

For discussion on
4 November 2014

Legislative Council Panel on Security

Latest Development of Rehabilitative Services Provided by the Correctional Services Department for Persons in Custody

PURPOSE

This paper briefs Members on the latest development in the provision of rehabilitative services to persons in custody by the Correctional Services Department (CSD).

BACKGROUND

2. CSD is committed to providing a safe and humane environment and suitable rehabilitative services for persons in custody, which will facilitate their re-integration into the society after having served their sentences. The rehabilitative services include industries and vocational training, employment support and education. CSD also organises public education activities to promote the message of acceptance of rehabilitated persons.

PRE-RELEASE PREPARATION FOR PERSONS IN CUSTODY

Industries and Vocational Training

3. CSD is committed to assisting persons in custody in their rehabilitation. One of its main tasks is to provide industries and vocational training for persons in custody, which aims to help them develop good working habits and enhance their employability, thereby facilitating their re-integration into the society upon release.

4. As required by law, all convicted adult persons in custody¹ have to work under CSD's arrangement. There are over 10 types of industrial work, including sign making, printing, garment making, carpentry, making of precast concrete products, metalwork, knitting and making of leather products. Apart from acquiring the trade skills associated with these works, persons in custody

¹ Except for persons in custody exempted on medical ground

will also be able to acquire other skills and management knowledge which are generally applicable to different industries. CSD will provide job-related training for persons in custody. For example, CSD will arrange them to take trade tests conducted by the Construction Industry Council (CIC), or help them obtain accreditation through “the Recognition of Prior Learning” mechanism after they have acquired the related knowledge and skills.

5. Moreover, CSD provides full-time or part-time vocational training courses to persons in custody². The Department works with various professional bodies and training institutions such as the Employees Retraining Board, CIC and Vocational Training Council (VTC) in providing more than 30 vocational training courses on construction, food and beverage, retailing, logistics, beauty care, tourism and health care etc. to adult persons in custody in various penal institutions. Eligible persons in custody may apply for these courses on a voluntary basis. CSD will make arrangements for them to sit in the related examinations to attain the recognised qualifications from accreditation organisations. In 2013-14, CSD provided about 1 400 training places to adult persons in custody.

6. CSD discusses with training institutions on a regular basis to introduce a range of market-oriented vocational training courses to persons in custody. Having regard to vacancies in the job market, CSD introduced new courses in 2013 and 2014 such as the Bar-bending and Fixing Skills, Timber Formwork Skills, Digital Images Editing, Travel Agent Assistant Training, Hong Kong Style Cafe Operation, Computer Multi-media Productions and Programming, and Health Care Services. Besides, CSD introduced the Professional Taxi Driver (Taxi Written Test) Training Course in 2014. The examination mode is specially arranged by the Transport Department. Candidates are allowed to sit in the taxi driving license written test in the penal institutions instead of taking them at the regular examination centres. Trainees of this course also receive training in “drivers’ integrity” and “capability to deal with sudden occurrences” in order to help them find related work after their release.

7. The majority of young persons in custody³ aged under 21 have to receive half-day vocational training and half-day education. Currently, CSD provides a total of 15 vocational training courses for young persons in custody of various institutions, which include office and business operations, mechanical

² Applicable to persons in custody who are serving a sentence of no less than 6 months and with remaining sentences from 3 to 24 months, and who can stay and work in Hong Kong legally after their release.

³ In accordance with the legislations, CSD provides disciplinary and physical training to detainees of Detention Centres. Young persons in custody undergoing Phase 2 training in Rehabilitation Centres may work or study outside the centres in daytime. They are not required to receive general education and vocational training provided by the institutions.

skills, catering, elementary Chinese culinary, hairdressing and beauty care etc. CSD will arrange them to sit for the examinations of accreditation organisations. CSD has also launched the Teen's Programme in the rehabilitation centres⁴ with the VTC to provide various vocational training courses for young persons in custody. Those who have completed the programme are eligible to enrol in VTC courses which require Secondary 3 level. These arrangements aim to encourage young persons in custody to revive their interest in learning and cherish the opportunities to upgrade themselves and pursue further studies.

Employment Support

8. CSD arranges all persons in custody to participate in the Pre-release Reintegration Orientation Course before their release. The course covers general information on social welfare services, government departments and non-government organisations (NGOs) that offer assistance to rehabilitated persons in terms of job hunting, introduction on community facilities, job interview skills and labour legislation, etc. CSD hopes that persons in custody can acquire the knowledge about the post-release life through these courses and prepare them for re-integration into the community.

9. To enhance the employability of rehabilitated persons after release, CSD proactively encourages employers to register as "Caring Employers" and offer jobs to rehabilitated persons. In late September 2014, CSD held the video conferencing job fair for rehabilitated persons jointly with the Chinese Manufacturers' Association of Hong Kong and Merchants Support for Rehabilitated Offenders Committee Limited. The event aims to provide opportunities for persons in custody who will be released in 4 months to have real-time interviews with employers through video conferencing technology. More than 70 business organisations from 17 trades including retailing, catering, electrical and mechanical engineering, construction and transportation industries, etc. participated in the fair. Around 400 persons in custody from 21 institutions applied for jobs provided by these firms/organisations. As at mid-October 2014, around 100 persons in custody have been provided job offers from employers and more than 300 employers have registered as "Caring Employers".

10. Besides, CSD has been working with the Society of Rehabilitation and Crime Prevention, Hong Kong (SRACP) in providing persons in custody with information on job vacancies. After coordinating the information on job vacancies provided by employers, SRACP will pass such information to CSD on a regular basis for displaying in penal institutions. Interested persons in

⁴ CSD has launched the related programme in all rehabilitation centres providing Phase 1 training (ie. Lai Chi Rehabilitation Centre and Chi Lan Rehabilitation Centre).

custody can send application forms directly to SRACP and the latter will arrange job interviews for them.

Education

11. On education services, CSD arranges courses of junior and senior secondary levels for eligible young persons in custody in young offender institutions. The courses are conducted by qualified teachers. CSD will assist young persons in custody to enrol in the Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education (HKDSE) Examination so that they can choose to pursue further studies or find jobs after release. In 2014, 15 young persons in custody sat for the HKDSE Examination. They took a total of 82 examination papers and obtained level 2 or above in 81 of them, representing a qualifying rate of 98.8% of all papers taken. Among the 15 young persons in custody, 2 met the general entrance requirements for local universities.

12. As regards adult persons in custody, CSD encourages them to participate in self-studying or distance learning programmes, and assist them in using resources and professional services of various recognised education institutions effectively to acquire recognised academic qualifications. In 2013, a total of 636 persons in custody took 711 papers in various public examinations with an overall passing rate of 78%. The public examinations mainly include the Open University of Hong Kong, the London Chamber of Commerce and Industry International Qualifications, and the City and Guilds International Limited, etc. In the past 5 years, a total of 8 and 2 persons in custody attained bachelor's and master's degrees respectively through distance learning. Currently, about 240 persons in custody are undertaking courses of the Open University of Hong Kong. To encourage more persons in custody to pursue further studies, CSD organises certificate presentation ceremonies in correctional institutions, and invites persons including family members of persons in custody, volunteers and related members of the public to attend.

13. To assist persons in custody who intend to pursue further studies but encounter financial difficulties in paying tuition fees, purchasing books and study aids, or enrolling in examinations organised by external bodies, CSD has set up a number of education funds⁵ to provide financial assistance. These funds are formed by donations from members of the public. In 2013, a total of about \$1.2 million were granted from these education funds to over 950 persons in custody.

⁵ The Education Funds include the Prisoners' Education Trust Fund, the Prisoners' Education Subsidy Fund, the Care of Rehabilitated Offenders Association Foundation, the Angel Education Fund and the New Life Foundation.

PROMOTING COMMUNITY SUPPORT ON THE ACCEPTANCE OF REHABILITATED PERSONS

14. Acceptance and support from the public are of utmost importance to rehabilitated persons turning over a new leaf and their re-integration into society. Therefore, CSD has been proactively promoting acceptance of rehabilitated persons through publicity and education campaigns and various activities.

Rehabilitation Pioneer Project

15. CSD's Rehabilitation Pioneer Project (the Project) aims to offer opportunities for young people to understand the detrimental effects of committing crime and drug abuse. Under the Project, CSD staff will arrange talks in schools or organisations to promote the message of crime prevention. Students, teachers and social workers will be arranged to visit correctional institutions and meet persons in custody. CSD hopes that students will recognise the serious consequences of committing crime and the importance of abiding by the law through experience-sharing by persons in custody. To encourage the participation of more schools in the Project, CSD has started to invite academic professionals to visit correctional institutions and meet persons in custody since March 2013. By the end of August 2014, a total of 216 educational professionals have participated in the related activities.

16. Since November 2012, the activities under the Project have been included into the moral and civic education-related activities under the "Other Learning Experiences" of the New Senior Secondary Curriculum.

Green Haven Scheme

17. Moreover, CSD has launched the Green Haven Scheme on Hei Ling Chau which allows young people to visit the Green Haven Resource Centre on Drug Prevention and Environmental Protection, Environmental Protection Garden and Hei Ling Chau Drug Addiction Treatment Centre and meet the drug abusers in the addiction treatment centre. The scheme aims to promote the messages on prevention of drug abuse and environmental protection. In 2013, 32 such activities were organised, in which over 660 young persons, social workers and teachers participated. Since 2012, CSD has also invited secondary students aged 13 above to join the 3-day extended training camps held in the CSD Staff Training Institute and on Hei Ling Chau. Apart from receiving disciplinary and adventurous training, the participants would also visit the Drug Addiction Treatment Centre and meet the inmates. So far, CSD has organised 14 extended training camps with a total of over 360

student participants.

Creation and Rehabilitation Programme

18. In recent years, CSD implements the Creation and Rehabilitation Programme at the Stanley Prison in collaboration with NGOs, which uses creative arts and drama to help persons in custody learn communication skills and conflict resolution. In April 2013 and February 2014, a total of some 600 secondary students were invited to attend the Drama and Music Performance of the Creation and Rehabilitation Programme held at the Stanley Prison with a view to enhancing their support of rehabilitation work. Furthermore, CSD organised 3 sessions of Student Forum in 2014 which included interactive dramas for young people. During the Student Forum, professional drama group carried out drama performance promoting the message on rehabilitation and the actors discussed the story of the drama performance with the young audiences. Rehabilitated persons also shared their experiences at the event to reinforce the message of supporting rehabilitation. Over 1 500 persons attended the 3 sharing sessions.

Community involvement and publicity activities

19. CSD has been working with 18 District Fight Crime Committees to design and organise various activities in different districts with a view to promoting the support of offender rehabilitation at different levels in the community. Such activities include debate competitions, music and drama performance school tours participated by rehabilitated persons, making mini-movies, etc. In November 2014, the Department worked with a TV broadcaster on the variety show “Support Offender Rehabilitation for a Safer and More Inclusive Society” and invited more than 10 charitable organisations and 18 District Fight Crime Committees to participate, aiming at introducing the work of CSD to the general public and calling on the community to offer support for rehabilitated persons.

WAY FORWARD

20. CSD will continue to actively review and enhance the various types of rehabilitation services and programmes in the light of social changes and needs, as well as making proactive efforts in promoting rehabilitation work.

Security Bureau
Correctional Services Department
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