

Chapter 20 Corrections, Policing and Public Safety—Rehabilitating Adult Inmates

1.0 MAIN POINTS

Research indicates that inmates receiving treatment in rehabilitation programs have lower re-offending rates than offenders who do not receive treatment.¹ Rehabilitated inmates gain more opportunities to return to work and contribute to their community.

Under *The Correctional Services Act, 2012*, the Ministry of Corrections, Policing and Public Safety is responsible for providing correctional services and programs, including inmate rehabilitation. The Ministry is responsible for having effective processes to rehabilitate sentenced adult inmates within provincial correctional centres.

Since our 2018 follow-up audit, the Ministry continued to improve its processes to rehabilitate adult inmates. It implemented one of the three remaining recommendations first made in 2008, and made good progress on the other two.

During 2020–21, the Ministry improved its reporting to better monitor the number of inmates accessing and waitlisted for planned rehabilitation programs, and to track re-offence rates of sentenced inmates.

However, as at March 2021, while the Ministry evaluated some of its rehabilitation programs in prior years, it has not yet used the information from improved reporting to monitor and evaluate whether its rehabilitation programs help reduce recidivism. Such evaluations would help the Ministry know which programs successfully rehabilitate inmates, and identify adjustments.

Since our 2018 follow-up audit, the Ministry generally improved the frequency in which it assessed sentenced inmates' rehabilitation needs; however, it continues to inconsistently complete these assessments within the expected 28 days of admission into custody timeframe. Our testing of 30 assessments identified five assessments occurring between seven and 61 days later than expected. Timely assessment of inmate rehabilitation needs allows inmates to receive rehabilitation programming promptly to address their needs before their release back into the community.

2.0 INTRODUCTION

2.1 Inmate Rehabilitation Programs

The Ministry of Corrections, Policing and Public Safety operates the provincial correctional facilities housing inmates sentenced for terms of less than two years. The average inmate sentence is 10.8 months, while the average time served is about 7.2 months after reductions for good behaviour. About one-third of inmates have a further probationary term in the community.

¹ www.publicsafety.gc.ca/cnt/rsrscs/pblctns/prnpls-rhbltn/index-en.aspx (7 April 2021).



As shown in **Figure 1**, approximately 13,000 inmates are admitted to custody in Saskatchewan's correctional facilities annually, which has remained steady over the last several years.

Figure 1—Total Custodial Admissions to Saskatchewan Correctional Facilities, 2014–15 to 2018–19

	2014–15	2015–16	2016–17	2017–18	2018–19
Total custodial admissions ^A	12,193	13,186	13,392	13,304	13,160

Source: www150.statcan.gc.ca/t1/tbl1/en/tv.action?pid=3510001401 (10 March 2021). The figure above includes the most current statistics available from Statistics Canada as of March 2021.

^A Total custodial admissions are totals of sentenced (including intermittent sentences), remand and other custodial status admissions.

As shown in **Figure 2**, the average daily number of sentenced inmates in Saskatchewan's correctional facilities was 940 during 2018–19.

Figure 2— Overall Sentenced Inmates and Annual Average Daily Counts in Saskatchewan Correctional Facilities, 2014–15 to 2018–19

	2014–15	2015–16	2016–17	2017–18	2018–19
Annual average daily count ^A	1,702	1,812	1,900	1,884	1,923
Sentenced	1,038	1,043	1,015	966	940

Source: www150.statcan.gc.ca/t1/tbl1/en/tv.action?pid=3510015401 (27 April 2021). The figure above includes the most current statistics available from Statistics Canada as of April 2021.

^A The annual average daily count is the yearly average total of persons held in custody under sentence, remand or who are otherwise legally required to be in custody at the time of the counts.

The Ministry, through its Custody, Supervision and Rehabilitation Services Division, designs and provides programs aimed at reducing re-offending and improving offenders' ability to reintegrate into their communities.² Types of programs provided include addictions, education, employment/work, and cognitive behavioural programs. In addition to assessed rehabilitation needs of inmates, programs vary by location and resources available.

To reduce recidivism risk and enhance public safety, the Ministry must address the needs of sentenced inmates. Effective rehabilitation programming helps meet inmate needs and better prepare them for re-integration into the community.

2.2 Focus of Follow-Up Audit

This chapter describes our fifth follow-up audit of the Ministry of Corrections, Policing and Public Safety's actions on the recommendations we made in 2008 about its processes to rehabilitate adult inmates. In our *2008 Report – Volume 1*, Chapter 2, we identified areas where the Ministry could improve its processes to rehabilitate adult inmates in provincial corrections centres. We made four recommendations.

As reported in our four subsequent follow-ups of the Ministry's actions on these recommendations, the Ministry implemented one of the four recommendations by

² Ministry of Corrections and Policing, *Annual Report for 2019–20*, p. 5.

March 31, 2010 (our first follow-up) and made some progress on the three other recommendations thereafter up to October 2018 (our fourth follow-up).³

To conduct this audit engagement, 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's management agreed with the criteria in the original audit.

In this audit, we interviewed staff responsible for the rehabilitation of adult inmates. To test key aspects of the rehabilitation processes, we reviewed policies, tested a sample of inmate case files, performed analytics on inmate data, and reviewed monitoring and evaluation 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 March 31, 2021, and the Ministry's actions up to that date.

3.1 Better Monitoring of Rehabilitation Programs and Evaluation Needed

We recommended the Ministry of Corrections, Policing and Public Safety monitor the proportion of inmates accessing planned rehabilitation programs before the inmates are released into the community and enhance access to rehabilitation if required. (2008 Report – Volume 1, p. 28, Recommendation 5; Public Accounts Committee agreement, August 28, 2008)

Status—Intent of Recommendation Implemented

We recommended the Ministry of Corrections, Policing and Public Safety monitor re-offending rates in relation to rehabilitation programs to better evaluate its rehabilitation of inmates. (2008 Report – Volume 1, p. 28, Recommendation 6; Public Accounts Committee agreement, August 28, 2008)

Status—Partially Implemented

The Ministry of Corrections, Policing and Public Safety routinely uses information about the number of inmates accessing, or waitlisted for programs, in each correctional facility to identify potential program enhancements. In addition, the Ministry monitors inmate re-offence rates, but does not yet evaluate whether rehabilitation programs help reduce re-offence rates.

The Ministry maintains key information about inmates in its IT system—Criminal Justice Information Management System. During 2020–21, the Ministry completed additional

³ Past follow-up audit reports include: 2018 Report – Volume 2, Chapter 30, pp. 221–224; 2015 Report – Volume 2, Chapter 47, pp. 327–329; 2011 Report – Volume 2, Chapter 4, pp. 93–97; 2010 Report – Volume 1, Chapter 4, pp. 33–37.



report development to help staff monitor and track inmate rehabilitation program participation.

For example in the summer of 2020, the Ministry created an *Adult Custody Program List* report that includes detailed inmate data (e.g., risk assessments), rehabilitation programming (current and past programs), and program status (e.g., already completed, participated in, waitlisted). It also created a monthly *Program Inventory and Participant Record* report. This report includes information to monitor inmate participation in programs on a monthly and annual basis.

Also, in fall 2020, the Ministry developed an *Adult Custody Program Evaluation* report and an *Adult Custody Recidivism* report. These reports include summary information about inmate recidivism (re-offending rates by year) and inmate risk levels of re-offending (high, medium or low).

Our testing found the information in the *Adult Custody Program List* and *Program Inventory and Participant Record* reports complete and accurate (that is, agreed to information in Criminal Justice Information Management System). Our review of two 2020–21 reports found they included sufficient information (e.g., waitlist data [by program type and facility], program staffing, and COVID-19 related implications) to enable the Ministry to determine where sentenced inmates need more programming access. That is, help it determine where demand for specific programming exceeds available programming.

We noted the Ministry monitors waitlists and program staffing on adult correctional facilities—rehabilitation programs approximately every quarter, and gives senior management written reports about the results. We also noted the Ministry’s fall 2020 rehabilitation program report included statistics on inmate re-offence rates and inter-jurisdictional comparisons for some of its adult rehabilitation programs (e.g., cognitive behavioural programs).

In addition, we found the following: the Ministry used information in the *Adult Custody Program List* and *Program Inventory and Participant Record* reports to identify needed enhancements to program access. For example, it identified large wait lists and demand for its *Addictions—Dedicated Substance Abuse Treatment Unit* program and, during 2020–21, expanded access to this program to the Pine Grove Correctional Centre. Previously, the Ministry only offered this program to the Regina Correctional Centre. The Ministry indicated it plans to expand access to include the Prince Albert and Saskatoon Correctional Centres in 2021–22.

While the Ministry evaluated some of its rehabilitation programs in prior years, as at March 2021, it has not yet used the information from its improved reporting to monitor and evaluate whether its rehabilitation programs help reduce recidivism. The Ministry hired a new position during fall 2020 responsible for program evaluation and program audits. The Ministry plans to annually assess and prioritize its rehabilitation programs for evaluation to determine whether the programs reduce inmate re-offence rates.

Without evaluating correctional centre rehabilitation program success in reducing inmate re-offences, the risk of rehabilitation programs not meeting inmates’ needs increases, and reduces inmates’ successful re-entry into society.

3.2 Completion of Inmate Assessments Improving

We recommended the Ministry of Corrections, Policing and Public Safety consistently comply with its policies to assess inmates' needs (primary and secondary) and plan relevant programs. (2008 Report – Volume 1, p. 28, Recommendation 3; Public Accounts Committee agreement August 28, 2008)

Status—Partially Implemented

While the Ministry of Corrections, Policing and Public Safety consistently assesses individual inmate needs and uses assessment results to identify relevant rehabilitation programming, it sometimes encountered delays in completing its sentenced inmates' needs assessments within 28 days of admission into custody.

The Ministry's case management policy requires correctional staff to complete an assessment of a sentenced inmate's risks and needs within 28 days of their admission to a secure custody facility. It makes case managers within each correctional facility responsible for the completion of these assessments.

During 2020–21, the Ministry gave correctional staff the ability to generate reports to monitor dates staff completed inmate needs assessments and offender programming status. Also, several times during 2019–20 and 2020–21 at each correctional centre, the Ministry provided correctional staff (e.g., case managers and supervisors) with case management training.⁴ This training supports the completion of quality and timely inmates' needs assessments. The Ministry was unable to provide updated training in 2020–21 in all correctional centres, due to restrictions resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Our testing of 30 inmate case files found correctional staff completed inmate assessments and planned for rehabilitation programs consistent with those assessments. These results were consistent with our analysis of the *Adult Custody Program List*. We found almost all of the 700 sentenced inmates listed completed, were participating in, or were waitlisted for rehabilitation programming at March 2021. The Ministry had reasonable explanations as to why a few sentenced inmates (i.e., five of 700) were not participating in rehabilitation programming.

However, for five of 30 inmate case files we tested, correctional staff did not complete inmate assessments within the policy expectation of 28 days of an inmate's admission into custody. For these five inmates, correctional staff completed assessments between seven and 61 days later than the policy expected. The expected length of stay for these five inmates was between 222 to 726 days. Our current testing results show correctional staff more often completed assessments within expected timeframes than in 2018. Our 2018 follow-up audit found for nine of 30 inmates' case files tested, correctional staff completed assessments later than the policy expected.

Management told us, in some cases, the COVID-19 pandemic impacted the Ministry's ability to complete timely inmate assessments. For example, during the pandemic, the Ministry moved inmates into different units within the correctional centre because of a lack of availability of beds for sentenced inmates. This delayed assigning case managers.

⁴ Supervisors are responsible for reviewing case plans completed by case managers within their unit.



However, for the noted five case files tested, we found the pandemic was not the only factor to cause delays. Ministry management indicated that for three of those five inmates, the supervisor was new and only recently received coaching on assessment timelines and case management due dates.

Not assessing sentenced inmates' rehabilitation needs within a reasonable timeframe from their admission delays their participation in rehabilitation programming designed to reduce inmate re-offences and address their needs.