

CSD's latest arrangements in light of epidemic developments

The Correctional Services Department (CSD) said today (April 21) that it has successfully contained the further spread of COVID-19 in correctional institutions by adopting various anti-epidemic measures over the past few weeks, including conducting daily rapid antigen tests, reducing the flow of people and contacts in correctional institutions, and isolating the persons in custody (PICs) who have tested positive for COVID-19 and their close contact groups. The number of confirmed cases of PICs has dropped from a daily average of over 140 persons during the peak period (February 28 to March 6) to a daily average of about five persons in the past seven days. Currently, about 90 PICs who tested positive for COVID-19 are undergoing isolation and treatment, and a cumulative total of about 3,410 PICs have recovered.

Although the number of confirmed cases in correctional institutions has substantially dropped, it is still necessary for the CSD to take measures to control the flow of people and reduce the risk of infection in view of the considerable number of infection cases detected in the community and the risk of a rebound of the epidemic situation in correctional institutions. To strike a balance between infection control and the rehabilitation needs of PICs, the CSD has decided to gradually relax the social visit arrangements and implement the following new measures from April 25 to May 8: (i) remand PICs are allowed to receive two social visits only per week and only one visitor is allowed during each visit; (ii) convicted PICs are allowed to receive two social visits only per month and only two visitors are allowed during each visit; (iii) visitors are required to conduct a rapid antigen test by themselves with a negative result on the day of the visit, and declare the test result in a health declaration form upon arrival at the correctional institutions; and (iv) save for exempted persons, visitors are required to follow the dosage schedule for the Vaccine Pass issued by the Government to present the corresponding vaccination record and/or relevant proof of recovery or infection for Vaccine Pass purposes, as well as use the "LeaveHomeSafe" mobile app to register before being allowed to enter the correctional institutions for visits (for details of the dosage schedule for the Vaccine Pass, please refer to the government website at www.coronavirus.gov.hk/pdf/vp_t1_ENG.pdf). The above visit arrangements may be subject to change according to the epidemic developments in correctional institutions and visitors should pay attention to the announcements by the CSD and the departmental website.

Visitors should also note that all PICs testing positive for COVID-19 and their close contact groups are not allowed to receive visits as they are subject to isolation for treatment and observation. If PICs are not allowed to receive visits due to the above reasons during the period, they will be allowed to receive approved hand-in articles on one occasion. For the types and maximum quantities of the approved hand-in articles, please refer to the

CSD website. Registered users of the HKCSD Mobile App may use the app to enquire about whether individual PICs are allowed to receive visits. Visitors may also call the staff of the Rehabilitation Unit or visit room of the respective correctional institutions (please refer to the departmental website for the telephone numbers) or the CSD hotline 2511 3511 in advance to enquire about the visit status of individual PICs.

Moreover, the CSD will maintain the official visit service on a limited basis during the period. Visitors are required to make reservations through the Official Visit e-booking Service and receive a confirmation of the application, as well as to follow arrangements (iii) and (iv) as mentioned above in order to enter the correctional institutions for visits.