

OVERVIEW OF THE CORRECTIONAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT OF HONG KONG

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I. INTRODUCTION

The Correctional Services Department (CSD) of Hong Kong runs a comprehensive range of rehabilitation programmes targeting different types of persons in custody, such as young offenders, drug dependants, first-time offenders and recidivists.

With an establishment of 6,807 staff, CSD manages 29 correctional facilities comprising correctional institutions, half-way houses and custodial wards of public hospitals. The correctional institutions include minimum, medium and maximum security prisons, a psychiatric centre and training, detention, rehabilitation and drug addiction treatment centres. Apart from 24 correctional institutions, there are three half-way houses and two custodial wards, which altogether accommodate about 9,100 persons in custody. CSD also runs an extensive community-based supervision service with some 2,400 persons under active supervision. As a brief introduction to the CSD, some selected services are introduced below.

II. INDUSTRIES AND VOCATIONAL TRAINING

CSD keeps convicted persons purposely and gainfully occupied for maintaining prison stability. In the pursuit of rehabilitation for offenders, the Industries and Vocational Training Section helps the offenders reintegrate into the society through acquisition of skills in industrial work and by providing vocational training to enhance their employability.

For young inmates, CSD provides half-day compulsory technical, commercial and services training. Equal importance is placed on theoretical and practical aspects of the curriculum, which prepares them to pursue further training after release.

Adult offenders engaged in industrial production are trained to acquire necessary skills. Where appropriate, CSD helps them obtain skill accreditation by enrolling them in relevant Intermediate Trade Tests conducted by vocational training organisations, or applying through the Recognition of Prior Learning Scheme under the Hong Kong Qualifications Framework.

III. SUPERVISION SERVICE

To ensure continued care and guidance, statutory supervision is provided for young inmates; persons released from training, detention, rehabilitation and drug addiction treatment centres; and those released under various schemes, such as the Release Under Supervision Scheme (RUSS), Pre-release Employment Scheme (PRES), Post-release Supervision of Prisoners Scheme (PRSS), Conditional Release Scheme (CRS) and Supervision After Release Scheme (SARS). The supervision staff works closely with inmates' families to establish good relationships between inmates and their families and to prepare inmates to face possible challenges and demands upon their return to the community. Continuous contact is maintained with every inmate in custody. Close supervision continues after discharge through frequent visits to supervisees' homes or places of work throughout the supervision period.

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IV. WELFARE AND COUNSELLING SERVICES

Rehabilitation Officers look after the welfare of prisoners and inmates who are in custody or on remand by providing assistance and guidance to help them solve their personal problems and cope with difficulties arising from detention. The officers also organize programmes such as the Sentence Planning Scheme to encourage prisoners serving long-term sentences to spend their time purposefully and the Pre-release Re-integration Orientation Courses to prepare prisoners for release.

To further improve rehabilitative services for offenders through community involvement, CSD officers work closely with over 80 non-government organizations (NGOs) to coordinate a variety of activities ranging from counselling services and religious sacraments to large-scale cultural ventures and recreational projects in correctional institutions.

V. PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES

Psychological services are provided for inmates/prisoners to improve their psychological well-being and help change their offending behaviour. Psychological assessments are provided for the courts, review boards and institution management to facilitate their decision-making and management of offenders. To assist in programme planning and improve treatment effectiveness, an automated programme for identifying the reoffending risks and rehabilitative needs of offenders has been developed.

VI. EDUCATION

Half-day compulsory education in general and practical subjects is provided for young inmates. The programmes enable inmates to improve their academic standards, which help their future reintegration. They are encouraged to study for local and international public examinations. Tutorial groups and hobby classes conducted by volunteer tutors are run in adult institutions, where prisoners can enrol voluntarily. Prisoners are also encouraged to participate in self-study courses or distant learning for tertiary education by making use of the resources and expertise of external accredited educational organizations.