

For discussion on
8 July 2008

Legislative Council Panel on Security

Latest Developments in the Provision of Rehabilitative Services by the Correctional Services Department

Purpose

This paper updates Members on the latest developments in the provision of rehabilitative services by the Correctional Services Department (CSD).

Background

2. At the Panel meeting on 3 July 2007, we briefed Members, vide LC Paper No. CB(2)2284/06-07(01), on the latest developments in the provision of rehabilitative services by CSD. In particular, Members noted the following initiatives of the Department to strengthen its services –

- (a) implementing the Risks and Needs Assessment and Management Protocol for Offenders;
- (b) enhancing vocational training and education for offenders; and
- (c) promoting community involvement for offender rehabilitation.

This paper provides an update of the developments over the past twelve months.

Risks and Needs Assessment and Management Protocol for Offenders

3. Through the implementation of the Risks and Needs Assessment and Management Protocol, CSD aims to deliver rehabilitative programmes to offenders in a more targeted and effective approach. Under the Protocol, offenders are first assessed on their custodial and re-offending risks and rehabilitative needs. This assessment facilitates prison management for threats of self-harm, escape and violence. More importantly, it also allows the Department to provide matching rehabilitative programmes to offenders having regard to their risks and needs profile.

4. Since the implementation of the Protocol in October 2006, all local young offenders have undergone the risks and needs assessment. As for local adult offenders, all new prisoners with sentences of two years or above have been assessed upon admission since October 2006. In order to widen the coverage of the Protocol, CSD is gradually extending the assessment to serving local adult prisoners. At the present moment, assessment has been conducted for around 60% of local adult prisoners with sentences of two years or above.

5. CSD started rehabilitative programme matching in January 2007. Since then, a total of 5 653 group sessions have been organised for 7 157 participants. The rehabilitative programmes currently available to offenders cover the domains on vocational/employment, family/marital, associates/social functioning, substance abuse treatment, community adjustment, intellectual/social/emotional and sub-cultural attitude/criminal attitude.

6. As the Protocol has only been implemented for less than two years, CSD will continue to take a step-by-step approach for its implementation and fine tune the Protocol in the light of operational experience. It will closely monitor the performance of discharged offenders in the coming years and conduct a full review in 2011.

Vocational Training for Offenders

7. CSD provides offenders with accredited and market-oriented vocational training to enhance offenders' employability after discharge. For inmates under the age of 21, the Department's vocational training is mainly targeted at the following five broad trades, which are selected having regard to the manpower projection in Hong Kong and the employment statistics of young discharged offenders –

- (a) Building Decoration (including joinery, painting and trowel);
- (b) Building Services (including air-conditioning, fire services, plumbing & drainage and electrical services);
- (c) Business Services (including business, import & export and retail);
- (d) Personal Services (including beauty care, hair and image design);
and
- (e) Food and Beverage (including restaurant operations, food and beverage production and service operations).

In this connection, CSD has set up an electrical services workshop in Cape Collinson Correctional Institution to train inmates on the basic skills in electrical services (e.g. air conditioning, electrical fitting and installation) and repairs. There is also a training restaurant in Lai King Correctional Institution to provide food and beverage training which prepares young rehabilitated offenders for working in restaurants and cafes. The results have been encouraging. In 2007, young offenders attempted a total of 1 137 public examination papers and trade tests with an overall passing rate of 94.8%. In the same year, 95% of young offenders discharged under supervision had successfully secured gainful employment within one month of their discharge.

8. As for adult prisoners, they are required to engage in useful work under Prison Rules (Cap 234A) unless excused on medical grounds. Gainful employment of offenders not only helps maintain a stable custodial environment, but also facilitates their rehabilitation through developing a good habit and a sense of responsibility.

9. To enhance vocational training for adult offenders, CSD has been operating a pre-release vocational training centre at Lai Sun Correctional Institution (LSCI) since July 2006. As present, about 160 male prisoners are receiving full-time, market-oriented vocational training at LSCI. So far prisoner-trainees at the centre have attempted a total of 1 096 public examination papers and trade tests with an overall passing rate of 95%. Based on the experience gained from LSCI, CSD has introduced a full-time vocational training course on commercial and retailing service for female prisoners at Lai Chi Kok Correctional Institution (LCKCI) in February 2008.

10. On top of full-time vocational training, CSD has recently secured the support of the Employees Retraining Board (ERB) in providing part-time vocational training for adult prisoners. In 2008-09, a total of 15 part-time training courses funded by ERB will be conducted at various penal institutions. Together with other part-time training opportunities provided by CSD, more than 550 part-time training places will be available to adult prisoners this year.

Community Involvement

11. Community acceptance and support is essential to the rehabilitation of offenders and their reintegration into society. In this connection, CSD has been organising a series of publicity activities since 1999. According to the findings of the opinion survey conducted in 2008, the majority of the public is in support of the Department's promotional efforts¹. In addition, many

¹ In the survey conducted in 2008, 85% of the public considered it worthwhile for the Government to continue to conduct publicity activities to appeal for community support for rehabilitated offenders. This compares with 83.6% and 91.9% in similar surveys conducted in 2002 and 2004 respectively.

community organisations and merchants / trade associations have expressed an interest in collaborating with CSD in promoting the welfare of rehabilitated persons.

12. To leverage on the resources available within the community, CSD will continue to work with non-government organisations (NGOs) and community organisations in enhancing rehabilitative services for offenders. At the present moment, over 60 NGOs are involved in the provision of such services. As with previous years, CSD will hold an annual forum with NGO representatives later this year to provide a platform to facilitate the exchanges of views and experience sharing. The Department will also continue to maintain/build up partnership with community organisations such as the Rotary Clubs, Lion Clubs, Zonta Clubs, etc, to take forward projects and initiatives for prisoners and rehabilitated persons.

13. Apart from NGOs and community organizations, CSD is looking to forge a stronger partnership with the commercial sector. For example, CSD is currently lining up the co-operation of a commercial enterprise and the Society of Rehabilitation and Crime Prevention for the establishment of a social enterprise to provide employment opportunities for rehabilitated persons. It will also continue to collaborate with merchant / trade associations in enhancing the vocational training opportunities for offenders.

14. As for the promotional efforts on offender rehabilitation and crime prevention targeted at the youth, CSD will promulgate a “Rehabilitation Pioneer Project” later this year. Participants of the project will be invited to attend education talks on offender rehabilitation and student forums on the untoward consequences of committing crime. They will also have the opportunity to visit correctional institutions, personally meet rehabilitated offenders and listen to their experience.

Way Forward

15. The Department will continue to review and improve its rehabilitative services and programmes to promote offender rehabilitation across the community in the interest of building a safer and more inclusive society.