

**Meeting of the Legislative Council Panel on Security  
held on 10 April 2003**

At the meeting held 10 April 2003, during the discussion of the paper “Psychotropic Substance Abuse and Actions Taken to Tackle the Problem”, members requested the Administration to provide further information on a number of subjects. The requested information is set out in the following paragraphs.

**Vocational Training, Aftercare and Outreaching Services**  
(paragraph 46 of the draft minutes of meeting)

2. Members requested for more information on the vocational training, aftercare and outreaching services that are provided to rehabilitated offenders. In this connection, members may wish to note that the Correctional Services Department (CSD) and Social Welfare Department (SWD) provide a wide range of aftercare and outreaching services for the rehabilitated offenders.

3. Offenders with a history of drug dependency, same as other types of offenders, are arranged to engage in productive work during their custody. To enhance their employability after release from correctional institutions, young inmates aged below 21, except those detained in the Detention Centre, receive half-day vocational training in industrial or commercial skills and half-day educational classes. The programme enables offenders to cultivate good work habits and acquire some basic skills in their assigned trades.

4. The Vocational Training Unit and Industries Section of the CSD have introduced in recent years more training on close-to-market trades, such as computer literacy and office procedures. Job skills in the manufacturing of leather products, carpentry, precasting of concrete products, printing, metalwork, garment-making, etc. are also taught to enhance the employment of rehabilitated offenders.

5. Before their discharge, all offenders are arranged to take part in a

“Pre-release Reintegration Orientation Course”, during which part of the topics would cover job interviewing skills and ways to find a job. For offenders who are required to be placed under statutory aftercare supervision, Aftercare Officers would try to help them secure a job and encourage them to participate in continual education after release to better equip themselves. For those who are not subject to any post-release supervision, assistance will be provided to them in formulating a discharge plan. With their consents, their cases would be referred to relevant non-government organizations (NGOs) for employment guidance and assistance prior to release.

6. A series of publicity campaign appealing to public’s acceptance and support to rehabilitated offenders has also been launched. Symposiums on employment of ex-offenders were jointly organized with the Centre for Criminology, University of Hong Kong in 2002 and 2003. Through the sharing of personal experience of rehabilitated offenders, together with their colleagues and employers, the symposiums have enhanced the participants’ understanding of the reintegration needs of ex-prisoners and the importance of community support in their reintegration process. It is encouraging to note that enquiries have been received from interested employers and some job placements have subsequently been offered.

7. SWD provides support to vulnerable members of the community through its extensive network of service units run by itself and by over 180 NGOs. Discharged offenders including those who are also rehabilitated drug abusers in need of support services may approach these service units such as the Integrated Family Services Centres, Family Services Centres and Social Security Field Units, etc as appropriate. In collaboration with the CSD, a Post-Release Supervision of Prisoners’ Scheme for discharged prisoners with guidance and counselling to help them reintegrate into the society and lead a law-abiding life has been launched. The SWD has also engaged the Society of Rehabilitation And Crime Prevention, Hong Kong (SRACP), the only NGO with subvented service contributing to the offender programmes under the ambit of SWD, to provide the following services for discharged offenders including those who are also rehabilitated drug abusers -

(i) Social Therapy Centre Service

Social workers of the centre provide counselling service and help service users enhance their self-confidence and problem solving abilities to cope with their financial, employment, social, psychological, emotional, behavioural and drug abuse problems, with a view to assisting them to reintegrate into the community and to lead a law-abiding and independent life. SRACP has since November 1998 been strategically launching the Operation Against Substance Abuse through Integrative Service (OASIS) Project (綠洲計劃) with Kwai Chung Hospital for discharged offenders who are also rehabilitated drug abusers. The project aims to help rehabilitated drug abusers sustain their momentum against relapse.

(ii) Hostel Service

Hostel service is provided to those discharged offenders who have difficulty in securing a suitable abode of their own accord. Hostel service is an important means to provide them with proper accommodation, necessary daily care and guidance plus group work support and activities, so as to help them adapt promptly to the new way of life in society.

(iii) Employment Service

The Employment Development Unit organized different types of training courses, workshops and employment counselling sessions for service users to improve employability, obtain employment resources and attend job interviews in order to secure open employment. In addition, temporary sheltered work placement in the form of workshop with major work activities including semi-manufactured goods assembling, packaging and cleaning is also provided.

**Resources Devoted towards Assisting Rehabilitated Offenders**

(paragraph 46 of the draft minutes of meeting)

8. In 2002, 1379 inmates of Drug Addiction Treatment Centres and

3035 prisoners below age 21 were released from CSD's institutions. CSD's aftercare services are largely undertaken by the Rehabilitation Division and the Industries Section. Currently, there are about 700 officers deployed for such services. The recurrent expenditures for 2003-04 on the provision of the services provided by the Rehabilitation Division and Industries Section are around 6.7 and 10 million respectively. With the continuous redeployment of internal resources, CSD, at the present stage, has no manpower shortage in providing offenders with aftercare services.

9. SWD, in collaboration with CSD, operates a Post-Release supervision of prisoners' scheme. In 2002-2003, SWD's recurrent expenditure for this scheme is \$3.8 million. Separately, a total of \$42.6 million has been allocated to SRACP for running voluntary aftercare and outreaching services for discharged prisoners, including those who are rehabilitated drug abusers.

### **Parent Education and Publicity Programme**

**(paragraph 59 of the draft minutes of meeting)**

10. Members requested for more information on the parent education and publicity programme of anti-drug message. In this connection, members may wish to note that the Government makes use of different channels and means to engage parents as a primary preventive agent in promoting the anti-drug message. The education and publicity work targeting parents include:

- (i) A letter from the Commissioner for Narcotics was sent to over 400,000 parents of students of Primary Five to Senior Secondary levels to raise their awareness on the problem of psychotropic substance abuse among youths and rally their support for sustaining the promotion of the anti-drug message at home. Guidelines on how to steer children from drugs and signs to watch for are enclosed for parents' reference.
- (ii) For the purpose of reaching out to working parents, the Narcotics Division conducts drug education programmes in the workplace. Large corporations including CLP Power Hong

Kong Limited, the Hong Kong and China Gas Company Limited, MTR Corporation Limited, etc. have been close partners of the Narcotics Division in launching these programmes.

(iii) Narcotics Division also work closely with Parent-Teacher Associations and schools to rally for parents' support for anti-drug work.

(iv) At the district level, inter-departmental efforts are often made to promote the anti-drug message to parents through organisation of local activities. For example, a "New Territories East Regional Seminar on Parent-School Cooperation in Tackling Substance Abuse" was held in June 2001 in cooperation with the then Education Department, the Police, Social Welfare Department and Department of Health. In Kwun Tong district, in collaboration with the YMCA and the Family Life Education Unit of Social Welfare Department, a series of drug talks were held for parents.

(v) Funding support to assist non-government organisations in launching anti-drug programmes are made through various funding schemes. Publicity activities are held to enhance parents' awareness of the drug problem as well. The following are some examples -

- Under the Parent Education Programme Grant Scheme, funding grant is provided by the Education and Manpower Bureau to non-government agencies in organizing parent drug education programmes has been given.
- Funding support is also provided by the Beat Drugs Fund. For example, with sponsorship from the Fund, the Hong Kong Federation of Youth Groups is organising a series of drug awareness training to enhance parental involvement in anti-drug work.

(vi) Narcotics Division has also enhanced cooperation with the non-

Chinese speaking community in parent education. A parents' seminar was conducted in September 2002 for the Hong Kong International School. Speakers from the drug education field and the Police were invited to speak at the drug talk. Apart from this, activities were also organised with the Gurkha's Sons and Daughters Association, Hong Kong which looks after the interests of the families of the Gurkhas as well as the Nepalese community. In support of their function "Say No to Drugs Programme" held in August 2002, anti-drug posters and leaflets were provided for display at their function and distribution to the participants.

- (vii) Parent education pamphlets on adolescent issues, and a parent education programme training manual for teachers and social workers serving parents of adolescents will be developed by the Parent Education Implementation Team of the Education and Manpower Bureau. The information has been broadcast on RTHK as part of the Radio Parenting College programme from February to May 2003. Road show messages on adolescent issues was broadcast at buses and mini-buses during the same period.
- (viii) To equip teachers and parent leaders with knowledge and skills in implementation of parent education programme in their respective schools or community, training courses have been organized for this purpose.
- (ix) 20 Family Support and Resource Centres have been set up by Social Welfare Department in 2002 with the aim of providing resources and support to families, in particular, the vulnerable families. Education and skills training programmes have also been provided to parents for effective parenting and communication with their children.

## **Information on Use of Psychotropic Substances by Secondary School Students**

**(paragraph 59 of the draft minutes of meeting)**

11. Members requested for more information about the psychotropic substances by secondary school students. In this connection, members may wish to note that since the late 1980's, Narcotics Division has been conducting regular statistical surveys to collect information about the misuse of substances (including psychotropic substances, heroin, tobacco and alcohol) among secondary level students. Five surveys were conducted between 1987 and 2000. The main objectives were to study the substance abuse patterns among the students concerned, as well as their perception of knowledge in and risks towards substance abuse.

12. Subject to availability of resources, the next round of the survey would be conducted in 2004.

## **Prosecution Policy for Young Offenders**

**(paragraph 65 of the draft minutes of meeting)**

13. As regards prosecution policy for persons under the age of 16 who were charged with drug offences, members may wish to note that generally, in cases other than where serious crime is concerned, children and young persons should be tried before a Juvenile Court, vide see section 3A(3) Juvenile Offenders Ordinance, Cap. 226. A "young person" is defined as a person who is 14 years of age or upwards and under the age of 16 years.

14. The Juvenile Court has exclusive jurisdiction over summary offences committed by a child or young person. Please see 3C(1) of Cap. 226. Nevertheless, section 3C(2) of Cap. 226 makes an exception for joint offenders. For indictable offences, the jurisdiction of the Juvenile Court is concurrent with that of the Court of First Instance. Consequently, both have the authority to try such offences, and the prosecutor chooses where to proceed.

15. A Juvenile Court has limited powers of punishment. As noted in the statement of Prosecution Policy and Practice, 2002 issued by

Department of Justice, in para. 10.4,

“In deciding whether or not the public interest warrants the prosecution of a juvenile regard should be had to such factors as :

(a) the seriousness of the alleged offence; ...

(d) the sentencing options available to the relevant Juvenile Court if the matters were to be prosecuted;...”

16. In cases of serious crime where a substantial prison sentence is likely to be imposed upon conviction, a young person will not normally be tried in the Juvenile Court. However, each case will depend upon its own particular facts and circumstances.

**Narcotics Division**  
**Security Bureau**  
**May 2003**