

Chapter 25

Corrections and Policing—Community Rehabilitation of Adult Offenders

1.0 MAIN POINTS

As of June 2020, the Ministry of Corrections and Policing continued to improve processes relating to the community rehabilitation of adult offenders. It implemented two of the four remaining recommendations first made in 2011, and made progress on the other two.

The Ministry successfully implemented two initiatives in the Saskatchewan South Region since 2017 that improve key information sharing with probation officers and the staff at correctional facilities involved in developing and implementing integrated case plans for rehabilitating offenders.¹ It implemented these initiatives in various communities over the past several years. Having readily accessible information helps make the content of case plans more comprehensive to support more effective community rehabilitation.

The Ministry revised its policies addressing offender risk assessments, case management, and supervision in 2019. In addition, it established a process to actively monitor staff compliance with the revised policies. As of June 2020, it was refining this process to include the use of compliance targets.

In 2019, it implemented and began monitoring compliance with the revised supervision policy. However, the COVID-19 pandemic delayed the Ministry's plans to implement the revised risk assessment and case management policies. It expects to implement these revised policies, along with processes to monitor staff compliance, in fall 2020.

Implementing and monitoring staff compliance with revised policies decreases the risk of the Ministry not effectively rehabilitating offenders.

2.0 INTRODUCTION

The Ministry of Corrections and Policing is responsible for promoting safe and secure communities, and providing supervision and rehabilitation services for adult offenders.^{2,3} The Ministry uses a variety of programs and services to rehabilitate adult offenders in its correctional centres and in communities. The Ministry's Community Corrections Branch is responsible for about 2,300 offenders in the South Region on a day-to-day basis.⁴ Providing offenders with rehabilitation services that meet their needs at the right time helps decrease the likelihood of offenders committing further offences.

¹ The Ministry manages Saskatchewan as three regions—South, Central, and North.

² *Ministry of Corrections and Policing and Ministry of Justice and Attorney General Plan for 2020-21*, p.3.

³ *Correctional Services Act, 2012*, s. 4(1)(d).

⁴ Adapted from information provided by the Ministry of Corrections and Policing.



2.1 Focus of Follow-Up Audit

This chapter describes our third follow-up audit of management's actions on the recommendations we made in 2011.

Our *2011 Report – Volume 1*, Chapter 3, 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.⁵ By October 2017, the Ministry implemented three of seven recommendations.⁶

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

In performing this follow-up audit, we examined policies, training materials, as well as agendas from relevant meetings (e.g., Workload Review Governance Committee). We also interviewed relevant Ministry staff and tested a sample of compliance audits the Ministry conducted in relation to its revised supervision policy.

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 June 30, 2020, and the Ministry's actions up to that date.

3.1 Policies Revised with Implementation and Compliance Monitoring Underway

We recommended the Ministry of Corrections and Policing (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, p. 37, Recommendation 1; Public Accounts Committee agreement September 23, 2014)

Status—Partially Implemented

We recommended the Ministry of Corrections and Policing (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 officer or alternates. (2011 Report – Volume 1, p. 38, Recommendation 3; Public Accounts Committee agreement September 23, 2014)

Status—Intent of Recommendation Implemented

⁵ 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.

⁶ *2017 Report – Volume 2, Chapter 38, p. 269-273* (16 October 2020).

We recommended the Ministry of Corrections and Policing (formerly the Ministry of Corrections, Public Safety and Policing) consistently follow its case management policy to prepare regular progress reports for adult offenders in the community. (2011 Report – Volume 1, p. 40, Recommendation 6; Public Accounts Committee agreement September 23, 2014)

Status—Partially Implemented

The Ministry of Corrections and Policing revised its policies surrounding offender risk assessments, case management, and supervision in 2019. It also established clear processes to determine and monitor staff compliance with the revised policies. However, while it had implemented and was actively monitoring compliance with the supervision policy, it had not yet implemented the revised risk assessment and case management policies.

The Ministry revised its risk assessment and case management policy requirements based on its review of standards used in Manitoba and Ontario. The Ministry consulted with various criminal justice stakeholders (e.g., provincial court judges, Assistant Deputy Attorney General) when considering revisions to its supervision policy. **Figure 1** describes the Ministry's 2019 policy adjustments made primarily to address staff workloads. In our 2017 audit, Ministry management noted many staff expressed concerns about their workload demands and the difficulty associated with meeting Ministry policy requirements.

Figure 1—Key Policy Revisions Made in 2019

Risk Assessment and Case Management Policies

- The policies require staff to complete risk assessments and case plans for offenders within 12 weeks of offenders starting their community sentences. The previous policy requirement was within six weeks.
- The case management policy sets out the requirements associated with progress reports—staff must document progress in the case plan every 120 days. This is unchanged from the previous policy.

Supervision Policy

- The policy requires staff to supervise offenders based upon the results of their risk assessments (e.g., high-risk offenders require two face-to-face contacts per month, while low-risk offenders require one face-to-face contact every two months). The previous policy required weekly face-to-face contact for serious violent offenders requiring high levels of supervision and did not require supervision for low risk offenders unless deemed necessary by a probation officer.

Source: Adapted from discussions with Ministry staff and review of Ministry policies.

Ministry management approved the revised policies and trained staff on their implementation. They approved the supervision policy in October 2019, and trained staff in fall 2019. Ministry management approved the revised risk assessment and case management policies in December 2019, and trained staff throughout the winter and spring 2020.

The Ministry implemented the revised supervision policy in December 2019, and as of June 2020, had not yet implemented the revised risk assessment and case management policies. The declaration of the COVID-19 pandemic in the spring of 2020 delayed the Ministry's implementation of these policies—it plans to begin their implementation in October 2020.



We found the Ministry also established well-defined processes to check whether staff complied with the revised policies (i.e., compliance audits), and consider root causes for identified non-compliance with policy (e.g., non-response from offenders), if any. It expects its Workload Review Governance Committee to receive the results of completed audits.⁷ It plans to do these compliance audits at 30-, 60-, 90-, and 180-day intervals following implementation of a policy and bi-annually afterwards.

For two Ministry compliance audits of the revised supervision policy we tested, the Ministry completed the audits as and when expected. It communicated the audit results to the Workload Review Governance Committee within a reasonable period (i.e., 23 and 29 days) after the audits were done. These two audits found 47% and 57% (respectively) of staff complied with the revised supervision policy. Each audit considered potential root causes for non-compliance (e.g., probation officer unable to attend scheduled meeting with offender due to bad weather or illness).

In response to the results of the supervision policy compliance audits, we observed the Workload Review Governance Committee in May 2020 considered setting target rates of staff compliance with the policy. The Ministry expects to establish targets before starting its bi-annual compliance audits of this policy. The Ministry also indicated it expects to establish compliance targets for its risk assessment and case management policies through review of its compliance audit results following implementation of these revised policies.

The establishment of associated compliance targets would help the Ministry take timely and appropriate corrective action where staff do not follow policies to the extent expected.

Delays in implementing or monitoring the use of its revised risk assessment and case plan policies increases the risk of the Ministry not effectively rehabilitating offenders.

3.2 Initiatives Implemented to Promote Integrated Case Planning

We recommended the Ministry of Corrections and Policing (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, p. 37, Recommendation 2; Public Accounts Committee agreement September 23, 2014)

Status—Implemented

Since 2017, the Ministry of Corrections and Policing implemented two initiatives in the South Region—the Serious Violent Offender Response Initiative (SVOR) and the In-Reach Initiative—to promote and support the use of integrated case plans for adult offenders through information sharing among stakeholders.

⁷ The Ministry's Workload Review Governance Committee consists of the following members: Assistant Deputy Minister of Custody Supervision and Rehabilitation Services; Executive Director of Community Corrections; Executive Director of Adult Custody Services; Executive Director of Offender Services; Director, Community Corrections; Director, Operational Services; Director, Offender Programs and Chief Clinical Director; and Director, Integrated Community Corrections. Its primary mandate is to oversee the Ministry's workload review project focused on improving client service delivery, the organizational environment for employees, and reducing client risk to reoffend.

The SVOR Initiative supports the use of integrated case plans for serious violent offenders transitioning to a community sentence. It is a multi-stakeholder partnership that includes Public Prosecutions, Adult Corrections, federal and municipal police services, and the Canadian Mental Health Association (Saskatchewan Division). Its main objective is to reduce violent crimes in Saskatchewan by having all partners work together to develop integrated case plans and share information about offenders. The Ministry implemented this Initiative in Saskatoon and North Battleford in 2013, with expanded implementation in Regina and three northern communities (i.e., Pelican Narrows, Sandy Bay, and Deschambault Lake) in 2018. The Ministry did not have specific plans to further expand this Initiative beyond the existing communities.

The In-Reach Initiative is for offenders in custody with probation orders (i.e., community orders) following their incarceration.⁸ Its goal is to prioritize the completion of offender risk assessments and support integrated case management. Under this Initiative, the Ministry manages offenders with community orders using a dedicated probation officer. The probation officer is to complete offender risk assessments and case plans while communicating with the correctional facilities and considering information prepared by staff at the facilities (e.g., correctional logs, risk assessments, case plans). The Ministry implemented this Initiative in Saskatoon in 2017 and expanded to Regina and Prince Albert in 2019. The Ministry did not have specific plans to further expand this Initiative beyond the existing communities.

We found the Ministry maintains case plan documentation at a community and facility level on its IT system (Criminal Justice Information Management System); it makes this information available to the probation officers and the staff at correctional facilities.

For five offenders in the SVOR Initiative we tested, files showed each offender had an integrated case plan that included details about partners involved, partner contacts with the offender, actions or tasks required, interventions taken, and progress of offender rehabilitation.

For nine offenders in the In-Reach Initiative we tested, files showed probation officers considered information prepared by staff at the correctional facilities (e.g., correctional logs, risk assessments, case plans) and information from other sources (e.g., police services, support workers) when completing offender risk assessments and case plans.

Offenders may move back and forth between the community and correctional centres (e.g., due to breached court orders or further offences). Enabling information sharing to support the creation of integrated case plans for offenders makes the content of plans more comprehensive and supports a more effective rehabilitation process.

⁸ A probation order (i.e., community order) is a punishment given out as part of a sentence which means that instead of imprisoning a person convicted of a crime, a judge will order that the person report to a probation officer regularly and according to a set schedule.

