

Chapter 16

Corrections, Policing and Public Safety—Rehabilitating Adult Inmates

1.0 MAIN POINTS

Research indicates inmates participating in rehabilitation programs have lower re-offending rates than inmates who do not receive treatment or participate in programs.¹ Rehabilitated inmates have more opportunities to return to work and contribute to their community upon release.

Under *The Correctional Services Act, 2012*, the Ministry of Corrections, Policing and Public Safety is responsible for providing correctional services and programs, including adult inmate rehabilitation programming.

By March 2024, the Ministry completed the majority of risk assessments of sentenced inmates and their case plans within required timeframes. It also developed a process to monitor the status of inmates' risk assessments and case plans weekly to support follow-up with frontline case managers where completion was not done timely.

Timely determination of inmates' needs and case plans helps the Ministry to identify inmates with the highest risk in re-offending and get them into rehabilitation programming promptly to address their needs before their release back into the community.

The Ministry also developed a strategy to evaluate the outcomes of its rehabilitation programs based on inmate recidivism rates. The Ministry evaluated five programs in 2022. We found the Ministry appropriately utilized program results to improve its delivery of rehabilitative programming. For example, while the Ministry aims to provide programming to all inmates, we found the Ministry prioritized inmates with the highest risk of re-offending to attend rehabilitation programs with high success rates.

Conducting program evaluations and analysis of recidivism can help the Ministry determine successful rehabilitation programs and make adjustments, if necessary.

2.0 INTRODUCTION

2.1 Background

The Ministry of Corrections, Policing and Public Safety operates the provincial correctional facilities housing inmates sentenced for terms of less than two years. In 2022–23, the average sentence length for inmates on the daily count was 12.5 months, while the average time served was about 8.3 months after reductions for good behaviour.

As shown in **Figure 1**, approximately 12,000 inmates were admitted to custody in Saskatchewan correctional facilities in each of the last couple years.

¹ www.publicsafety.qc.ca/cnt/rsrscs/pblctns/prnpls-rhbltn/index-en.aspx (25 April 2024).

**Figure 1—Total Custodial Admissions in Saskatchewan Correctional Facilities, 2018–23**

	2018–19	2019–20	2020–21	2021–22	2022–23
Total custodial admissions ^A	13,160	12,779	10,726	11,773	12,106

Source: As of April 2024, www150.statcan.gc.ca/t1/tbl1/en/tv.action?pid=3510001401 (25 April 2024).

^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 834 during 2022–23.

Figure 2—Sentenced (Overall) as a Percentage of Annual Average Daily Counts in Saskatchewan Correctional Facilities, 2018–23

	2018–19	2019–20 ^B	2020–21 ^B	2021–22	2022–23
Annual average daily count ^A	1,923	1,948	1,689	1,924	2,046
Sentenced	940	990	738	864	834
% on sentence	49%	51%	44%	45%	41%

Source: As of April 2024, www150.statcan.gc.ca/t1/tbl1/en/tv.action?pid=3510015401 (25 April 2024).

^A 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.

^B The Ministry of Corrections, Policing and Public Safety indicated the COVID-19 pandemic impacted annual average daily counts for 2019–20 and 2020–21.

The Ministry, through its two Divisions—Custody Services and Supervision and Rehabilitation Services—designs and delivers programs for sentenced inmates aimed at reducing re-offending and reintegration into their communities, such as addictions support, employment, and cognitive behavioural programs.

To reduce the risk of recidivism 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 reintegrating into the community.

2.2 Focus of Follow-Up Audit

This chapter describes our sixth follow-up audit of the Ministry of Corrections, Policing and Public Safety's actions on the recommendations we made in 2008.

We assessed the Ministry's processes to rehabilitate sentenced adult inmates within provincial correctional centres as of January 31, 2008, and made four recommendations.² By March 2021, the Ministry implemented two recommendations and made progress on the other two recommendations.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. Ministry management agreed with the criteria in the original audit.

² *2008 Report – Volume 1, Chapter 2*, pp. 26–35.

³ *2010 Report – Volume 1, Chapter 4*, pp. 33–37; *2011 Report – Volume 2, Chapter 4*, pp. 93–97; *2015 Report – Volume 2, Chapter 47*, pp. 327–329; *2018 Report – Volume 2, Chapter 30*, pp. 221–224; and *2021 Report – Volume 2, Chapter 20*, pp. 171–176.

To conduct this follow-up audit, we interviewed staff responsible for rehabilitation of adult inmates. To test key aspects of the rehabilitation processes, we reviewed policies, assessed reports, analyzed inmate data, and reviewed the Ministry's 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, 2024, and the Ministry of Corrections, Policing and Public Safety's actions up to that date.

3.1 Improved Completion of Inmate Needs Assessments and Case Plans

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—Implemented

The Ministry of Corrections, Policing and Public Safety improved its processes to assess inmates' needs and used these assessments to plan relevant programs (i.e., set case plans) as required by its policy.

The Ministry updated its case management policy in 2023. The policy requires correctional staff to complete an assessment of a sentenced inmate's risks and needs within 35 days of their admission to a secure custody facility.⁴ The policy designates case managers at each correctional facility responsible for completing these needs assessments. Relevant programming (e.g., addictions support, employment) does not begin until a case manager completes a risk assessment and case plan; high-risk offenders with an earlier release date compared to other offenders get programming first.

If case management activities cannot be completed within the required 35 days, the Ministry's updated policy requires staff to document reasons (e.g., due to safety or security concerns, inmate transferred).

In fall 2022, the Ministry implemented weekly case-management dashboard reporting and provided training to frontline staff, managers, and directors on monitoring the status of case management activities (e.g., completed, upcoming or overdue risk assessments and case plans).

We analyzed the Ministry's weekly case-management dashboard reports and found a 24% decline in the number of inmates without or having incomplete risk assessments and case plans between 2023 and 2024 (see **Figure 3**). This improvement shows staff are using the

⁴ The Ministry of Corrections, Policing and Public Safety's previous policy required staff to complete inmate risk assessments within 28 days of their custodial sentence, but this extended to 35 days during the COVID-19 pandemic. The Ministry continues to use 35 days for all inmate risk assessments to accommodate any public health advisories or other disease outbreaks (if any).



dashboard reports to follow up on inmates' outstanding risk assessments and case plans. As noted in **Figure 2**, the average daily number of sentenced inmates in Saskatchewan's correctional facilities was 834 during 2022–23, meaning roughly 80% of sentenced inmates had completed case plans.

Figure 3—Number of Inmates Without Risk Assessments or Case Plans at 2023 and 2024

Category	As of February 27, 2023	As of February 26, 2024
Cases with expired or no risk assessments	89	70
Cases with current risk assessments but no current case plan	73	53
Total	162	123

Source: Adapted from the Ministry of Corrections, Policing and Public Safety's records.

Completing inmates' risk assessments enables the Ministry to identify inmates with the highest risk of re-offending. Completing case management activities within required timeframes enables inmates to access and participate in timely rehabilitation programming, which can help reduce risks to re-offend, and contribute to safer communities.

3.2 Rehabilitation Programs and Re-offending Rates Monitored

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—Implemented

The Ministry of Corrections, Policing and Public Safety monitored inmate re-offence rates and evaluated whether its rehabilitation programs helped reduce recidivism.

In 2020, the Ministry created a new role—Director, Program Integrity and Evaluation—responsible for program evaluation and program audits. In 2022–23, the Director along with other Ministry staff developed the Offender Services Program Evaluation Strategy. The Strategy prioritized evaluating Ministry-delivered rehabilitation programs (e.g., cognitive behavioural, addictions support, employment programs) in its correctional facilities over programs delivered in collaboration with other partners such as the Ministry of Education. The Ministry plans to set criteria to evaluate these other programs (e.g., cultural, spiritual) targeting educational and employment skills, depending on available resources in 2024–25.

By March 2024, the Ministry evaluated five programs at its Saskatoon Correctional Centre (based on inmate data from 2001–19) and found program results showed evidence of recidivism reduction for all five programs (see **Figure 4**). Results from these evaluations would also be relevant for the Ministry's other correctional centres with similar programming. The Ministry made no changes to the five rehabilitation programs as a result of this evaluation.

Figure 4—Ministry Evaluation of its Inmate Rehabilitation Programs

Program	Description	Results ^A
A) Cognitive-Behavioural		
i. Thinking for a Change	A 25-session skill-based program primarily addressing pro-criminal attitude and antisocial pattern risk/needs. Focuses on cognitive restructuring and social skill interventions to reduce risky choices.	48% of offenders who completed this program returned to custody compared to 63% who were waitlisted and did not attend
ii. Living Without Violence	A 10-session program intended to help participants distinguish between anger and violence, to analyze the sources of anger, and identify non-violent ways of expressing or resolving anger	61% of offenders who completed the program returned to custody compared to 68% who were waitlisted and did not attend. (26% of offenders classified as high risk to violently re-offend who completed the program violently re-offended and returned to custody compared to 50% who were waitlisted and did not attend)
B) Addictions Support		
iii. Offender Substance Abuse Prevention Program	A 26-session cognitive-behavioural substance abuse intervention program to address substance abuse	63% of offenders who completed the program returned to custody compared to 67% who were waitlisted and did not attend.
iv. Urban Camp Addictions Program	A four-week recovery program focusing on addictions and the effects of chemical dependency, recovery planning, and relapse prevention strategies	49% of offenders who completed the program returned to custody compared to 61% who were waitlisted and did not attend
C) Employment		
v. Employment Essentials Program	A 15-session program to strengthen employment readiness and provide training activities for offenders while incarcerated	53% of offenders who completed the program returned to custody compared to 55% who were waitlisted and did not attend

Source: *Programming and Recidivism at Saskatoon Correctional Center: A Review and Findings from an Outcome Evaluation (2022)*.

^A Return to custody means inmates who re-offended and were sentenced within two years of their release.

The Ministry's evaluation also found offenders are less likely to return to custody (46%) if they completed any three of the five evaluated programs listed in **Figure 4** during their sentence compared to 68% of those who did not attend similar programming.

We found the Ministry appropriately utilized program results to improve rehabilitative programming processes. For example, the Ministry prioritized inmates with the highest risk of re-offending to attend rehabilitation programs, such as its Thinking for a Change program.

Conducting program evaluations and analysis of recidivism in its correctional facilities can help the Ministry determine successful rehabilitation programs and make adjustments, if necessary.

