

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2009-10
**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

SB169

Question Serial No.

1583

Head : 30 Correctional Services Department

Subhead (No & title) :

Programme : (2) Re-integration

Controlling Officer : Commissioner of Correctional Services

Director of Bureau : Secretary for Security

Question :

Regarding the psychological counselling sessions provided in prisons and the welfare services sessions provided to young prisoners, has the Administration reviewed their effectiveness? If yes, what is the result? If no, what are the reasons? What are the estimated expenditure and staffing establishment for these services in 2009?

Asked by : Hon. LAU Kong-wah

Reply :

Psychological services are provided to prisoners to enhance their psychological well-being during custody, and address their attitudes and patterns of behaviour that contribute to offending. The effectiveness of psychological counselling sessions is systematically evaluated by internationally recognised psychological tests. Test results have indicated that the counselling sessions currently provided by the Correctional Services Department to prisoners have a favourable impact on them. Generally, the sessions have effectively reduced the participants' level of criminal thinking. As for some particular groups of prisoners such as drug abusers and sex offenders, the sessions have enhanced the former's confidence in coping with those high risk factors related to their drug abuse problems, and enhanced the latter's relapse-prevention skills and deepened their empathy towards the victims.

Two Senior Clinical Psychologists, 17 Clinical Psychologists and 21 Officers are actively engaged in providing psychological services for prisoners with the support of staff from individual institutions and the Headquarters. The estimated expenditure for providing such services in 2009-10 is \$37.1 million, which includes the relevant staff cost and other operational expenses.

Welfare and counselling services are also provided to all prisoners to assist them in coping with adjustment, emotional or psychological problems during imprisonment, and prepare them for reintegration into society. The effectiveness of the services is assessed by the feedback from prisoners during and after the sessions. Their feedback has been encouraging. Generally, participants are satisfied with the assistance and guidance provided to them, and the services are considered useful in facilitating their rehabilitation.

One Principal Officer, two Officers and one Assistant Officer II are deployed specifically to organise the provision of welfare and counselling services to young prisoners. In addition, staff of individual institutions are also involved in providing the services for young prisoners as part of their duties. The estimated expenditure for providing welfare and counselling services for all prisoners in 2009-10 is \$53.7 million, which includes the relevant staff cost and other operational expenses. We do not have separate breakdowns of the expenditure on the provision of welfare and counselling services to young offenders alone.

Signature	_____
Name in block letters	<u> KWOK LEUNG MING </u>
Post Title	<u> Commissioner of Correctional Services </u>
Date	<u> 19 March 2009 </u>