

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO  
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

SB222

Question Serial No.

3447

Head: 30 Correctional Services Department      Subhead (No. & title):

Programme: (1) Prison Management

Controlling Officer: Commissioner of Correctional Services

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question: Relatives of persons in custody often complained that the visit rooms in various correctional institutions being rather small and the waiting time too long. In 2012-13, will the Government increase the provision for expansion of the visit rooms in correctional institutions for the convenience of the relatives of persons in custody? Besides, will the number and duration of the visits in each month be increased in order to facilitate the communication between persons in custody and their relatives?

Asked by: Hon. LEUNG Kwok-hung

Reply: Among the existing 29 correctional facilities, 10 of them have been in operation for 40 years or above by 2012. The Correctional Services Department (CSD) has all along been implementing different measures, including the conversion or upgrading of the institutions, to address the problem of ageing facilities. For example, Lo Wu Correctional Institution, which was redeveloped and commissioned in 2010, has been equipped with more visit rooms with better environment and a visitor registration centre. Besides, the CSD has been working with the Architectural Services Department to construct, maintain or upgrade various facilities, such as cells, visit rooms, dayrooms, vocational training workshops and other rehabilitative facilities in institutions, having regard to their situation and priorities.

Persons in custody can keep in touch with their relatives and friends by different means, generally by letters and social visits. Regarding the number and duration of social visits, Rule 48 of the Prison Rules stipulates that all convicted persons in custody are allowed to receive 2 social visits from their relatives and friends each month, during which no more than 3 persons will be allowed at one time, and the visits will be limited to 30 minutes on each occasion. As for persons in custody awaiting trial, Rule 203 of the Prison Rules prescribes that every person in custody awaiting trial is allowed to receive 1 social visit from their relatives and friends each day, during which no more than 2 persons will be allowed at one time, and the visit will be limited to 15 minutes. CSD shares the view that if persons in custody can get support and care from their relatives and friends, especially their immediate family members, it will have a positive bearing on their rehabilitation. As such, the Department encourages them to receive more visits from their immediate family members. Where the facilities permit, the Department will generally allow convicted persons in custody to receive additional monthly visits from their immediate family members. Besides, persons in custody can also maintain communication with their relatives and friends by letters, or communicate with them by making phone calls as necessary.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Name in block letters: SIN YAT KIN

Post Title: Commissioner of Correctional Services

Date: 28 February 2012