



SINGAPORE PRISON SERVICE

CORRECTIONS SINGAPORE PRISON SERVICE | ANNUAL REPORT 2014



# CORRECTIONS

A Journey

ANNUAL REPORT 2014



SINGAPORE PRISON SERVICE



## Vision

As Captains of Lives, we inspire everyone, at every chance, towards a society without re-offending.

## Mission

As a correctional agency, we enforce secure custody of offenders and rehabilitate them, for a safe Singapore.

**Rehab** is a commitment to our programmes and services within the system to support inmates who have proven that they have the inherent desire to change.

**Renew** is a commitment an inmate makes to change his / her life for the better. Looking beyond their imprisonment, they demonstrate a willingness and desire to renew their lives.

**Restart** is a commitment to garner the support of the community. Through the CARE Network, our offenders are given opportunities to restart their lives.

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What a year 2014 had been!

The Singapore Prison Service identity as a correctional agency was cemented in 2014 with the amendments to the Prisons Act which gave us the role to supervise persons released from prisons under the Mandatory Aftercare Scheme. With this change, our responsibilities extended beyond the prison walls. Thus, the Community Corrections Command was set up so that we could better walk with them as they set foot outside the prisons in their journey of rehabilitation.

2014 will also be remembered as the year the enhanced drug rehabilitation regime commenced, where greater differentiation is made between drug inmates with different needs, so that more targeted programmes are applied for greater effectiveness. In particular, the Community Rehabilitation Centre commenced operation, where younger, lower risk drug offenders are rehabilitated in a more community-based setting more suited for their needs.

Promoting community involvement continued to be of great priority under the auspices of the CARE Network. Of particular significance was the launch of the Development Framework for Offender Rehabilitation Personnel, which will go a long way towards lifting the level of

professionalism and effectiveness of our partners and volunteers.

In the area of international collaboration, we hosted for the first time the regional Reintegration Puzzle Conference, through which we drew together more than 280 participants from eight countries, including professionals, partners and volunteers from Singapore, in a time of mutual sharing, learning and inspiration.

As expansive as we were in 2014 in reaching out beyond the prison walls, development within the prisons to deepen our capabilities continued unabated. The Inspectorate and Review Division was set up to more systematically identify the risk areas for more effective management. Technological advancement was also evident from the e-Letters trial and the introduction of GPS-based electronic monitoring tags.

2014 was a great start for our Five-Year Plan, auguring well for our future as a technologically-driven prison system supporting more targeted regimes and greater community involvement. So, onward Captains of Lives!

**SOH WAI WAH**

Commissioner of Prisons  
Singapore Prison Service

**2014 was a great start for our Five-Year Plan, auguring well for our future as a **technologically-driven prison system** supporting more targeted regimes and greater community involvement. So, onward Captains of Lives!**





COMMISSIONER OF PRISONS  
SOH WAI WAH



DEPUTY COMMISSIONER OF PRISONS / CHIEF OF STAFF  
DESMOND CHIN KIM THAM



DIRECTOR, OPERATIONS  
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DIRECTOR, COMMUNITY CORRECTIONS COMMAND  
MATTHEW WEE YIK KEONG



COMMANDER, OPERATIONS & SECURITY COMMAND  
CHEW CHWEE LEONG VINCENT



# CORRECTIONS

Criminal justice systems around the world have undergone a series of prison reforms – from improving the living conditions of inmates and building more prisons to cope with overcrowding, to developing programmes and treatments to help inmates change their criminal behaviour through evidence-based interventions, and preparing them for their eventual return to the community.

We have long moved away from viewing prisons as mere instruments of society's retributive vengeance to seeing them also as places to facilitate rehabilitation directed at changing offenders, thereby preventing future criminal behaviour. Clearly, locking inmates up and throwing away the keys will not achieve the primary function of prisons, which is to ensure public safety by reducing crime through the prevention of re-offending<sup>1</sup>.

Recent research has shown that drug and mental health treatment, job skills training, and behavioural interventions delivered in the community were more effective than those offered behind bars. By keeping individuals in the community and offering supervision, interventions, and services that are responsive to their risks and needs to prevent re-offending, community supervision helped to improve public safety in the USA<sup>2</sup>. Defendants and offenders who are not incarcerated are able to remain with their families and support systems while maintaining educational and employment opportunities. Participating in programmes in the community thus allows offenders to receive interventions within the natural context of their lives, as opposed to the unnatural setting of a prison. The effectiveness of a gradual supervised release into the community has also been observed in Canada, with offenders who completed their sentences on parole four times less likely to be re-admitted on a federal sentence (two years and more) compared to offenders released on warrant expiry<sup>3</sup>.



**So, what is a correctional agency?  
Apart from operating the prisons, a  
correctional agency also manages other  
aspects of the criminal justice system,  
including probation and parole.**

With the evolution of societies, social reactions to criminal behaviour and attitudes towards the social reintegration of offenders, more systematic approaches to corrections are being developed. Increasingly, criminal justice systems are reducing their reliance on institutional corrections (i.e. incarceration in prisons) and reconsidering the role of community-based corrections, which encompasses probation, parole, and pre-trial supervision.

## SPS, A CORRECTIONAL AGENCY

So, what is a correctional agency? At the most basic level, it is one which supervises people under the authority of the criminal justice system, including those who are behind bars and those who are not. Apart from operating the prisons, a correctional agency also manages other aspects of the criminal justice system, including probation and parole.

In this regard, SPS has actually been executing the functions of a correctional agency for a long time. In 1985, SPS introduced the Work Release Scheme, which allowed suitable inmates to be granted leave from prison for employment. Subsequently, other Community Based Programmes such as the Halfway House and the Home Detention Schemes were introduced, allowing more inmates to serve the tail end of their sentences in the community under supervision so as to facilitate their gradual reintegration back into society.

SPS's involvement in the supervision of offenders after they have completed their time in prison has also been expanding in recent years. Since November 2012, under the Enhanced Supervision Scheme, SPS has been collaborating with the

Central Narcotics Bureau in the supervision and support of drug offenders with higher likelihoods of re-offending after they leave prisons. Also, in what was undoubtedly a key milestone in SPS's development into a correctional agency, the Prisons Act was amended in 2014 to introduce, among other things,



## FEATURE

the Conditional Remission System (CRS) and Mandatory Aftercare Scheme (MAS). These extended SPS's powers and responsibilities beyond prison walls.

Under CRS, the one-third remission which most inmates are eligible for is no longer given unconditionally. Instead, offenders are expected to adhere to the basic condition of not being sentenced to imprisonment for a new offence during the remaining remission period. If an offender does re-offend and is sentenced to a new term of imprisonment, the remainder of his remission period may be added onto the new sentence. For higher risk offenders, the introduction of MAS allows them to be supported with a structured aftercare regime that provides enhanced community support, counselling and case management with tight supervision for up to two years to facilitate their reintegration.

Recent developments have seen SPS involved even in the management of offenders who are sentenced to spend minimal, or sometimes not any, time in custody. Taking cognisance of the disruption that incarceration may cause to the lives of offenders, the Day Reporting Order (DRO) and Community Rehabilitation Centre (CRC) allow lower risk and less serious offenders to be duly punished and rehabilitated in the community while not overly disrupting their daily lives.

Introduced in 2011, DRO requires offenders who have committed less serious crimes to report to SPS regularly and be electronically monitored for a period of not more than one year. These offenders may also be required to undergo programmes to address their risks and needs. Operationalised in May 2014, CRC similarly allows suitable young drug offenders to receive interventions to address their drug use in a

supervised environment while continuing with their education or employment.

## CONCLUSION

Ensuring the safe and secure custody of inmates as well as facilitating their rehabilitation have been, and will continue to be, key tenets of SPS's work. However, recent developments have seen SPS extending these duties beyond prison walls and into the community as well. As part of SPS's continued efforts and commitment to strengthen aftercare supervision and support, the Community Corrections Command (COMC) was established on 1 August 2014.

Indeed, SPS has moved away from being just a prison service, and has developed into a correctional agency. Let us continue to strive for operational excellence so as to forge ahead in corrections and work towards our Mission and Vision.

<sup>1</sup> A. MacCormick. (1950). *The Prison's Role in Crime Prevention*. *Journal of Criminal Law and Criminology*, 41(1).

<sup>2</sup> A. Petteruti, N. Walsh & T. Velazquez. (2009). *Pruning Prisons: How Cutting Corrections Can Save Money and Protect Public Safety*, Washington, D.C.: Justice Policy Institute.

<sup>3</sup> R. Collette. (2006). *International Trends in Community Corrections: What about Parole? An Overview of Community Corrections in China and Canada*. *International Centre for Criminal Law Reform and Criminal Justice Policy (ICCLR) Programme: Implementing International Standards in Criminal Justice in China*, supported by the Canadian International Development Agency.

"As Senior Reintegration Officers, we need to balance risk management, security and supervision, while also providing support, advice, referrals and assistance for offenders who are out in the community. This is necessary for the successful reintegration of offenders back into society and to break the cycle of re-offending."

ASP 2 Vinod Jenardhanan,  
Senior Reintegration Officer,  
SPCSC, COMC



"By taking care of the 'heartware' of our officers through their well-being, we can be assured that their 'hardware' and what they can offer to the department will be strengthened and enhanced, as we continue to advance in corrections."

MX 11A Joannah Teo,  
Manager Developmental  
Services, Staff Well-Being,  
SDD



## HEARING FROM OUR CAPTAINS OF LIVES

# HOW DO YOU THINK YOUR WORK CONTRIBUTE TO SPS'S ROLE AS A CORRECTIONAL AGENCY?

"Having the right staff in place is key as we forge ahead in corrections. This could be where our strengths lie, where our potential can be developed, or where we can best contribute or learn as a team."

Supt 1 Chan Ching Ching,  
Assistant Commander Staff  
Development, Cluster B



"It is pertinent to maintain secure custody and reduce offenders' risk of re-offending via evidence-based correctional practices, which includes both operational processes and interventions. Our officers and specialists have a shared vision, and we work together to provide the environment necessary to become effective agents of change."

HTS 12 Sharifah Nur Bte Syed  
Aidrus Alhadad,  
Psychologist, Psychological  
Programme Development, PCRD



"Daily operational routines ensure the safe custody of offenders and the security of prisons. The programmes introduced thus far have enhanced our efforts to rehabilitate and reintegrate the offenders. Operational work forms the core of correctional work, so that our rehabilitation and reintegration efforts can have a bigger impact on offenders and ex-offenders."

SCW 2 Abdullah Bin Eskak,  
Chief Personal Supervisor,  
Institution A3, Cluster A

