

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB128

(Question Serial No. 1785)

Head: (30) Correctional Services Department

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (2) Re-integration

Controlling Officer: Commissioner of Correctional Services (WONG Kwok-hing)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

It is mentioned in Matters Requiring Special Attention under this Programme that support will be provided for persons in custody (PICs) to continue their studies. In this connection, please advise on the following:

1. Please set out, by age, the total numbers of PICs enrolling in senior secondary courses and sitting for the Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education Examination respectively in correctional institutions in each of the past 5 years. Among them, how many met the general entrance requirements for universities?
2. Please set out, by age, the respective numbers of PICs enrolling in distance learning associate degree, undergraduate and postgraduate programmes offered by different organisations in each of the past 5 years. Among them, how many completed the relevant tertiary programmes each year?
3. Did the Department provide any improvement measures for PICs last year to assist them to continue their studies? If yes, what were the improvement measures, correctional institutions and expenditure involved?
4. What are the work and expenditure involved in this regard in the coming year? Is the Rehabilitation College to be established by the Department included? If yes, what are the details?

Asked by: Hon LEUNG Yuk-wai, Kenneth (LegCo internal reference no.: 32)

Reply:

1 & 2. In the past 5 years, a total of 53 young persons in custody (PICs) (i.e. those aged below 21) took the Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education Examination (HKDSE) and 36 adult PICs were awarded 34 bachelor's degrees and 2 master's degrees. The numbers of the relevant PICs are tabulated below:

	Young PICs	Adult PICs	
	HKDSE	Bachelor's degree	Master's degree
2022	12	5	-
2021	7	5	-

	Young PICs	Adult PICs	
	HKDSE	Bachelor's degree	Master's degree
2020	9	9	-
2019	14	5	1
2018	16	10	1
Total	58 <small>Note 1 Note 2</small>	34	2
	(involving a total of 53 young PICs)	(involving a total of 36 adult PICs)	

Note 1: In the past 5 years, a total of 5 young PICs sat for HKDSE more than once.

Note 2: In the past 5 years, a total of 5 young PICs met the general admission requirements for local universities.

Note 3: The Correctional Services Department (CSD) does not maintain a breakdown of PICs taking other individual programmes.

3. CSD has set up the Prisoners' Education Trust Fund and a number of education subsidy schemes, which are contributed by donations from charitable organisations and the community, to provide financial assistance for PICs who want to pursue further studies but have difficulties in paying for public examinations and the tuition fees for distance learning courses. In the past 5 years, the average annual amount of subsidy granted was about \$2.7 million.

In addition, CSD and the Hong Kong Metropolitan University (HKMU) signed a Memorandum of Understanding on 24 October 2022 to provide more comprehensive support, including the provision of grants, credit transfers and programme articulation, for PICs who wish to pursue further studies. As at 28 February 2023, HKMU has provided grants totaling about \$1 million to over 120 PICs.

To encourage and facilitate PICs' learning, CSD has launched an electronic learning platform "Learning on Demand" (LOD) for them. By using a tablet computer connected with the intranet of the respective institution, a PIC can access the electronic learning materials in the system, which cover a variety of areas and are of different levels, such as learning materials for distance learning courses offered by HKMU and those for public examinations (including HKDSE). The first LOD system was installed in Pik Uk Correctional Institution in December 2022, while the same will be extended to Sha Tsui Correctional Institution and Lai King Correctional Institution in the second quarter of 2023. The total expenditure involved is about \$1.3 million, which is mainly met by CSD's existing resources and partly by donations from charitable organisations.

4. CSD plans to establish the Rehabilitation College to offer full-time continuing education programmes for adult PICs to enrol on a voluntary basis, so as to help them equip themselves for smooth re-integration into society. The plan is still in the pipeline, and CSD is seeking funding from charitable organisations to cover the relevant expenses.