

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB441

(Question Serial No. 5039)

Head: (30) Correctional Services Department

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (1) Prison Management (2) Re-integration

Controlling Officer: Commissioner of Correctional Services (LAM Kwok-leung)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

The types of education, learning and training provided by some prisons and correctional institutions are said to be behind the times and impractical, failing to facilitate persons in custody's (PICs) re-integration into society after release. PICs are of the view that courses on booth setting, taxi driving, craft, piping and wiring, western cooking, etc. can help them develop skills which facilitate their return to society by making a living.

1. Has the Correctional Services Department kept up with the times and planned to review and replace courses provided in various prisons and correctional institutions in Hong Kong?

2. If yes, what is the specific timetable? If not, what are the reasons?

3. What is the estimated financial expenditure involved ?

Asked by: Hon SHIU Ka-chun (Member Question No. (LegCo use): 336)

Reply:

On education, the Correctional Services Department (CSD) provides half-day compulsory education for young persons in custody (PICs) aged between 14 and 20, and arranges qualified teachers to teach the subjects. Teachers assess the academic levels of young PICs and help them learn in a progressive manner, having regard to the length of sentence. Teachers encourage individual PICs with stronger learning abilities to take the New Senior Secondary curriculum and assist them in taking the Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education Examination. CSD follows the curriculum contents and requirements of the Education Bureau and make suitable adjustments to meet PICs' levels and needs.

As regards adult PICs, CSD has been encouraging them to pursue further studies in their spare time, enrol in distance learning courses according to their interests and abilities, and take public examinations under the users-pay principle. The courses and examinations include courses of the Open University of Hong Kong, and examinations held by the Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority, the City and Guilds of London Institute Examinations and the London Chamber of Commerce and Industry International Qualifications Examinations, etc. Correctional institutions provide appropriate assistance to PICs. For example, CSD has set up a number of education funds and subsidy schemes for PICs to apply for financial assistance if they want to pursue further studies but have difficulties in paying for public examination fees, the examination and tuition fees for distance learning courses or purchasing reference books. These funds and subsidy schemes are contributed by donations from charitable organisations and members of the public.

On vocational training, CSD, having regard to the situation of the local employment market, has been working with various training bodies such as the Employees Retraining Board, the Construction Industry Council and the Vocational Training Council to provide eligible adult PICs with remaining sentences from 3 to 24 months with more than 1 400 training places of 40 full-time and part-time vocational training courses for enrolment. These courses cover construction, business, food and beverage, retail, beauty care, transport, logistics, laundry services, computer application and environmental services, etc. There are also new courses such as Foundation Certificate in Plumber Training for Interior Renovation (Intermediate Trade Test) and Foundation Certificate in Pet Sitter.

Having regard to the overall situation of the local employment market and labour demand, CSD offers diversified vocational training courses, and adjust the courses according to the employment rate of particular industries and the response of PICs. Moreover, in view of labour shortage problem of the construction industry, CSD will regularly review the courses with the sector to meet the market needs. For example, in 2018-19, CSD will introduce new courses such as Foundation Certificate in Preparation for Intermediate Trade Test for Floor Layer (Timber Flooring) of Interior Renovation and Foundation Certificate in AutoCAD in Renovation Drawings. In 2018-19, a total of 41 and 20 vocational training courses will be provided for adult and young PICs respectively.

CSD will continue to co-operate with various training bodies which provide employment follow-up service, so that CSD will keep abreast of the market changes and the employment situation of discharged persons for reviewing its vocational training programmes.

In 2018-19, CSD's estimated expenditure on vocational training, including manpower and provision of vocational training courses, is about \$31.25 million, while the estimated expenditure on education is about \$36.76 million.