

The CBS options include:

1. **Mandatory Treatment Order (MTO)** – Through the Institute of Mental Health, MTOs provide treatment for offenders suffering from psychiatric conditions that are susceptible to treatment.
2. **Community Service Order (CSO)** – CSOs can be imposed on offenders for reformation, and for them to make amends to the community by performing unpaid community service under the supervision of an authorised officer.
3. **Day Reporting Order (DRO)** – Administered by the Singapore Prison Service, DROs require an offender to report to a day reporting centre for monitoring, counselling, and to undergo rehabilitation programmes.
4. **Short Detention Order (SDO)** – An offender can be detained in prison for a period not exceeding 14 days.

## Community Resources/Agencies

The community agencies and resources that provide support to the CCS include:

- ✦ Community Rehabilitation and Support Services
- ✦ Family service centres
- ✦ Institute of Mental Health/Child Guidance Clinic
- ✦ Ministry of Social and Family Development
- ✦ National Addiction Management Services
- ✦ Prisons Family Resource Centre
- ✦ Sheltered homes & half-way houses
- ✦ Silver Ribbon Singapore
- ✦ Singapore Association of Mental Health
- ✦ WINGS Counselling Centre
- ✦ We Care Community Services



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### State Courts

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criminal  
JUSTICE DIVISION



# Community Court

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# Community Court

*“A justice system that enjoys the confidence of the public is one that pays proper heed to the needs of the community. As fundamental justice reforms have been institutionalised, the time is right for the establishment of a specialist court that is responsive to the needs of the community. A new Community Court will be established.”*

Former Chief Justice Chan Sek Keong  
15<sup>th</sup> Subordinate Courts Workplan, 18 May 2006

The Community Court which adopts a **problem-solving approach that combines criminal justice and community resources for a comprehensive response** was formed on 1 June 2006. In addition to the principles of **deterrence** and **retribution**, the Community Court is committed to the dual principles of **rehabilitation** and **prevention**.

Using a **non-traditional, multi-disciplinary team approach** to deal with offenders, the Community Court explores sentencing alternatives and community-based sanctions with in-court assessments. This promotes a **problem-solving** approach to the root causes of criminality. To this end, Community Court Judges, psychologists, and social workers collaborate with community agencies to develop **treatment plans** for offenders and **safety plans** for victims in order to reduce the offenders' chances of re-offending.

## Categories of Cases

The categories of cases that are heard in the Community Court are:

- ✦ cases involving offenders aged 16 to 18 years;
- ✦ cases involving offenders below 21 years old who have been accused of theft, violence, sex, gambling or drug related offences;
- ✦ selected cases involving offenders with mental disorders;
- ✦ attempted suicide cases;
- ✦ family violence cases;
- ✦ abuse and cruelty to animal cases;
- ✦ cases which impact race relations;
- ✦ selected cases involving accused persons who are 65 years old and above;
- ✦ selected cases involving accused persons with chronic addiction problems; and
- ✦ shop theft cases.

## Community Court Conference

During a pre-trial conference, or before sentencing or post-sentencing, the Community Court Judge may call for a Community Court Conference (CCC) to be held. The CCC will involve the families of the accused persons, victims in family violence cases, and the Defence Counsel, where appropriate. The CCC serves to achieve some of the following purposes:

- ✦ To assess the main cause for the accused person's repeat offending behaviour, e.g. the accused person has a history of previous convictions for shop theft and the present charge before the Community Court is for a similar offence;
- ✦ To explore with the accused person (and his family) the appropriate treatment plan to address the root causes of his offending behaviour in order to reduce his chances of re-offence;
- ✦ To provide immediate follow-up, emergency safety plans, and coordination of resources with the relevant agencies, e.g. the Ministry of Social and Family Development (MSF), Singapore Police Force, and family service centres for victims of family violence;
- ✦ To make pre-sentence and, if possible, post-sentence follow-up referrals with community agencies, MSF, and Singapore Prison Service, and to follow up on the cases to ensure that the most appropriate treatment and care plans for the offenders are in place to avoid re-offending;
- ✦ To liaise with resource agencies, e.g. Silver Ribbon Singapore, Centre for Enable Living, Community Rehabilitation and Support Services, etc., and follow up on each case to facilitate optimal rehabilitation;
- ✦ To provide clear information on Community Based Sentences to the accused persons and their families, e.g. the purposes and effects of the orders, consequences of not complying with the orders, and the Court's power to change or withdraw the orders.

## Community Court Secretariat

In order to provide a high level of integrated services, the Community Court is supported by a team of psychologists, social workers and other administrative staff in the assessment, referral, management and coordination of cases. The team is known as the Community Court Secretariat (CCS). Going beyond the traditional sentences of imprisonment, fines, and probation, the CCS engages community agencies in Singapore to provide rehabilitation services and treatment options for offenders. The CCS follows up on cases not just to monitor but to instill hope in the offenders and their families.

The CCS also works closely with the Defence Counsel to formulate non-traditional solutions to rehabilitation. Such plans look beyond sentencing and focus on treating the root causes of the accused persons' offending behaviour, and reducing their chances of re-offending.

## Community-Based Sentencing Options

Community-Based Sentencing (CBS) options have been introduced in the Criminal Procedure Code 2010 to provide greater flexibility in sentencing. The Courts are given more graduated sentencing options for minor offences. Many of these intermediate measures will be considered by the Community Court in appropriate cases.

Since January 2011, with the implementation of the CBS, the CCS has played a bigger role in the administration of criminal justice by engaging the community and serving the society. The CCS provides professional and administrative support to all criminal Courts in relation to the implementation and operation of CBS options. In this respect, the CCS also coordinates with government agencies such as MSF, Ministry of Home Affairs, Singapore Prison Service, and Institute of Mental Health to muster adequate community support and professional resources to implement the CBS options.

The State Courts are able to utilise the CBS options if legislative requirements are met. Where appropriate, CCCs can be arranged for any CBS case that is being dealt with in any criminal Court. If the CBS is successfully completed, the criminal record will be rendered spent, i.e. the offender is deemed to have no record of that conviction.