

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB145

(Question Serial No. 1535)

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:

Regarding persons' in custody (PICs) re-integration, would the Government inform this Committee of the following:

1. It is estimated that 179 posts will be deleted in the Correctional Services Department (CSD) in 2026-27. Will the reduction in the number of posts affect the Department's work, including the work under this Programme? What measures will be taken to mitigate the impact;
2. CSD provides education and vocational training to PICs. Please tabulate the types of education and vocational training courses provided in the past 3 years and the expenditures involved;
3. In recent years, some PICs convicted of national security offences have been released after serving their sentences. Are there any targeted arrangements for the rehabilitation of these PICs? Will the Government provide targeted rehabilitation support for these PICs after their release? What are the details?

Asked by: Hon SO Shiu-tsung, Thomas (LegCo internal reference no.: 18)

Reply:

1. The Government has been strictly controlling the civil service establishment by implementing the zero-growth policy since 2021-22, with the overall civil service establishment controlled at a level not exceeding that as at end-March 2021. To tie in with the Government's Productivity Enhancement Programme and its aim to optimise the use of manpower resources, the civil service establishment will be reduced by 2% each in 2026-27 and 2027-28.

Having considered factors such as the overall service demand, operational needs and vacancy situations, etc., the Correctional Services Department (CSD) has made arrangements to tie in with the policy to reduce the civil service establishment by 2% in 2026-27. Together with the lapse of other time-limited posts and reduction in posts due to reallocation or redeployment of internal resources, CSD will reduce 179 civil service posts in 2026-27. CSD will continue to adopt management measures and

digitalisation to enhance efficiency through reprioritisation, internal redeployment, streamlining of work processes and application of technology, with a view to continuing to provide high-quality public services while further streamlining the civil service establishment.

2. CSD provides half-day compulsory education for convicted young persons aged between 14 and 20, and qualified teachers are arranged to teach the subjects.

Persons in custody (PICs) who were studying post-secondary programmes before imprisonment may contact their tertiary institutions for suitable modes of study and learning materials. CSD would assist PICs upon their request to continue to study the relevant programmes at correctional institutions. PICs may also enrol in distance learning courses offered by the Hong Kong Metropolitan University according to their abilities and interests. Correctional institutions would provide appropriate assistance to them.

CSD set up the Ethics College at Pak Sha Wan Correctional Institution and Lo Wu Correctional Institution in October 2023 to provide a one-year full-time Diploma of Applied Education programme for voluntary enrolment by adult PICs. To further assist PICs who have completed the Diploma of Applied Education programme in acquiring higher qualifications, a two-year full-time Associate of General Studies distance learning programme was organised in the Ethics College in 2024 to provide PICs with an option for further studies. Meanwhile, CSD has also extended the Ethics College to Pik Uk Prison to provide a half-day Associate of General Studies programme and half-day vocational training for graduates of the Ethics College who are unable to complete the associate degree programme during the remainder of their sentences. This arrangement allows them to receive short-term educational and vocational training, so that they can continuously equip themselves in preparation for academic and career pursuits upon their imminent release.

On vocational training, the Department has been collaborating with various training bodies (including the Vocational Training Council, the Employees Retraining Board and the Construction Industry Council, etc.) to provide over 40 market-oriented vocational training courses, covering industries such as construction, engineering, business, food and beverage, retail, beauty care, transport, logistics, information technology applications and environmental services, etc. for eligible adult PICs. More than 1 800 full-time and part-time vocational training places were provided in 2025.

Moreover, CSD also provides all young PICs with 13 half-day vocational training courses, covering a wide range of industries such as commercial practice, creative multimedia production, coffee house operations, western pastry and dessert making, building services, beauty care and hairstyling, etc.

CSD's expenditures on vocational training and PICs' education in the past 3 years are tabulated as follows:

Year	2023-24 (Actual expenditure)	2024-25 (Actual expenditure)	2025-26 (Revised estimate)
Expenditure on vocational training courses (\$ million)	33.10	38.19	41.58
Expenditure on education* (\$ million)	46.29	46.62	46.69

** Note: In 2023, CSD received a donation of \$43 million from the Hong Kong Jockey Club Charities Trust to set up the Jockey Club Education Fund for Rehabilitation to provide education support for PICs. This include establishing the Ethics College to offer different types of study programmes, and providing education subsidies for PICs enrolling in distance learning programmes in other institutions. Besides, to assist PICs who aspire to pursue further studies but have difficulties in paying for public examinations and tuition fees for university distance learning courses, CSD has set up a number of education funds and subsidy schemes funded by donations from charitable organisations and the community for application by PICs. The tabulated expenditure on education has not included these funds and subsidy schemes set up with donations.*

3. Some PICs involved in the “black-clad violence” or contravened the Hong Kong National Security Law are subject to statutory supervision after release. Apart from providing them with appropriate rehabilitation support and counselling service, CSD also provides community-based psychological counselling and organises different kinds of treatment programmes at its Multi-purpose Family and Rehabilitation Service Centres. For example, the Change Lab was set up to assist young supervisees build up confidence and psychological resilience so that they can overcome difficulties and resist temptations. Family therapy centres were set up to help rehabilitated persons with violent tendencies or radical thoughts resolve family problems, so that they can rebuild family relationships.

Besides, in February this year, young supervisees involved in the “black-clad violence” were for the first time arranged to participate in an exchange tour to the Mainland. Through on-site visits and personal experiences, they could obtain a deeper understanding of the profound Chinese history and culture, and witness the nation’s prosperous development, thereby deepening their knowledge of national affairs and development, fostering their sense of belonging to our country and enhancing their sense of national identity.

As for PICs who are not subject to statutory supervision after release, CSD may, according to the needs and wishes of each individual, refer their cases to relevant organisations or non-governmental organisations for follow-up.