

Chapter 38

Justice – Community Rehabilitation of Adult Offenders

1.0 MAIN POINTS

This chapter describes our second follow-up of the Ministry of Justice's actions on the seven recommendations we made in our 2011 audit of its processes to rehabilitate adult offenders in the community. By October 2017, the Ministry implemented three recommendations and had more work to do on the remaining four recommendations.

The Ministry established processes to monitor rehabilitation programs and offenders' access to those programs. However, it continues to need to work on consistently following its case management policies (including completion of timely risk assessments and integrated case plans),¹ having sufficient contact with offenders, and preparing regular progress reports for offenders.

2.0 INTRODUCTION

We concluded that during 2010, the Ministry had, other than the matters reflected in the seven recommendations, adequate processes to rehabilitate adult offenders likely to repeat crimes (including serious or violent crimes) who were serving a community sentence in the Regina Qu'Appelle Region.² In 2013, the Ministry reorganized its eleven adult and youth community corrections regions into three regions—South, Central, and North. The Regina Qu'Appelle Region became part of the South Region. By 2013, the Ministry made progress but still had more work to do on all seven recommendations.³

To conduct this audit engagement, we followed the standards for assurance engagements published in the *CPA Canada Handbook – Assurance* (including CSAE 3001). To evaluate the Ministry's progress towards meeting our recommendations, we used the relevant criteria from the original audit. The Ministry's management agreed with the criteria in the original audit.

To carry out our audit, we interviewed Ministry staff, reviewed policies, and tested a sample of offender case files and evaluations of rehabilitation programs.

3.0 STATUS OF RECOMMENDATIONS

This section sets out each recommendation including the date on which the Standing Committee on Public Accounts agreed to the recommendation, the status of the recommendation at October 3, 2017, and the Ministry's actions up to that date. We found that the Ministry had implemented three recommendations and was making progress on implementing the remaining four recommendations.

¹ A documented strategy for managing the offender throughout the court ordered disposition(s).

² 2011 Report – Volume 1, Chapter 3.

³ 2013 Report – Volume 1, Chapter 28.



3.1 Compliance with Policies Inconsistent

We recommended that the Ministry of Justice (formerly the Ministry of Corrections, Public Safety and Policing) consistently follow its policy requiring risk assessments and case plans for adult offenders to be completed within six weeks of starting community sentences. (2011 Report – Volume 1; Public Accounts Committee agreement September 23, 2014)

Status – Not Implemented

We recommended that the Ministry of Justice (formerly the Ministry of Corrections, Public Safety and Policing) consistently follow its policy to use integrated case plans for adult offenders that coordinate rehabilitation strategies between the community and provincial correctional centres. (2011 Report – Volume 1; Public Accounts Committee agreement September 23, 2014)

Status – Not Implemented

We recommended that the Ministry of Justice (formerly the Ministry of Corrections, Public Safety and Policing) consistently follow its supervision policy for high-risk adult offenders in the community to have required contacts with probation officers or alternatives. (2011 Report – Volume 1; Public Accounts Committee agreement September 23, 2014)

Status – Not Implemented

We recommended that the Ministry of Justice (formerly the Ministry of Corrections, Public Safety and Policing) consistently follow its case management policy to prepare regular progress reports on adult offenders in the community. (2011 Report – Volume 1; Public Accounts Committee agreement September 23, 2014)

Status – Not Implemented

The Ministry did not consistently follow its policies surrounding offender case management and supervision.

During 2017, the Ministry reviewed a sample of offender case files in the Regina Community Corrections Office for compliance with its case management policy. It continued to find non-compliance with its policies, including:

- About half of the case files that it reviewed did not have risk assessments and case plans completed within six weeks of offenders starting their community sentences, as expected. Management explained that its policy to use integrated case plans between custody and the community is not adhered to in the Regina Community Corrections Office.

If the Ministry does not complete risk assessments and case plans for offenders in a timely manner, offender rehabilitation may not be effective. Since many offenders move back and forth between the community and correctional centres, the use of

integrated case plans would support a more effective and efficient rehabilitation process.

- About a quarter of the case files that it reviewed did not comply with its supervision policy.

The Ministry needs to have sufficient contact with offenders for effective rehabilitation and evaluation of offenders' progress in response to rehabilitation programs.

- Over three-quarters of the case files that it reviewed did not have regular progress reports completed.

Without regular progress reports, it is difficult for the Ministry to evaluate the effectiveness of rehabilitation programs and determine if offenders require adjustments to their programming.

Ministry management noted that many staff had expressed concern about their workload demands and the difficulty associated with meeting Ministry policy requirements. To address this concern, the Ministry expects to start assessing staff workload demands by March 31, 2018.

At October 2017, the Ministry acknowledged that it still had work to do on achieving compliance with its policies and had the following initiatives underway to improve compliance with policies:

- Establishing a new service delivery model that includes training in assessment and case management processes.
- Implementing the Ministry's IT system (Criminal Justice Information Management System [CJIMS]) to provide supervisors with the ability to monitor the completion of offender risk assessments and case plans.
- Developing pilot projects in two regions of the province to allow for better coordination between correctional centres and the community. One project is the Serious Violent Offender Response Initiative⁴ and the other project involves having offenders with community orders managed on one caseload with a dedicated probation officer.
- Establishing an agreement in 2014 between the Ministry and the RCMP to contribute toward decreasing re-offence rates and ensuring offender accountability (including joint planning and supervision for chronic and serious violent offenders).

⁴ The Serious Violent Offender Response (SVOR) Initiative is operational in North Battleford and Saskatoon. This initiative includes the development of a new case management system allowing for key information about each SVOR offender to be posted and used by all front-line partners (e.g., police, corrections staff, mental health partners)—creating a simple way to share community safety plans and relapse prevention plans, but most importantly to add notes from visits with the offender or alerts for concerns.



3.2 Offender Access to Programs Monitored

We recommended that the Ministry of Justice (formerly the Ministry of Corrections, Public Safety and Policing) monitor whether high-risk adult offenders have timely access to priority community rehabilitation programs. (2011 Report – Volume 1; Public Accounts Committee agreement September 23, 2014)

Status – Implemented

The Ministry monitors whether high-risk adult offenders have timely access to priority community rehabilitation programs.

The Ministry provides various rehabilitation programs for high-risk adult offenders, such as programs specific to violence prevention and sexual offenders. Programming is scheduled and available throughout the year. When determining program placement, program staff and probation officers screen and prioritize offenders identified in need of rehabilitation programming.

We found that the Ministry tracks offenders' participation in rehabilitation programs. Program staff use CJIMS to update offenders' progress within the programs. For all five high-risk adult offenders we tested, program staff documented sufficient information about the offenders' progress (e.g., attendance, completion of homework, general participation) in CJIMS within a reasonable timeframe.

3.3 Improved Monitoring of Rehabilitation Strategies

We recommended that the Ministry of Justice (formerly the Ministry of Corrections, Public Safety and Policing) use criteria to select rehabilitation services provided by other agencies and evaluate if high-risk adult offenders in the community benefit from these services. (2011 Report – Volume 1; Public Accounts Committee agreement September 23, 2014)

Status – Implemented

We recommended that the Ministry of Justice (formerly the Ministry of Corrections, Public Safety and Policing) establish a policy to evaluate rehabilitation programs for high-risk adult offenders in the community. (2011 Report – Volume 1; Public Accounts Committee agreement September 23, 2014)

Status – Implemented

The Ministry established a process to evaluate rehabilitation services provided by other agencies before it selects and provides funding to those agencies. In addition, it introduced a new policy that requires the Ministry to evaluate programs using evidence-based best practices and established research methodologies. The Ministry had several program evaluations underway.

We found that the Ministry uses a standard template to evaluate rehabilitation services provided by other agencies (community-based organizations). It must complete this template before selecting and providing funding to those agencies.

For all three evaluations we tested, the Ministry sufficiently evaluated various aspects of those agencies using the template. Each of those evaluations considered whether the rehabilitation services aligned with program objectives, the continued demand for the services, and whether there was satisfactory program performance in previous years.

The Ministry's new 2016 program evaluation policy establishes general practices for evaluating offender rehabilitation programs. While the Ministry did not complete any evaluations by October 2017, we found that the Ministry had several program evaluations underway (e.g., domestic violence programming, gender responsive practices⁵ for working with female high-risk offenders). As of October 2017, the Ministry completed extensive research surrounding these programs and documented an understanding of the various programs in the province, including those in the South Region. To complete these evaluations, we saw that the Ministry plans to compare existing programs to best practices and develop work plans to adjust current programming as necessary.

⁵ Gender responsive practices involves recognizing that gender makes a difference when working with female offenders and providing services which are responsive to the unique strengths and challenges that female offenders present.

