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Correctional Services in Hong Kong (香港的懲教服務)

Introduction (引言)

Correctional Services Department (懲教署) (“CSD”) was formerly known as Prisons Department (監獄署). The change of name on 1 February 1982 reflected and recognized the increasing importance of rehabilitation (囚犯更新) in parallel with the conventional penal system (懲罰). Since then, CSD has not been merely the Government’s arm to operate and manage the prisons. It also coordinates and runs a comprehensive range of rehabilitation programmes for the offenders and prisoners. The underlying philosophy is that the rehabilitation regime will help the prisoners and offenders re-mould themselves and reduce the re-offending risks so much so that they can re-integrate themselves into the community after serving the sentences. The article also gives a brief account of the various services of CSD.

Correctional Facilities (懲教設施)

CSD manages about 29 correctional facilities including (a) correctional institutions (懲教院所); (b) half-way houses (中途宿舍); and (c) custodial wards (羈留病房) of public hospitals. The correctional institutions comprise prisons of minimum security, medium security and maximum security respectively, psychiatric centre, training centre, detention centre, rehabilitation centre and drug addiction treatment centre. Also, there are about 3 half-way houses i.e. Phoenix House (豐力樓), Pelican House (百勤樓) and Bauhinia House (紫荊樓) and 2 custodial wards managed by CSD.

Maximum-security Prisons (高度設防監獄)

Stanley Prison (赤柱監獄) is the largest maximum-security prison for male offenders serving life or long-term sentences. Shek Pik Prison (石壁監獄) is another maximum-security prison for male adults serving medium to long-term sentences including life imprisonment. Pik Uk Correctional Institution (壁屋懲教所) is a maximum-security institution with mixed functions of reception centre, training centre and prison for young male offenders.

Tai Lam Centre for Woman (大欖女懲教所), on the other hand, is a maximum-security

institution featured as a remand centre and a prison for adult women only.

Medium-security Prisons (中度設防監獄)

Tong Fuk Correctional Institution (塘福懲教處), Hei Ling Chau Correctional Institution (喜靈洲懲教所) and Pak Sha Wan Correctional Institution (白沙灣懲教所) are medium-security prisons for male adults.

The new Lo Wu Correctional Institution (羅湖懲教所) is equipped with two medium security wings for female adults.

Minimum-security Prisons (低度設防監獄)

There are 4 minimum-security prisons for male adults namely, Tung Tau Correctional Institution (東頭懲教所), Pik Uk Prison (壁屋監獄), Tai Lam Correctional Institution (大欖懲教所) and Ma Hang Prison (馬坑監獄).

Sha Tsui Correctional Institution (沙咀懲教所) is a minimum-security institution for young male offenders (年青男罪犯) only.

Lo Wu Correctional Institution (羅湖懲教所) comprises one minimum-security wing for female adults whereas Lai King Correctional Institution (勵敬懲教所) is a minimum-security institution for young female aged between 14 and 21.

Reception Centre (收押所)

Lai Chi Kok Reception Centre (荔枝角收押所) is for persons awaiting court trial and newly-convicted persons pending classification and allocation to above institutions.

Drug Addiction Treatment (戒毒治療)

Drug addiction treatment means an alternative rehabilitation to imprisonment for the convicted drug addicts. Adult male drug abusers and young male drug abusers are housed in Hei Ling Chau Addiction Treatment Centre (喜靈洲戒毒所) and Lai Sun Correctional Institution (勵新懲教所) respectively. Female drug addicts are accommodated at Nei Kwo Correctional Institution (勵顧懲教所). The treatment programme usually lasts for 2 to 12 months with emphasis on disciplined conduct and physical activities as the therapy.

Psychiatric Centre (精神病治療中心)

Siu Lam Psychiatric Centre (小欖精神病治療中心) was established to provide psychiatric treatment for the criminally insane (精神失常刑事罪犯), dangerous and violent persons in custody. Moreover, the visiting psychiatrists of Hospital Authority (醫院管理局) also provide psychiatric assessments for the courts which will consider the psychiatric assessments before sentencing.

Industries and Vocational Training (工業及職業訓練)

Despite the reality that prisoners are deprived of freedom while in jail, they are offered industries and vocational training for two main purposes: (a) to maintain prison stability by keeping the prisoners purposely and gainfully occupied; and (b) to equip the prisoners with industrial skills and vocational training so as to enhance their employability.

Supervision Service (監管服務)

The rehabilitation programme continues even though the prisoners are discharged. The following categories of people will receive the statutory supervision and continuous care and guidance from CSD officers: (a) young inmates (青少年在囚人士); (b) persons released from training centre, detention centre, rehabilitation centre and drug addiction treatment centre; and (c) persons released under various schemes such as Release Under Supervision Scheme, Pre-release Employment Scheme, Post-release Supervision of Prisoners Scheme, Conditional Release Scheme, and Supervision After Release Scheme.

3 half-way houses (中途宿舍) provide accommodation to the discharged young inmates and drug addicts, who will be under CSD officers' regular contacts and supervision.

Welfare and Counselling Services (福利及輔導服務)

Rehabilitation officers provide assistance and guidance to prisoners and inmates who are in custody or on remand so as to help them solve their personal problems (e.g. family problems) and cope with difficulties arising from detention.

Psychological Services (心理服務)

Psychological services aim at improving the psychological well-being of inmates and prisoners in order to help them change their offending behaviour.

Education (教育)

Young inmates are encouraged to take up local and international public examinations and to

participate in self-study course or distance learning at tertiary level. This enables them to improve their academic standards and facilitates their future re-integration into the community. Through these supports, some inmates were conferred university degrees even at master level.

Religious Services (宗教服務)

Religious services are also made available to prisoners. Various volunteers and non-government organizations also organize a wide range of spiritual and social services for the prisoners.

Visiting Justices (巡獄太平紳士)

Two Justices of Peace (太平紳士) will pay regular visits to each institution. It is incumbent upon the visiting Justices to investigate the complaints made by persons in custody, inspect diets and examine buildings and accommodation facilities.

Up-to-date policy (與時並進政策)

To maintain a healthy environment, CSD actively promotes anti-smoking policy and no smoking culture. Tung Tau Correctional Institution (東頭懲教所) was designated as the first “no Smoking Correctional Facility” (無煙懲教設施) in 2013.

Conclusion (總結)

Prisons are traditionally seen as dreadful and isolated zones. As a result, our understanding about prisons and prisoners may be outdated. It is hoped that the above summary will help you better understand the different nature and significance of the modern correctional services delivered in Hong Kong.

Nothing shall constitute legal advice to any person by Messrs. Maurice WM Lee Solicitors (Tel: (852) 2537 5833) (Website: www.wmleehk.com)

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