

Chapter 13

Corrections, Policing and Public Safety—Community Rehabilitation of Adult Offenders

1.0 MAIN POINTS

By August 2022, the Ministry of Corrections, Policing and Public Safety improved its processes to provide community rehabilitation to adult offenders by implementing two outstanding recommendations.

The Ministry:

- Monitored compliance with expected timelines stated in its revised risk assessment and case management policies (eight weeks and four weeks respectively)
- Conducted compliance audits to verify probation officers completed progress reports for offenders every 120 days after the offender's initial case plan was complete

Also, the Ministry approved the following completion rate targets for adult offender risk assessment, case plans, and progress reports:

- 65% of offender risk assessments, case plans, and progress reports will be completed within policy timelines by March 31, 2023
- 75% of offender risk assessments, case plans, and progress reports will be completed within policy timelines by March 31, 2024

By July 2022, the Ministry achieved a province-wide risk assessment completion rate of 78% and a province-wide case plan completion rate for adult offenders of 77%.

The Ministry reported on achievement of these targets to senior management and front-line staff (e.g., probation officers and their supervisors) every two months.

Establishing targets and monitoring achievement of timelines set in policies (e.g., for risk assessments, case plans and progress reports) can assist the Ministry in addressing delays in a timely manner and formally tracking its progress toward reducing offender recidivism.

2.0 INTRODUCTION

2.1 Background

The Ministry of Corrections, Policing and Public Safety is responsible for the provision of correctional services and programs including the supervision and rehabilitation of adult



offenders in the community.¹ At July 1, 2022, there were approximately 830 adult offenders serving community sentences in the South Region.²

Through its Custody, Supervision and Rehabilitation Services Division, the Ministry provides offender care, control, and supervision for offenders in the community and in correctional centres. It utilizes case management and supervision to support adult offenders serving a sentence in the community.³

Providing offenders with rehabilitation services that meet their needs at the right time helps decrease the likelihood of offenders committing further offences.

2.2 Focus of Follow-Up Audit

This chapter describes our fourth 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. By June 2020, the Ministry implemented five of the seven recommendations.⁴

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 agreed with the criteria in the original audit.

In performing this follow-up audit, we examined policies, minutes and agendas from relevant meetings. We observed the Ministry's processes to obtain and to analyze relevant data, interviewed key Ministry staff, and tested a sample of offender files for staff completion of offenders' risk assessments, case plans and progress reports to assess alignment with Ministry policies.

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 recommendations, the status of the recommendations at August 31, 2022, and the Ministry's actions up to that date.

¹ *The Correctional Services Act, 2012*, sections 4(2)(d) and 27(1)(a).

² Our *2011 Report – Volume 1*, Chapter 3, focused on rehabilitating adult offenders likely to repeat crimes who were serving a community sentence in the Regina Qu'Appelle Region. In 2013, the Ministry reorganized its 11 adult and youth community corrections regions into three regions—South, Central, and North. The Regina Qu'Appelle Region became part of the South Region.

³ *The Correctional Services Act, 2012*, section 84.

⁴ *2011 Report – Volume 1, Chapter 3*, pp. 29–43 and *2020 Report – Volume 2, Chapter 25*, pp. 207–211.

3.1 Approved Risk Assessment and Case Plan Policies Monitored for Compliance

We recommended the Ministry of Corrections, Policing and Public Safety (formerly the Ministry of Corrections 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—Intent of Recommendation Implemented

The Ministry of Corrections, Policing, and Public Safety updated and monitored compliance with its risk assessment and case management policies for adult offenders.

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 policy.

The Ministry approved its revised risk assessment and case management policies effective October 2020. It also further clarified its case management policy in July 2022, informing staff that progress reports are due within 120 days from each case plan completion date, until probation order expiry. **Figure 1** depicts changes to the Ministry's policies.

Figure 1—Key Policy Revisions Approved in October 2020

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. That is, eight weeks to complete risk assessments and four weeks to complete case plans. The previous policy requirement was within six weeks.
- The case management policy sets out requirements associated with progress reports—staff must document progress in the case plan every 120 days, which begins to count from the date of completing the initial case plan. This is unchanged from the previous expectation.

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

We tested 30 offender files and found supervisors monitored whether probation officers completed case plans within four weeks of completing risk assessments. We found:

- Four of 15 offender files had risk assessments completed outside the eight-week timeframe outlined in policy. Most staff completed offender risk assessments within six months (93% of files tested).
- Six of 15 offender files had case plans completed outside the four-week timeframe outlined in policy. Overall, staff completed all case plans we tested within six months.

We reviewed evidence (e.g., emails, information from the Ministry's IT system, and meeting minutes) of staff discussing rationale for why case plans were outstanding or completed outside policy timelines. Rationale for incomplete assessments and case plans included, amongst others, difficulty in establishing contact with offenders. We found the process to monitor the timely completion of risk assessments and case plans, including having discussions at the local level to address root causes, reasonable.



Monitoring for timely completion of risk assessments and case plans for offenders helps support an effective offender rehabilitation process.

3.2 Regular Progress Reported

We recommended the Ministry of Corrections, Policing and Public Safety (formerly the Ministry of Corrections 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—Implemented

The Ministry of Corrections, Policing and Public Safety management performed monthly audits assessing staff compliance with its case management policy, and approved completion rate targets for risk assessments, case plans, and progress reports.

We found the Ministry had established, well-defined processes to check whether staff complied with revised policies (i.e., monthly compliance audits), and considered root causes for identified policy non-compliance as mentioned in **Section 3.1**.

For two Ministry compliance audits we tested, the Ministry evaluated whether staff completed progress reports for offenders in accordance with its policy (i.e., every 120 days from initial case plan completion date).

We also found Ministry staff appropriately communicated policy compliance results (e.g., number of risk assessments completed within policy, over policy timelines) to senior management, regional staff and supervisors every two months.

In July 2022, the Ministry established and approved completion rate targets for risk assessments, case plans, and progress reports. The Ministry appropriately consulted with federal, provincial, and territorial partners in March 2022 to establish reasonable targets consistent with other jurisdictions. The approved targets include:

- 65% of risk assessments, case plans, and progress reports will be completed within policy timelines by March 31, 2023
- 75% of risk assessments, case plans, and progress reports will be completed within policy timelines by March 31, 2024

By July 2022, the Ministry achieved a province-wide risk assessment completion rate of 78% (South Region: 74%) and province-wide case plan completion rate for adult offenders of 77% (South Region: 74%). It also achieved a provincial completion rate for progress reports of 24% (South Region: 31%) for adult offenders.

Completion rates for progress reports are lower than for case plans and risk assessments because the case management process must occur sequentially (risk assessment, case plan, progress report). Probation officers complete case plans and risk assessments at the beginning of an offender's sentence, while they complete progress reports throughout the

sentence. Therefore, there is increased risk of an offender losing contact with their probation officer the longer the offender is under supervision.

Establishing targets to achieve timelines set in policies can assist the Ministry in formally tracking progress toward achieving adult community rehabilitation objectives (i.e., reduce offender recidivism). Setting and reporting on targets can assist the Ministry to measure how fast it achieves its policy objectives, identify root causes of non-compliance, and determine the extent of resources necessary to achieve its objectives.

