

CORRECTIONS COVID-19 RESPONSE

Issue

The Minister may receive questions on Corrections response to the COVID-19 pandemic and actions taken to mitigate risks to staff and inmates.

Key Messages

- Corrections is working closely with Health and Social Services to assess procedures within the facilities and adjust operations as necessary to ensure the safety and wellbeing of both staff and inmates.
- All facilities have pandemic plans and there are regular meetings set up with medical officials to review corrections operating procedures and align them with best practices.
- The Director of Corrections has regular teleconferences with Federal and Provincial Corrections counterparts including Corrections Service Canada and heads of corrections from provincial governments who are discussing best practices for mitigating exposure to staff and inmates.
- Facility management is regularly communicating with staff and inmates on operational changes and hygiene etiquette.

Current Status

Reducing Inmates in Custody

- The Department of Justice has been actively exploring options available to reduce the number of inmates within NWT correctional facilities in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. This has included investigating opportunities to grant temporary absences for releasing inmates on a case by case and risk assessed basis. As of May 7, 2020 a total of 42 temporary absences have been processed where inmates have less than 90 days remaining on their sentence and 16 have been approved.
- Housing is taken into consideration as part of the temporary absence review process. The Corrections Service will not release an individual on a temporary absence without an appropriate housing plan being in place to support their release.

Inmate Care and Wellness

- All inmates entering NWT Correctional facilities are required to be medically screened. Screening procedures have been bolstered due to COVID-19 and include:
 - A COVID-19 specific screening questionnaire
 - Temperature check (as part of regular medical screening)
 - In the event an inmate is symptomatic they are isolated in identified cells within the facilities and COVID-19 testing is arranged in conjunction with health officials. To date all tests for COVID-19 have come back negative, and currently no tests are outstanding.

- Currently there is sufficient capacity within the facilities to allow each inmate their own cell.
- The Department has attempted to keep as many activities and programs running for inmates as safely possible. There has been curtailment and cancellation of some higher risk activities including personal visits and some programming that is delivered by outside agencies, as well as programming in the community. Program size has been reduced to ensure safe distancing practices are followed. Case management and counselling services also remain in place ensuring proper protocols are followed
- All contractors attending facilities are required to be screened before entry. At this time only essential contractors are permitted. Lawyers and Elder visits are assessed on a case by case basis. Personal visits in emergency circumstances are considered on a case by case basis, and would occur behind glass where available. PPE is utilized in all circumstances.
- The Department is setting up the ability for inmates to video conference with family members and friends, recognizing that personal contact is very important for healing. This was introduced at the NSCC on May 15, 2020 and other facilities will follow once dedicated internet connections are completed.
- Any resumption of services will be done in close consultation with the Office of the Chief Public Health Officer. Currently there is no timeline as to when in person visits will be re-established.

Staff Safety

- Procedures for staff have evolved over the course of the last few months as recommendations from health officials have changed and developed.
- Currently all persons are screened upon entry into the facility for COVID-19 symptoms. Staff who identify as having symptoms upon screening at the facility are requested to go home and contact Public Health.
- The Department continues to monitor risk factors in determining appropriate procedures for staff and inmates in conjunction with health officials.
- Currently NWT correctional facilities are adequately stocked with PPE. This is reviewed on a regular basis.
- As a proactive measure and in consultation with other correctional jurisdictions, the Department has procured a material type mask for staff and inmates to be worn voluntarily which is aligned with the Chief Public Health Officer's advice on reducing transmission of COVID-19. Proper PPE protocols remain in place where required. These masks do not take the place of the use of proper PPE.
- Regular communications are sent out to staff to advise of procedural changes and to ensure safe practices are highlighted. Occupational Health and Safety meetings are held on a monthly basis at all facilities and ensure engagement with committee members on updates specific to COVID-19 practices and protocols.

- Corrections has cancelled staff annual leave through June 2020 and are currently approving leave requests on a case by case basis. Currently staffing capacity has not been challenged due to self isolations requirements for facility staff.

Facility Operations

- Safety procedures have been put in place to ensure high contact points within the facilities are sanitized several times a day. Cleaning protocols have been bolstered across all facilities.
- All facilities have contingency plans should positive COVID-19 cases occur within the facilities. There are a variety of operational contingencies that can be put into place including:
 - Isolating inmates who are sick in designated areas within the facilities;
 - Closing and/or repurposing the smaller facilities
 - Redeploying facility staff
 - As a last resort and only in the case of severe staff shortages, lock downs would be considered. This would in part be needed for the safety of redeployed staff who may have limited security training.
 - Inmates who are symptomatic will be locked down and isolated outside the living units. They would still be offered daily showers and fresh air with appropriate personal protective equipment supplied. Corrections consults with the Office of the Chief Public Health Officer to determine the best courses of action for implementing isolation and maintaining inmate wellbeing.

Community Corrections

- Probation offices across the NWT are having clients report by telephone. Arrangements are flexible as not all clients have telephone services.
- One Staff member in each of the 3 regional offices are in place, maintaining an office presence to ensure responses to court are met without delay.
- Local RCMP detachments have been advised of this change in reporting and Probation Officers continue to liaise with police on any challenges.
- Regional Probation Managers are reviewing reporting requirements on an ongoing basis to ensure compliance with court orders.

Background

- Corrections began reviewing their pandemic plans and planning for the potential spread of COVID-19 in January 2020.
- The COVID-19 virus was first detected in Wuhan, China in December 2019.
- An outbreak was declared a Public Health Emergency of International Concern on January 3, 2020 by the World Health Organization (WHO).
- The COVID-19 virus was declared a pandemic by the WHO on March 11, 2020.

CORRECTIONS COVID-19 RESPONSE**ISSUE**

Changes in protocols, temporary cancellation and resumption of Corrections services were and continue to be completed in close consultation with the Office of the Chief Public Health Officer.

KEY MESSAGES

- Corrections is working closely with the Office of the Chief Public Health Officer to continuously assess procedures within the facilities and adjust operations as necessary to ensure the safety and wellbeing of both staff and inmates.
- The Director of Corrections has regular teleconferences with federal and provincial corrections counterparts on best practices for mitigating exposure to staff and inmates.
- Corrections has been actively exploring options available to reduce the number of inmates in NWT correctional facilities in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- In conjunction with Public Health, Corrections provided the Moderna Vaccine for all staff and inmates at NWT Correctional facilities between January 20-22, 2021. NSCC and FSCC received the vaccine on January 20, 2021. SMCC received the vaccine on January 22, 2021. The second dose will be administered between 28-42 days after the initial dose was provided.

CURRENT STATUS***Reducing the number of inmates in custody***

- Corrections has considered opportunities to grant temporary absences to inmates on a case-by-case and risk-assessed basis.
- Housing is taken into consideration as part of the temporary absence review process. The Corrections Service will not release an individual on a temporary absence without an appropriate housing plan in place to support their release.

Inmate care and wellness

- During admission screening procedures have been bolstered to include:
 - A COVID-19 specific screening questionnaire
 - If an inmate is symptomatic they are isolated in identified cells in facilities and COVID-19 testing is conducted by health service staff. To date all tests for COVID-19 have come back negative, and no tests are outstanding.
- Correctional facilities currently have sufficient capacity so each inmate can have their own cell.
- The Department continues to keep as many activities and programs running, however some higher risk activities have been cancelled to maintain the safety of inmates, including personal visits and some programming that is delivered by outside agencies, as well as programming in the community.

Staff Safety

- Staff who identify as having symptoms upon screening at the facility are requested to go home and contact Public Health.
- The Department continues to monitor risk factors in determining appropriate procedures for staff and inmates in conjunction with health officials.
- NWT correctional facilities are currently adequately stocked with personal protective equipment (PPE).
- As a proactive measure the Department has procured cloth masks that staff and inmates may wear voluntarily as per the Chief Public Health Officer's advice on reducing COVID-19 transmission. Proper PPE protocols remain in place where required and these masks do not replace the use of proper PPE.
- Regular communications are sent out to staff on procedural changes and safety practices. Occupational Health and Safety meetings are held at all facilities and ensure staff engagement with COVID-19 practices and protocols.
- Vacation leave for staff allows for a maximum total of 14 successive days off to ensure operational requirements can be met during the pandemic. This leave policy will remain in place until March 31, 2021, at which time the current COVID-19 landscape will factor into any increases. Vacation leave may be suspended at any time in line with the current COVID-19 situation in the NWT.

Facility Operations

- Facility management communicates regularly with staff and inmates on operational changes and hygiene etiquette.
- Cleaning protocols have been bolstered in all facilities with high contact points sanitized several times a day.

- All facilities have contingency plans in the event of a positive COVID-19 case in a correctional facility. Possible operational contingencies include:
 - Isolating inmates who are sick in designated areas within the facilities
 - Closing and/or repurposing smaller facilities
 - Redeploying facility staff
 - As a last resort and only in the case of severe staff shortages, lock downs would be considered. This would in part be needed for the safety of s 20(1)(e)
 - Any inmate who is symptomatic will be locked down and isolated outside the living units. They would still be offered daily showers and fresh air and ongoing consultation by Corrections with the Office of the Chief Public Health Officer would determine the best courses of action for implementing isolation and maintaining inmate wellbeing.

Community Corrections

- As of July 2020, probation offices have reopened for offenders to report in person with appropriate safety measures in place.

PERFORMANCE MEASURES

- As of January 18, 2021, 20 inmates have been tested for Covid-19. All tests have come back negative. There has been no case of COVID-19 in NWT correctional facilities.

BUDGET INFORMATION

To date, Corrections has spent approximately \$230,000 on COVID-19 related mitigation expenses including PPE and enhanced cleaning materials. These costs have been absorbed by Corrections existing budget allocations.

BACKGROUND

- Corrections began reviewing their pandemic plans and planning for the potential spread of COVID-19 in January 2020.
- In March 2020, the Department kept as many activities and programs running for inmates as safely possible though some were curtailed or cancelled for safety reasons including personal visits (in emergency situations only but video conferencing was made available), some programming delivered by outside agencies, and community programming. The number of participants in programs was reduced to ensure safe distancing. Case management and counseling services remained with proper protocols in place.

- Lawyers and Elder visits were assessed on a case by case basis with PPE used in all circumstances.
- In March 2020, probation offices were restricted from in person reporting by offenders, and the majority of probation staff worked from home. Reporting during this time occurred via telephone.

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- If an inmate is symptomatic they are isolated in identified cells in facilities and COVID-19 testing is conducted by health service staff. To date all tests for COVID-19 have come back negative, and no tests are outstanding.
- Correctional facilities currently have sufficient capacity so each inmate can have their own cell.
- In July 2020, personal visits and access to external programming resumed inmates. Safety measures and screening remain in place and are monitored.

Staff Safety

- Staff who identify as having symptoms upon screening at the facility are requested to go home and contact Public Health.
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- NWT correctional facilities are currently adequately stocked with personal protective equipment (PPE).
- As a proactive measure the Department has procured cloth masks that staff and inmates may wear voluntarily as per the Chief Public Health Officer's advice on reducing COVID-19 transmission. Proper PPE protocols remain in place where required and these masks do not replace the use of proper PPE.
- Regular communications are sent out to staff on procedural changes and safety practices. Occupational Health and Safety meetings are held at all facilities and ensure staff engagement with COVID-19 practices and protocols.
- In June 2020, vacation leave resumed for staff working in facilities and community corrections offices (vacation leave was suspended in March). Currently staffing capacity has not been challenged due to self-isolation requirements for facility staff. Vacation leave may be suspended at any time in line with the current COVID-19 situation in the NWT.

Facility Operations

- Cleaning protocols have been bolstered in all facilities with high contact points sanitized several times a day.
- All facilities have contingency plans in the event of a positive COVID-19 case in a correctional facility. Possible operational contingencies include:
 - Isolating inmates who are sick in designated areas within the facilities;
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- Any inmate who is symptomatic will be locked down and isolated outside the living units. They would still be offered daily showers and fresh air and ongoing consultation by Corrections with the Office of the Chief Public Health Officer would determine the best courses of action for implementing isolation and maintaining inmate wellbeing.

Community Corrections

- As of July 2020, probation offices have reopened for offenders to report in person with appropriate safety measures in place.

PERFORMANCE MEASURES

- As of September 8, 2020, 15 inmates have been tested for Covid-19. All tests have come back negative. There has been no case of COVID-19 in NWT correctional facilities.

BUDGET INFORMATION

To date, Corrections has spent approximately \$200,000 on COVID-19 related mitigation expenses including PPE and enhanced cleaning materials. These costs have been absorbed by Corrections existing budget allocations.

BACKGROUND

- Corrections began reviewing their pandemic plans and planning for the potential spread of COVID-19 in January 2020.
- In March 2020, the Department kept as many activities and programs running for inmates as safely possible though some were curtailed or cancelled for safety reasons including personal visits (in emergency situations only but video conferencing was made available), some programming delivered by outside agencies, and community programming. The number of participants in programs were reduced to ensure safe distancing. Case management and counselling services remained with proper protocols in place.
- Lawyers and Elder visits were assessed on a case by case basis with PPE used in all circumstances.
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MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLNESS: CORRECTIONS COUNSELLING AND PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES

Issue

The Corrections Service is responsible for the care of inmates during their incarceration. This includes offenders with mental health concerns or diagnosed illnesses.

Key Messages

- I know that many offenders have experienced trauma themselves and may have mental health or cognitive difficulties as a result.
- Mental health and counselling services are provided at all correctional facilities using a screening, assessment and referral process that is supportive of a continuum of care model. Services are delivered by psychologists, counsellors, traditional liaison officers, community volunteer organizations and agencies, Elders, and medical staff.
- In addition, correctional facilities offer evidence-based programming that address common factors that lead an offender to crime. Programs are delivered using a culturally appropriate lens and integrate Indigenous culture and traditions.
- The Department of Justice continues to work with the Department of Health and Social Services and local and regional providers on the continuity of mental health and addictions services for offenders.
- Counselling supports and psychology services continue to be offered to inmates during the COVID-19 pandemic. Elders visits to all facilities are available on a case by case basis for humanitarian and compassionate reasons during this time, and although AA and NA sessions will not be available in the community, in-facility sessions will be made available where possible.

Current Status

- Inmates in NWT correctional facilities who are unable to participate in criminogenic programming due to cognitive limitations may be considered for an alternative individual program on a case by case basis.
- Two mental health screening tools are used, one for men and one for women, as well as suicide screening tools for adults and youth to assist with referrals and the application of services for those in need.
- Corrections psychologists deliver expert clinical services and counselling supports to inmates. These services are available to inmates in facilities and to probation clients on an as needed basis.
- Counselling and psychological services are available as follows:
 - There are two dedicated psychologist positions at the North Slave Correctional Complex (NSCC). Two previous competitions have been

advertised and no successful candidates have been identified. As this is a hard to fill position at the NSCC a counsellor has been hired from May 11, 2020 to May 28, 2021 to provide services to both adult and youth at the NSCC on a daily basis. The Corrections Service is exploring options for filling the second position, including a mentorship program under a registered psychologist in the NWT to complete appropriate hours. This process has been used in the past to fill psychologist positions.

- One psychologist in Hay River provides services to the South Mackenzie Correctional Centre (SMCC), Fort Smith Correctional Complex (FSCC) and South Slave Regional Community Corrections office.
- The FSCC fulltime counsellor provides counselling services to the male and female inmates at the complex and to community clients as referred through the Fort Smith Community Corrections office.
- Corrections traditional and addictions counsellors help identify inmates' specific needs and work with case managers to ensure appropriate supports are made available. Traditional counsellors are employed at the SMCC and at the NSCC.
- Facilities involve Elders and volunteer services to provide traditional spiritual support, non-denominational faith based counselling, and supports to residential school survivors. Elders visit all facilities (for youth and adults).
- All facilities support Alcoholics and Narcotics Anonymous groups and sessions. Some of these are led by community volunteers, while others are organized and led by the inmates themselves.
- Corrections' staff working in facilities and probation offices receive training in Mental Health First Aid. This training helps staff recognize the signs and symptoms of common mental health problems, provide assistance and make referrals to ensure concerns are addressed with health professionals.
- Mental Health First Aid training is also being offered to inmates at the NSCC.
- Corrections staff have participated in a number of training sessions on trauma informed care since 2018 in Yellowknife and in Fort Smith provided by experts in the field. This training will continue within Corrections and is now part of the entry level training for new correctional officers.

Background

- Inmate mental health had been raised as an issue by the Office of the Auditor General in its 2015 audit report of NWT Corrections. Out of 14 recommendations made, one pertained to mental health.
- Our NWT Correctional facilities provide direct supervision of inmates as a key method to facilitate holistic healing in a safe, secure environment. Supports and services are available for inmates in the areas of education, training and counselling as well as for culturally appropriate spiritual support.

INMATES WITH COGNITIVE LIMITATIONS AND FETAL ALCOHOL SPECTRUM DISORDERS (FASD)

Issue

Members of the Legislative Assembly may have questions about programs and services for inmates with cognitive limitations and for those with FASD.

Key Messages

- I am aware that many people who come into contact with the criminal justice system have FASD or cognitive difficulties through adverse life experiences – be it as victims, witnesses, and/or offenders. These individuals require supports appropriate to their needs and circumstances.
- In corrections, the specific needs of each inmate/offender are identified on admission to custody or community corrections. These needs are reviewed throughout the period during which the individual is under the supervision of NWT Corrections.
- As of January 2020, NWT residents now have the ability to access FASD diagnostic services for the first time with the implementation of the Territorial Adult FASD Diagnosis and Support Program.
- However, an FASD or other medical diagnosis is not required for an offender with complex needs to access adapted services and supports in NWT Corrections.
- Inmates in NWT correctional facilities who are unable to participate in criminogenic programming due to cognitive limitations may be considered for an alternative individual program on a case by case basis.
- For offenders not yet sentenced, the NWT Wellness Court is an alternative to conventional court that focuses on the offender rather than the offence. It applies a model that seeks to address underlying issues of drug and alcohol addiction, mental health and cognitive challenges.

Current Status

- During the COVID-19 pandemic, correctional facilities remain as an essential service and counselling and program services remain available. Individual counselling sessions and program delivery class sizes have been reduced with safe distancing and PPE protocol in place.
- The NWT Corrections Service provides supports to inmates and offenders as a key method to facilitate holistic healing in a safe, secure environment and to improve functioning in daily life for those under its supervision. This includes the provision of supports and services in the areas of education, training and counselling, culturally appropriate spiritual support, and programming to address the common factors that lead an offender to crime.
- Corrections case management practices ensure that resources are used most effectively, including for those offenders with complex needs so that they can be

supported appropriately throughout their incarceration and eventual release from custody.

- NWT Corrections uses an inclusive approach and provides services and supports to offenders and inmates with cognitive difficulties and other complex needs on a case by case basis. Individuals with suspected FASD, but not necessarily diagnosed, would fall into this group.
- The NWT, as a small jurisdiction with limited resources, is unable to meet the specific needs of every offender with multiple complex needs - especially given the relatively short period of time served in custody by the majority of offenders.
- Corrections provides ongoing FASD awareness education to staff.
- See BN 36, *Corrections Counselling and Psychological Services* for details on mental health services across Corrections.

Process for obtaining an FASD diagnosis (HSS information)

- The process of diagnosing FASD involves a complex medical evaluation and neurodevelopmental assessment.
- The establishment of an FASD diagnosis is best practice; a diagnosis provides a mechanism for entry into intervention and support services. Assessment and diagnosis leads to a better understanding of both the individual's strengths and areas of deficit. This may assist those living with the disability in obtaining health, education, and vocational services tailored to their unique needs.
- As of January 2020, NWT residents now have the ability to access FASD diagnostic services for the first time with the implementation of the Territorial Adult FASD Diagnosis and Support Program.

Background

Yukon FASD Study

- In 2017 an FASD prevalence study was released that had been conducted of 80 adults involved with Yukon corrections, ages 18 to 40, over 17-months from May 2014 to September 2015.
- The Yukon study found that, of the sample of 80 individuals in the Corrections system, only 17.5% were formally diagnosed with FASD. Further significant rates of cognitive impairment, addiction and mental health issues were identified.

NWT Corrections Approach

- In 2011, the NWT Department of Justice examined the feasibility of conducting an FASD prevalence study in NWT Corrections. It was decided that a more effective approach is to move away from a specific focus on FASD to look at the needs of people who may live with FASD and other cognitive challenges affecting daily functioning. This removes the burden of having to secure a diagnosis under the fetal alcohol spectrum or another medically identified condition.

- Justice established a Functional Assessment committee tasked with identifying tools that determine the level of functioning of offenders related to social skills, daily living skills and basic indicators for mental capacity.
- This led to the piloting and implementation of mental health screening tools for men and women that are now used in all NWT correctional facilities.

CORRECTIONS PROGRAMS

Issue

The Minister may receive questions about correctional programming that is currently available in NWT correctional facilities and in community probation offices.

Key Messages

- The Department of Justice recognizes that to make a difference, corrections programming must address the root causes that lead an individual to crime. This is essential for successful offender rehabilitation and reintegration into their communities.
- All corrections programs support participants to become aware of the triggers that lead them to engage in unhealthy and unsafe behaviours. Information and tools are presented to support a change in participants' thoughts, values and behaviours in daily life – and thus reduce the risk they present to themselves and others.
- Corrections programs integrate Indigenous culture and traditions in the way they are delivered with the input of Elders, Traditional Liaison Officers and other Indigenous staff.
- Remanded inmates can access, on a voluntary basis, the same programs that are offered to sentenced inmates. Corrections continuously looks for opportunities to increase offender participation in programming. Remanded inmates frequently attend Court; therefore their voluntary participation in programs is hard to anticipate.

Current Status

- The Department continues to research, redesign and roll out programs that better address the large percentage of Indigenous offenders, respond to prevalent issues requiring intervention, and that take into account the average length of stay in custody. Through ongoing reviews, programs are revised as needed and staff are trained to deliver the modified programs.
- Program delivery schedules across Corrections are updated on a quarterly basis, based on the needs of the clients under supervision at that time.
 - Correctional Facilities: The Department has attempted to keep as many activities and programs running for inmates as safely possible during COVID-19. Suspensions to some higher risk activities including personal visits and some programming that is delivered by outside agencies, were lifted on July 08, 2020, recognizing the current COVID-19 situation within the NWT. Personal visitations for immediate family resumed and outside agencies were also permitted back into the facilities with the proper screening precautions being implemented to mitigate any potential risks. Programming in the community was also re-instated. Program size has been reduced to ensure safe distancing practices are followed. Case

management and counselling services at correctional facilities also remain in place ensuring proper protocols are followed.

- Probation Offices: Due to Covid-19, Probation Officers were ordered home to work remotely on March 19, 2020. As a result, all regularly delivered programming was suspended. Probation Services returned physically to their office spaces on July 14, 2020 and a resumption of program services will be done in close consultation with the Office of the Chief Public Health Officer.
- Community-based programs are used to facilitate inmate reintegration. In this way, inmates learn about, and are equipped to deal with, the day-to-day requirements of life outside of the facility. Such programs are an important part of release planning for all inmates.

Correctional Programs

- The Department delivers evidenced based core programs that target the most common factors that can lead an offender to crime ('criminogenic needs') and are designed to help inmates with shorter sentences, as well as those serving their sentence in the community. These programs are offered at all correctional facilities and regional probation offices:
 - *'Substance Abuse Management'* (or SAM) program – offered since 2016, to address addictions related needs of both male and female offenders;
 - *'Living Without Violence'* program – offered since 2017, to address the needs of male offenders with violence related offences;
 - *'Respectful Relationships'* program – offered since 2017, to address the needs of male offenders with domestic violence offences; and
 - *'Thinking Leads to Change'* program – implemented in November 2019, to address the criminal attitudes and behaviours of female offenders.
- The new *'Change Management Maintenance'* program aims to consolidate self-knowledge and personal change that offenders gained from participation in core programming. Change Management is being piloted in two facilities (NSCC and FSCC) and in the Yellowknife probation office.
- For sex offenders serving territorial sentences at the NSCC: a modified program is used that is more targeted to the relatively short average sentence length for, and needs of, this population in the NWT. The program runs for 9 weeks.
- The Correctional Service of Canada determines the risk level and programming needs of federal offenders. If required, NWT offenders serving federal sentences are transferred to federal institutions to complete necessary programming not offered in the NWT. As per the agreement between the GNWT and CSC, these NWT offenders may return to the NWT to serve the remainder of their sentences, once their programming needs identified by CSC have been met.

Meeting the specific needs of Indigenous offenders

All NWT correctional facilities

- Statistics indicate that the majority of inmates and youth in custody in the NWT are Indigenous. In 2019-20, the average percentage of males who were Indigenous was 81% and females who were indigenous was 73% (excludes Nunavut Offenders). In addition to substance abuse identified as the prevalent issue for all inmates in the NWT, many Indigenous inmates must contend with additional factors such as the limited employment opportunities in some small communities and the trauma, often intergenerational, associated with the legacy of residential schools.
- All NWT correctional facilities incorporate Indigenous cultures and traditions into programming and involve Elders in the sharing of traditional knowledge, and the provision of traditional counselling and support services to inmates. Where possible, in-house traditional facilities are used and inmates, youth and adults, may be taken out on the land to engage in traditional activities.

North Slave Correctional Complex (NSCC)

- The NSCC offers the services of a Traditional Counsellor and Liaison Officer. Due to the incumbent's availability this position is a three quarter time position providing traditional counseling and programming services to inmates at the complex. Inmates may self refer or sign up to see the counsellor or they may be referred by their case manager. The NSCC traditional counsellor brings a wealth of knowledge and experience, focusing on Indigenous trauma and healing practices. He provides both individual counseling services to inmates at the facility and also in a group setting. He has facilitated a number of sharing circles, to which several inmates have signed up with positive feedback from the inmates.

The NSCC has four traditional areas for the delivery of programs to inmates and youth by a traditional counsellor: two areas are located inside the facility (respectively one each in the adult and in the separate youth unit). The other two are located outdoors, within the secure perimeter. These areas are used for smudging, one-on-one counselling and sharing circles.

South Mackenzie Correctional Centre (SMCC) – innovative programs and approaches

- The SMCC has been leading the way on the development of Northern Sessions, developed to address the specific background and needs of NWT Indigenous inmates. Since March 2019, Northern Sessions on addictions have been delivered that harmonize with the core criminogenic Substance Abuse Management (SAM) program. Delivery materials for the Northern Sessions on violence were finalized in December 2019. SMCC will begin using these materials during the delivery of the core criminogenic Respectful Relationships and Living Without Violence programs. It is envisioned that this program model will eventually extend to NSCC and FSCC.
- The SMCC offers a wraparound approach: a made-in the NWT Indigenous Pre-Treatment Healing program prepares offenders to begin their healing journey and to engage in more structured core correctional programming. The Red Road to Freedom program is also delivered at the SMCC to help prepare offenders for their reintegration back into their communities. Both programs are delivered with the

participation of Elders and rooted in NWT Indigenous traditions, spirituality and worldview. Work is currently underway on the development of a curriculum for the Pre-Treatment Healing Program to be expanded to other correctional facilities.

- It is envisioned that the Indigenous Pre-Treatment Healing Program will become the cornerstone of the Therapeutic Community model to be implemented at the SMCC. (*For more information see BN 40. SMCC as a Therapeutic Community.*)

Education, vocational training and life skills programs

Academics

- The Corrections Service assists youth in custody to achieve high school graduation. The Corrections Service also assists adults in custody with their educational goals.
- An analysis of the adult population at the NSCC indicated that the average education level for incarcerated inmates at the Adult Unit is at around a grade six level, which reflects the situation of inmates across NWT corrections.
- Adult offenders can participate in educational programming at the NSCC Adult Unit and at the FSCC (provided by institutional instructors) and at the SMCC (provided by a contracted literacy instructor).
- The NSCC Young Offender Unit has a non-monetary contract with Yellowknife Education District No.1 (YK1) for the delivery of education to youth in custody. Two full time high school teachers teach classes as per the YK1 schedule - one posted in the open custody classroom, and one posted in the secure custody classroom. The teachers collectively teach all grades to the young offenders in custody.
- All facilities maintain a close working relationship with local high schools and colleges. Inmates may access distance learning with the assistance of the institutional instructors. In addition, inmates who are eligible for temporary absence from the facility may attend education programs in the community.

Additional supports

- For youth, NSCC Youth Unit staff facilitate life skills sessions.
- For adults, both NSCC and FSCC offer the '*Foundations For Success*' program, which is designed to assist inmates with some of the challenges that adult learners face when they return to school. Plans are in place to also roll out the delivery of this program at the SMCC.
- Since 2017, the NSCC offers Mental Health First Aid training to inmates.
- The SMCC offers various vocational programs and training opportunities, such as Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System (WHMIS), Food Safe Level 1, First Aid/CPR and Safe Equipment Operation.

Background

- Substance abuse is the most prevalent issue requiring intervention, especially for offenders assessed at high risk to re-offend. Family violence and sexual offences

have also been identified as issues for NWT offenders.

- Dedicated corrections staff provide case management and programming services to assess and support the needs of inmates:
 - 11 staff at the North Slave Correctional Complex
 - 6 staff at the South Mackenzie Correctional Centre; and
 - 5 staff at the Fort Smith Correctional Complex.
- In addition to programs offered in correctional facilities, counsellors and psychologists are available to provide therapeutic services, where this is identified in an offenders' case plan. (*For more information see BN 36. Corrections Counselling and Psychological Services.*)
- As part of the release planning process, case managers look at options in the community, where available, for inmates to be able to continue attending programming similar to what they started while in custody.

**MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLNESS:
CORRECTIONS COUNSELLING AND PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES**

ISSUE

The Corrections Service is responsible for the care of inmates during their incarceration. This includes offenders with mental health concerns or diagnosed illnesses.

KEY MESSAGES

- Mental health and counselling services are provided at all correctional facilities using a screening, assessment and referral process that is supportive of a continuum of care model.
- In addition, correctional facilities offer evidence-based, culturally appropriate programming that address common factors that lead an offender to crime.
- The Department of Justice continues to work with the Department of Health and Social Services and local and regional providers on the continuity of mental health and addictions services for offenders.
- Counselling supports and psychology services continue to be offered to inmates during the COVID-19 pandemic.

CURRENT STATUS

- Inmates in NWT correctional facilities who are unable to participate in criminogenic programming due to cognitive limitations may be considered for an alternative individual program on a case by case basis.
- Two mental health screening tools are used, one for men and one for women, as well as suicide screening tools for adults and youth to assist with referrals and the application of services for those in need.

- Corrections psychologists deliver expert clinical services and counselling supports to inmates. These services are available to inmates in facilities and to probation clients on an as needed basis.
- Counselling and psychological services are available as follows:
 - There is one psychologist position and one counsellor position at the North Slave Correctional Complex (NSCC). Two previous competitions have been advertised and no successful candidates have been identified. As this is a hard to fill position at the NSCC a counsellor has been hired from May 11, 2020 to May 28, 2021 to provide services to both adult and youth at the NSCC on a daily basis. The Corrections Service is exploring options for filling the second position as a provisional psychologist position, including a mentorship program under a registered psychologist in the NWT to complete appropriate hours. This process has been used in the past to fill psychologist positions.
 - One psychologist in Hay River provides services to the South Mackenzie Correctional Centre (SMCC), Fort Smith Correctional Complex (FSCC) and South Slave Regional Community Corrections office.
 - The FSCC fulltime counsellor provides counselling services to the male and female inmates at the complex and to community clients as referred through the Fort Smith Community Corrections office.
- Corrections traditional and addictions counsellors help identify inmates' specific needs and work with case managers to ensure appropriate supports are made available. Traditional counsellors are employed at the SMCC and at the NSCC.
- Facilities involve Elders and volunteer services to provide traditional spiritual support, non-denominational faith based counselling, and supports to residential school survivors. Elders visit all facilities (for youth and adults) and are permitted on a case by case basis for humanitarian and compassionate reasons during the pandemic.
- All facilities support Alcoholics and Narcotics Anonymous groups and sessions. Some of these are led by community volunteers, while others are organized and led by the inmates themselves. These sessions will not be available in the community during the pandemic, but in-facility sessions will be made available where possible.

- Corrections' staff working in facilities and probation offices receive training in Mental Health First Aid. This training helps staff recognize the signs and symptoms of common mental health problems, provide assistance and make referrals to ensure concerns are addressed with health professionals.
- Mental Health First Aid training is also being offered to inmates at the NSCC.
- Corrections staff have participated in a number of training sessions on trauma informed care since 2018 in Yellowknife and in Fort Smith provided by experts in the field. This training will continue within Corrections and is now part of the entry level training for new correctional officers.

STATISTICS

- Not applicable.

BUDGET INFORMATION

This program area is funded through general operating funds for the facilities and does not have a specific line item dedicated to corrections programming.

BACKGROUND

- Inmate mental health had been raised as an issue by the Office of the Auditor General in its 2015 audit report of NWT Corrections. Out of 14 recommendations made, one pertained to mental health.
- Our NWT Correctional facilities provide direct supervision of inmates as a key method to facilitate holistic healing in a safe, secure environment. Supports and services are available for inmates in the areas of education, training and counselling as well as for culturally appropriate spiritual support.

TEMPORARY ABSENCES FOR COMMUNITY PROGRAMMING IN FORT SMITH

Issue

The Minister may get questions regarding the temporary absence process to attend programming in the community, including on-the-land programs such as the one previously offered in Fort Smith by Poundmaker's.

Key Messages

- I am aware how important it is to provide opportunities for healing that are respectful of offenders' culture and heritage; and the Department certainly recognizes the potential benefits of land-based programming for offenders who serve their custodial sentence in Fort Smith.
- Whenever there is a community program that offenders could benefit from, Corrections seeks to identify suitable inmates who could participate, through the temporary absence program.
- Inmates wishing to attend on-the-land programming in the community such as at Poundmaker's must apply for an unescorted temporary absence from the facility in order to participate. To ensure the safety of the public at large and of victims there are strict established criteria for an inmate to be considered for an unescorted temporary absence.
- At the same time, FSCC provides criminogenic programming in-house to address most common issues (such as addictions) that lead an offender to crime. These programs are geared specifically to the needs of offenders in the NWT.

Current Status

- During this time of the COVID-19 pandemic all inmate temporary absences for work or program activity outside the facilities has been suspended. This does not apply to inmates who are applying for a temporary absence or early release back to their community.
- Each offender is informed of his/her right to apply for a temporary absence and all case plans for offenders consider the suitability for temporary absence
- Facility wardens have the delegated authority to approve temporary absences under most circumstances.
- The following criteria identified are considered when deciding whether to grant a temporary absence:
 - a) Public safety
 - b) Inmate risk assessment
 - c) Likelihood of escape or non-compliance
 - d) Inmate security classification

- e) Consideration of victim proximity and safety
- f) Length of sentence served
- Offenders are informed of their right to appeal the denial of a temporary absence application to the Director of Corrections.

Background

- In 2017, the Salt River First Nation and Poundmaker's Lodge Treatment centres collaborated to deliver a six week pilot on-the-land program in Fort Smith. The focus of the program was to provide a safe, secure, community based mobile addictions treatment program with an on-the-land component and with significance placed on Indigenous healing and recovery and the road to abstinence. This was the only delivery of this program in the community of Fort Smith.
- One female offender from the Fort Smith Correctional Complex Female Unit attended the three part treatment programming, each session lasting 2 weeks.
- There were no male offenders at the Fort Smith Correctional Complex Male Unit that met the criteria for a temporary absence from the facility to attend the on-the-land program at that time.

CORRECTIONS DIVISION – HUMAN RESOURCES

Issue

The Minister may receive questions on supports, training and resources available to staff within the Corrections Service.

Key Messages

- The Department of Justice understands the importance of employee mental health and wellness and providing staff with appropriate training, tools and supports to carry out their duties effectively.
- An inter-departmental working group has been formed with officials from the Departments of Justice and Finance to identify issues and develop a workplan to address: training requirements; appropriate tools and resources for employee mental health and wellness; and recruitment and retention within the NWT Corrections Service.
- Management within the Corrections Service works closely with GNWT Human Resources in relation to ongoing training and supports available to GNWT employees and how they can be modified and delivered in a correctional context.
- Staff experiencing personal problems or requiring support are encouraged to access the Employee and Family Assistance Program available to GNWT employees. Following all serious incidents within Corrections there is an immediate shift briefing of those officers involved and critical incident stress debriefings are available (if required) with trained facilitators.

Current Status

- The Interdepartmental working group met on February 7, 2020. The next meeting will be scheduled in mid to late June, 2020 due to COVID-19, as next steps require the scheduling of training for Corrections staff.
- The Heads of Corrections FPT has recently created a working group on Employee Wellness and Recruitment & Retention as jurisdictions have seen increases in work related injuries, predominantly psychological injuries. All jurisdictions have also experienced challenges around recruitment and retention in Corrections. The NWT Corrections Service will have representation on this working group.

Staff Training

- The Corrections Services is in the process of formulating a comprehensive training plan and calendar to ensure training activities delivered in a efficient manner taking into consideration the operational realities of a 24/7 operation.
- In service training in Mental Health First Aid, and Compassion Fatigue is currently offered to current corrections staff, and to staff through the CNRTP.
- The Corrections Service is currently working with Ontario Corrections on wellness

training for front line staff and supervisors/managers. Training will begin to roll out in 2020-21.

- Training on de-escalation techniques, violence prevention and Peace Officer responsibilities is provided to staff on an ongoing basis. This training is also delivered to new recruits through the CNRTP.
- Supervisor training on leading in crisis situations, leadership roles and development was held at the NSCC in January 2020. This was attended by Deputy Wardens, Assistant Wardens and the Warden at the NSCC.
- The Corrections Service will be developing a leadership course for supervisor/managers to be delivered in fall/winter 2020-21. The existing course needs to be revamped incorporating changes in the *Corrections Act* and best practices in the field of Corrections.
- Corrections is currently in the process of revamping the Corrections Recruitment Training Program (CNRTP) recognizing the new *Corrections Act* and best practices in the field of Corrections.

Background – CONFIDENTIAL TO THE MINISTER

- A staff member at the NSCC has brought forward concerns around staffing, management, and leadership within Corrections.

CORRECTIONS PROGRAMS

ISSUE

The Department recognizes the need to support offender rehabilitation and reintegration back into their communities, and address the overrepresentation of Indigenous people in the justice system.

KEY MESSAGES

- All corrections programs support participants to become aware of the root causes that lead them to crime.
- Corrections programs integrate Indigenous culture and traditions in the way they are delivered.
- The average education level of inmates at the adult unit is grade 6, and the Department supports inmates with their educational goals by providing educational programming.

CURRENT STATUS

- Due to Covid – 19, facility programming was briefly interrupted but has since resumed in full. Probation Officers were sent home on March 19, 2020 and returned to the workplace on July 14, 2020. Corrections program delivery schedules are updated on a quarterly basis, based on the needs of the clients under supervision at the time.
- A new Change Management Maintenance program is being piloted in two facilities (NSCC and FSCC) and in the Yellowknife probation office. The pilot will end in May 2021 and will be reviewed at that time. This program aims to consolidate self-knowledge and personal change that offenders gained from participation in core programming.
- Traditional knowledge sharing, counseling, and support services are provided in all NWT correctional facilities through:
 - The Traditional Counsellor and Liaison Offer at the NSCC who delivers programs both inside and outside the facility.
 - The Northern Sessions program offered at SMCC aims to harmonize with the core criminogenic programming currently being delivered and address

- the specific background and needs of Indigenous inmates. It is expected to be extended to NSCC and FSCC in 2021.
- A made in the NWT Indigenous Pre-Treatment Healing Program also offered at SMCC, prepares offenders at the beginning of their healing journey to engage in more structured core correctional programming. It is envisioned that this program would be expanded to NSCC and FSCC, and would become the cornerstone of the Therapeutic Community model being implemented at SMCC.
 - Educational programming supports are provided through all NWT correctional facilities:
 - Institutional or literacy instructors hired through the Adult Units of NSCC, FSCC and the SMCC work closely with local high schools and colleges to provide for the educational needs of inmates. Programs include adult literacy, basic education, general education development, exam preparation, trades exam preparation, life skills, and assistance with pursuing or registration into post-secondary courses.
 - A non-monetary contract with the Yellowknife District Education No. 1 for the delivery of education to youth in custody.
 - Assisting inmates with some of the challenges that adult learners face when they return to school through the Foundations for Success program. This program is currently offered by NSCC and FSCC, with intentions to roll out to SMCC by 2021.
 - Various vocational training offered through the SMCC, including First Aid/CPR and Safe Equipment Operation.
 - As part of the release planning process, case managers look at options in the community, where available, for inmates to be able to continue attending programming similar to what they started while in custody.

STATISTICS

- In 2019-20, the average percentage of males who were Indigenous was 81% and females who were Indigenous was 93% (excluding Nunavut and Federal offenders)
- Refer to attachment for program related statistics.

BUDGET INFORMATION

This program area is funded through general operating funds for the facilities and does not have a specific line item dedicated to corrections programming.

BACKGROUND

- Substance abuse is the most prevalent issue requiring intervention, especially for offenders assessed at high risk to re-offend. Family violence and sexual offences have also been identified as issues for NWT offenders.
- These core programs are offered at all correctional facilities and regional probation offices:
 - *'Substance Abuse Management'* (or SAM) program – offered since 2016, to address addictions related needs of both male and female offenders;
 - *'Living Without Violence'* program – offered since 2017, to address the needs of male offenders with violence related offences;
 - *'Respectful Relationships'* program – offered since 2017, to address the needs of male offenders with domestic violence offences; and
 - *'Thinking Leads to Change'* program – implemented in November 2019, to address the criminal attitudes and behaviours of female offenders.
- The Correctional Service of Canada determines the risk level and programming needs of federal offenders. If required, NWT offenders serving federal sentences are transferred to federal institutions to complete necessary programming not offered in the NWT. As per the agreement between the GNWT and CSC, these NWT offenders may return to the NWT to serve the remainder of their sentences, once their programming needs identified by CSC have been met.
- Dedicated corrections staff provide case management and programming services to assess and support the needs of inmates:
 - 11 staff at the North Slave Correctional Complex
 - 6 staff at the South Mackenzie Correctional Centre; and
 - 5 staff at the Fort Smith Correctional Complex.

**MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLNESS:
CORRECTIONS COUNSELLING AND PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES**

ISSUE

The Corrections Service is responsible for the care of inmates during their incarceration. This includes offenders with mental health concerns or diagnosed illnesses.

KEY MESSAGES

- Mental health and counselling services are provided at all correctional facilities using a screening, assessment and referral process that is supportive of a continuum of care model.
- In addition, correctional facilities offer evidence-based, culturally appropriate programming that address common factors that lead an offender to crime.
- The Department of Justice continues to work with the Department of Health and Social Services and local and regional providers on the continuity of mental health and addictions services for offenders.
- Counselling supports and psychology services continue to be offered to inmates during the COVID-19 pandemic.

CURRENT STATUS

- Inmates in NWT correctional facilities who are unable to participate in criminogenic programming due to cognitive limitations may be considered for an alternative individual program on a case by case basis.
- Two mental health screening tools are used, one for men and one for women, as well as suicide screening tools for adults and youth to assist with referrals and the application of services for those in need.
- Corrections psychologists deliver expert clinical services and counselling supports to inmates. These services are available to inmates in facilities and to probation clients on an as needed basis.
- Counselling and psychological services are available as follows:

- There is one psychologist position and one counsellor position at the North Slave Correctional Complex (NSCC). Two previous competitions have been advertised and no successful candidates have been identified.
 - The Psychologist positions have been hard to fill at the NSCC and as a result a counsellor has been hired from May 11, 2020 to May 28, 2021 to provide services to both adult and youth at the NSCC on a daily basis.
 - The Corrections Service is exploring options for filling the second position as a provisional psychologist position, including a mentorship program under a registered psychologist in the NWT to complete appropriate hours. This process has been used in the past to fill psychologist positions.
 - One psychologist in Hay River provides services to the South Mackenzie Correctional Centre (SMCC), Fort Smith Correctional Complex (FSCC) and South Slave Regional Community Corrections office.
 - The FSCC fulltime counsellor provides counselling services to the male and female inmates at the complex and to community clients as referred through the Fort Smith Community Corrections office.
- Corrections traditional and addictions counsellors help identify inmates' specific needs and work with case managers to ensure appropriate supports are made available. Traditional counsellors are employed at the SMCC and at the NSCC.
 - Facilities involve Elders and volunteer services to provide traditional spiritual support, non-denominational faith-based counselling, and supports to residential school survivors. Elders visit all facilities (for youth and adults) and are permitted on a case by case basis for humanitarian and compassionate reasons during the pandemic.
 - All facilities support Alcoholics and Narcotics Anonymous groups and sessions. Some of these are led by community volunteers, while others are organized and led by the inmates themselves. These sessions will not be available in the community during the pandemic, but in-facility sessions will be made available where possible.
 - Corrections' staff working in facilities and probation offices receive training in Mental Health First Aid. This training helps staff recognize the signs and symptoms of common mental health problems, provide assistance and make referrals to ensure concerns are addressed with health professionals.
 - Mental Health First Aid training is also being offered to inmates at the NSCC.
 - Corrections staff in both Yellowknife and Fort Smith have participated in a number of training sessions on trauma informed care since 2018. This training

will continue within Corrections and is now part of the entry level training for new correctional officers.

STATISTICS

- Not applicable.

BUDGET INFORMATION

This program area is funded through general operating funds for the facilities and does not have a specific line item dedicated to corrections programming.

BACKGROUND

- Inmate mental health had been raised as an issue by the Office of the Auditor General in its 2015 audit report of NWT Corrections. Out of 14 recommendations made, one pertained to mental health.
- Our NWT Correctional facilities provide direct supervision of inmates as a key method to facilitate holistic healing in a safe, secure environment. Supports and services are available for inmates in the areas of education, training and counselling as well as for culturally appropriate spiritual support.

OFFENDERS WITH COGNITIVE LIMITATIONS AND FETAL ALCOHOL SPECTRUM DISORDERS (FASD)

ISSUE

Some offenders are affected by cognitive limitations and Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder.

KEY MESSAGES

- Many people who come into contact with the criminal justice system have FASD or cognitive difficulties through adverse life experiences – be it as victims, witnesses, and/or offenders. These individuals require supports appropriate to their needs and circumstances.
- In corrections, the specific needs of each offender are identified on admission to custody or community corrections. These needs are reviewed throughout the period during which the individual is under the supervision of NWT Corrections.
- As of January 2020, NWT residents now have the ability to access FASD diagnostic services for the first time with the implementation of the Territorial Adult FASD Diagnosis and Support Program. However, an FASD or other medical diagnosis is not required for an offender with complex needs to access adapted services and supports in NWT Corrections.
- Inmates in NWT correctional facilities who are unable to participate in criminogenic programming due to cognitive limitations may be considered for an alternative individual program on a case by case basis.

CURRENT STATUS

- During the COVID-19 pandemic, correctional facilities remain as an essential service and counselling and program services remain available. Individual counselling sessions and program delivery class sizes have been reduced with safe distancing and PPE protocols in place.

- Corrections case management practices ensure that resources are used most effectively, including for those offenders with complex needs so that they can be supported appropriately throughout their incarceration and eventual release from custody.
- NWT Corrections uses an inclusive approach and provides services and supports to offenders and inmates with cognitive difficulties and other complex needs on a case by case basis. Individuals with suspected FASD, but not necessarily diagnosed, would fall into this group.
- The Corrections Service provides FASD awareness education to staff.
- The NWT, as a small jurisdiction with limited resources, is unable to meet the specific needs of every offender with multiple complex needs - especially given the relatively short period of time served in custody by the majority of offenders.

Process for obtaining an FASD diagnosis (HSS information)

- The process of diagnosing FASD involves a complex medical evaluation and neurodevelopmental assessment.
- The establishment of an FASD diagnosis is best practice; a diagnosis provides a mechanism for entry into intervention and support services. Assessment and diagnosis leads to a better understanding of both the individual's strengths and areas of deficit. This may assist those living with the disability in obtaining health, education, and vocational services tailored to their unique needs.
- As of January 2020, NWT residents have the ability to access FASD diagnostic services for the first time with the implementation of the Territorial Adult FASD Diagnosis and Support Program.

STATISTICS

- All new recruits are trained in FASD awareness through the Corrections Northern Recruitment Training Program.

BUDGET INFORMATION

This program area is funded through general operating funds for the facilities and does not have a specific line item dedicated to corrections programming.

BACKGROUND

Yukon FASD Study

- In 2017 an FASD prevalence study was released that had been conducted of 80 adults involved with Yukon corrections, ages 18 to 40, over 17-months from May 2014 to September 2015. The Yukon study found that, of the sample of 80 individuals in the Corrections system, only 17.5% were formally diagnosed with FASD. Further significant rates of cognitive impairment, addiction and mental health issues were identified.

NWT Corrections Approach

- In 2011, the NWT Department of Justice examined the feasibility of conducting an FASD prevalence study in NWT Corrections. It was decided that a more effective approach is to move away from a specific focus on FASD to look at the needs of people who may live with FASD and other cognitive challenges affecting daily functioning. This removes the burden of having to secure a diagnosis under the fetal alcohol spectrum or another medically identified condition.
- Justice established a Functional Assessment committee tasked with identifying tools that determine the level of functioning of offenders related to social skills, daily living skills and basic indicators for mental capacity.
- This led to the piloting and implementation of mental health screening tools for men and women that are now used in all NWT correctional facilities.

CORRECTIONS PROGRAMS

ISSUE

The Department recognizes the need to support offender rehabilitation and reintegration back into their communities and address the overrepresentation of Indigenous people in the justice system.

KEY MESSAGES

- All corrections programs support participants to become aware of the root causes that lead them to crime.
- Corrections programs integrate Indigenous culture and traditions in the way they are delivered.
- The average education level of inmates at the adult unit of the North Slave Correctional Complex is grade 6, and the Department supports inmates with their educational goals by providing educational programming.

CURRENT STATUS

- Due to Covid-19, facility programming was briefly interrupted but has since resumed in full. Probation Officers were sent home on March 19, 2020 and returned to the workplace on July 14, 2020. Corrections program delivery schedules are updated on a quarterly basis, based on the needs of the clients under supervision at the time.
- A new Change Management Maintenance program is being piloted in two facilities (NSCC and FSCC) and in the Yellowknife probation office. The pilot will end in May 2021 and will be reviewed at that time. This program aims to consolidate self-knowledge and personal change that offenders gained from participation in core programming.
- Traditional knowledge sharing, counseling, and support services are provided in all NWT correctional facilities through:
 - The Traditional Counselor and Liaison Offer at the NSCC delivers programs both inside and outside the facility.
 - The Northern Sessions program offered at SMCC aims to harmonize with the core criminogenic programming currently being delivered and

- addresses the specific background and needs of Indigenous inmates. It is expected to be extended to NSCC and FSCC in 2021.
- A made in the NWT Indigenous Pre-Treatment Healing Program also offered at SMCC, prepares offenders at the beginning of their healing journey to engage in more structured core correctional programming. It is envisioned that this program would be expanded to NSCC and FSCC, and would become the cornerstone of the Therapeutic Community model being implemented at SMCC.
 - Educational programming supports are provided through all NWT correctional facilities:
 - Institutional or literacy instructors hired through the Adult Units of NSCC, FSCC and the SMCC work closely with local high schools and colleges to provide for the educational needs of inmates. Programs include adult literacy, basic education, general education development, exam preparation, trades exam preparation, life skills, and assistance with pursuing or registration into post-secondary courses.
 - A non-monetary contract with the Yellowknife District Education No. 1 for the delivery of education to youth in custody.
 - Assisting inmates with some of the challenges that adult learners face when they return to school through the Foundations for Success program. This program is currently offered by NSCC and FSCC, with intentions to roll out to SMCC in 2021.
 - Various vocational training offered through the SMCC, including First Aid/CPR and Safe Equipment Operation.
 - As part of the release planning process, case managers look at options in the community, where available, for inmates to be able to continue attending programming similar to what they started while in custody.

STATISTICS

- In 2019-20, the average percentage of males who were Indigenous was 81% and females who were Indigenous was 93% (excluding Nunavut and Federal offenders)

BUDGET INFORMATION

This program area is funded through general operating funds for the facilities and does not have a specific line item dedicated to corrections programming.

BACKGROUND

- Substance abuse is the most prevalent issue requiring intervention, especially for offenders assessed at high risk to re-offend. Family violence and sexual offences have also been identified as issues for NWT offenders.
- These core programs are offered at all correctional facilities and regional probation offices:
 - *'Substance Abuse Management'* (or SAM) program – offered since 2016, to address addictions related needs of both male and female offenders;
 - *'Living Without Violence'* program – offered since 2017, to address the needs of male offenders with violence related offences;
 - *'Respectful Relationships'* program – offered since 2017, to address the needs of male offenders with domestic violence offences; and
 - *'Thinking Leads to Change'* program – implemented in November 2019, to address the criminal attitudes and behaviours of female offenders.
- The Correctional Service of Canada determines the risk level and programming needs of federal offenders. If required, NWT offenders serving federal sentences are transferred to federal institutions to complete necessary programming not offered in the NWT. As per the agreement between the GNWT and CSC, these NWT offenders may return to the NWT to serve the remainder of their sentences, once their programming needs identified by CSC has been met.
- Dedicated corrections staff provide case management and programming services to assess and support the needs of inmates:
 - 11 staff at the North Slave Correctional Complex
 - 6 staff at the South Mackenzie Correctional Centre; and
 - 5 staff at the Fort Smith Correctional Complex.

TEMPORARY ABSENCES FOR COMMUNITY PROGRAMMING IN FORT SMITH

ISSUE

Inmates wishing to attend on-the-land programming in the community must apply for an unescorted temporary absence from the facility in order to participate.

KEY MESSAGES

- It is important to provide opportunities for healing that are respectful of offenders' culture and heritage; and the Department certainly recognizes the potential benefits of land-based programming for offenders who serve their custodial sentence in Fort Smith.
- Whenever there is a community program that offenders could benefit from, Corrections seeks to identify suitable inmates who could participate, through the temporary absence program.
- To ensure the safety of the public at large and of victims there are strict established criteria for an inmate to be considered for an unescorted temporary absence.
- At the same time, FSCC provides criminogenic programming in-house to address most common issues (such as addictions) that lead an offender to crime. These programs are geared specifically to the needs of offenders in the NWT.

CURRENT STATUS

- During this time of the COVID-19 pandemic all inmate temporary absences for work or program activity outside the facilities were suspended. A measured approach and gradual return to work or program temporary absences resumed in July. This does not apply to inmates who are applying for a temporary absence or early release back to their community. Each offender is informed of his/her right to apply for a temporary absence and all case plans for offenders consider the suitability for temporary absence.

- Facility wardens have the delegated authority to approve temporary absences under most circumstances.
- The following criteria identified are considered when deciding whether to grant a temporary absence:
 - a) Public safety
 - b) Inmate risk assessment
 - c) Likelihood of escape or non-compliance
 - d) Inmate security classification
 - e) Consideration of victim proximity and safety
 - f) Length of sentence served
- Offenders are informed of their right to appeal the denial of a temporary absence application to the Director of Corrections.

STATISTICS

- No current inmates at the FSCC on temporary absence

BUDGET INFORMATION

This program area is funded through general operating funds for the facilities and does not have a specific line item dedicated to corrections programming.

BACKGROUND

- In 2017, the Salt River First Nation and Poundmaker's Lodge Treatment centres collaborated to deliver a six week pilot on-the-land program in Fort Smith. The focus of the program was to provide a safe, secure, community based mobile addictions treatment program with an on-the-land component and with significance placed on Indigenous healing and recovery and the road to abstinence. This was the only delivery of this program in the community of Fort Smith.
- One female offender from the Fort Smith Correctional Complex Female Unit attended the three part treatment programming, each session lasting 2 weeks.
- There were no male offenders at the Fort Smith Correctional Complex Male Unit that met the criteria for a temporary absence from the facility to attend the on-the-land program at that time.

s 16(1)(c) **CORRECTIONS RESPONSE AND RECOVERY** s 16(1)(c)

Issue

s 16(1)(c)

NWT Position

- s 16(1)(c)

Current Status

NWT Corrections During COVID

Corrections began reviewing their pandemic plans and planning for the potential spread of COVID-19 in January 2020.

Reducing Inmates in Custody

- The Department of Justice has been actively exploring options available to reduce the number of inmates within NWT correctional facilities in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. This has included investigating opportunities to grant temporary absences for releasing inmates on a case by case and risk assessed basis. As of June 24, 2020 a total of 16 temporary absences have been approved where inmates meet the minimum criteria and have less than 90 days remaining on their sentence.
- Housing is taken into consideration as part of the temporary absence review process. The Corrections Service will not release an individual on a temporary absence without an appropriate housing plan being in place to support their release.

Inmate Care and Wellness

- All inmates entering NWT Correctional facilities are required to be medically screened. Screening procedures have been bolstered due to COVID-19 and include:
 - A COVID-19 specific screening questionnaire
 - Temperature check (as part of regular medical screening)
 - In the event an inmate is symptomatic they are isolated in identified cells within the facilities and COVID-19 testing is arranged in conjunction with health officials. To date all tests for COVID-19 have come back negative, and currently no tests are outstanding.
- Currently there is sufficient capacity within the facilities to allow each inmate their own cell.
- The Department has attempted to keep as many activities and programs running for inmates as safely possible. There has been curtailment and cancellation of some

higher risk activities including personal visits and some programming that is delivered by outside agencies, as well as programming in the community. Program size has been reduced to ensure safe distancing practices are followed. Case management and counselling services also remain in place ensuring proper protocols are followed

- All contractors attending facilities are required to be screened before entry. At this time only essential contractors are permitted. Lawyers and Elder visits are assessed on a case by case basis. Personal visits in emergency circumstances are considered on a case by case basis, and would occur behind glass where available. PPE is utilized in all circumstances.
- The Department has set up the ability for inmates to video conference with family members and friends, recognizing that personal contact with loved ones is very important for healing. Any resumption of services will be done in close consultation with the Office of the Chief Public Health Officer and the Workers' Safety & Compensation Commission (WSSC). Currently there is no timeline as to when in person visits will be re-established.

Staff Safety

- Procedures for staff have evolved over the course of the last few months as recommendations from health officials have changed and developed.
- Currently all persons are screened and have their temperature checked upon entry into the facility for COVID-19 symptoms. Staff who identify as having symptoms upon screening at the facility are requested to return home and contact Public Health.
- The Department continues to monitor risk factors in determining appropriate procedures for staff and inmates in conjunction with health officials.
- Currently NWT correctional facilities are adequately stocked with PPE. This is reviewed on a regular basis.
- As a proactive measure and in consultation with other correctional jurisdictions, the Department has procured a material type mask for staff and inmates to be worn voluntarily which is aligned with the Chief Public Health Officer's advice on reducing transmission of COVID-19. Proper PPE protocols remain in place where required. These masks do not take the place of the use of proper PPE.
- Regular communications are sent out to staff to advise of procedural changes and to ensure safe practices are highlighted. Occupational Health and Safety meetings are held on a monthly basis at all facilities and ensure engagement with committee members on updates specific to COVID-19 practices and protocols.
- The Corrections Service cancelled all staff leave in March 2020 due to Covid-19. Staff leave requests during this time were reviewed on a case by case basis. Staff leave for the summer months has been reinstated in correctional facilities and probation offices. Communication was circulated that leave is subject to operational requirements and may be suspended at any time due to Covid-19.

Facility Operations

- Safety procedures have been put in place to ensure high contact points within the facilities are sanitized several times a day. Cleaning protocols have been bolstered across all facilities.
- All facilities have contingency plans should positive COVID-19 cases occur within the facilities. There are a variety of operational contingencies that can be put into place including:
 - Isolating inmates who are sick in designated areas within the facilities;
 - Closing and/or repurposing the smaller facilities
 - Redeploying facility staff
 - As a last resort and only in the case of severe staff shortages, lock downs would be considered. This would in part be needed for the safety of redeployed staff s 20(1)(e)
 - Inmates who are symptomatic will be locked down and isolated outside the regular living units. Inmates would still be offered daily showers and fresh air with appropriate PPE supplied. The Corrections Service consults with the Office of the Chief Public Health Officer to determine the best courses of action for implementing isolation and maintaining inmate wellbeing.

Community Corrections

- Probation offices across the NWT are having clients report by telephone. Arrangements are flexible as not all clients have telephone services.
- One Staff member in each of the 3 regional offices are in place, maintaining an office presence to ensure responses to court are met without delay.
- Local RCMP detachments have been advised of this change in reporting and Probation Officers continue to liaise with police on any challenges.
- Regional Probation Managers are reviewing reporting requirements on an ongoing basis to ensure compliance with court orders.
- The Corrections Service is currently in the process of returning Probation Officers to community offices. This will only occur after consultation with Public Health and the WSCC. The timing of this will coincide with Courts returning to operation.

Background

- Jurisdictions have developed innovative approaches in responding to COVID-19. Efforts are expanding to consider recovery plans for the corrections system.
- In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, coordination and collaboration between health and justice sectors has been crucial to ensure the health of individuals in custody is protected. Correctional systems have had to update practices and

procedures to align with direction received, including recommendations and orders by public health officials.

- This has included measures within correctional centres to protect the safety and human rights of vulnerable populations and upon release to help keep communities safe.

- s 16(1)(c)

Conference Documents

- s 16(1)(c)

s
16(1)**CORRECTIONS RESPONSE AND RECOVERY**

s 16(1)(c)

Issue

s 16(1)(c)

NWT Position

- **In the NWT the response to COVID has included taking opportunities to reduce the number of inmates in custody through temporary absences on a case by case and risk assessed basis.**
- **All inmates entering facilities are medically screened by way of questionnaire, temperature check, and isolation if symptomatic. To date all tests have come back negative, and there are no outstanding tests. Currently there is sufficient capacity to allow each inmate their own cell. We have seen a 29% reduction in custody counts in all adult facilities since mid-March.**
- **Personal visits were cancelled, and Elder and lawyer visits are assessed on a case by case basis. The Department has set up the ability for inmates to video conference with family members and friends. The Department is currently exploring a phased approach to easing visitation restrictions.**
- **All staff are screened and have their temperature checked upon entering facilities**
- **Probation offices have had clients reporting by phone with some exceptions.**

Current Status**NWT Corrections During COVID**

Corrections began reviewing their pandemic plans and planning for the potential spread of COVID-19 in January 2020.

Reducing Inmates in Custody

- **The Department of Justice has been actively exploring options available to reduce the number of inmates within NWT correctional facilities in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. This has included investigating opportunities to grant temporary absences for releasing inmates on a case by case and risk assessed basis. As of July 2, 2020, a total of 16 temporary absences have been approved where inmates meet the minimum criteria and have less than 90 days remaining on their sentence.**
- **Housing is taken into consideration as part of the temporary absence review process. The Corrections Service will not release an individual on a temporary absence without an appropriate housing plan being in place to support their release.**

Inmate Care and Wellness

- All inmates entering NWT Correctional facilities are required to be medically screened. Screening procedures have been bolstered due to COVID-19 and include:
 - A COVID-19 specific screening questionnaire
 - Temperature check (as part of regular medical screening)
 - In the event an inmate is symptomatic they are isolated in identified cells within the facilities and COVID-19 testing is arranged in conjunction with health officials. To date all tests for COVID-19 have come back negative, and currently no tests are outstanding.
- Currently there is sufficient capacity within the facilities to allow each inmate their own cell.
- The Department has attempted to keep as many activities and programs running for inmates as safely possible. There has been curtailment and cancellation of some higher risk activities including personal visits and some programming that is delivered by outside agencies, as well as programming in the community. Program size has been reduced to ensure safe distancing practices are followed. Case management and counselling services also remain in place ensuring proper protocols are followed
- All contractors attending facilities are required to be screened before entry. At this time only essential contractors are permitted. Lawyers and Elder visits are assessed on a case by case basis. Personal visits in emergency circumstances are considered on a case by case basis, and would occur behind glass where available. PPE is utilized in all circumstances.
- The Department has set up the ability for inmates to video conference with family members and friends, recognizing that personal contact with loved ones is very important for healing. Any resumption of services will be done in close consultation with the Office of the Chief Public Health Officer and the Workers' Safety & Compensation Commission (WSCC).
- The Department is currently exploring options for easing restrictions on visitation in correctional facilities. This would be done with a "phased approach" starting with approved family visitors with current screening procedures in place. This process will begin the week of July 6, 2020, in close consultation with the Office of the Chief Public Health Officer and the Workers' Safety & Compensation Commission (WSCC).

Staff Safety

- Procedures for staff have evolved over the course of the last few months as recommendations from health officials have changed and developed.
- Currently all persons are screened and have their temperature checked upon entry into the facility for COVID-19 symptoms. Staff who identify as having symptoms

upon screening at the facility are requested to return home and contact Public Health.

- The Department continues to monitor risk factors in determining appropriate procedures for staff and inmates in conjunction with health officials.
- Currently NWT correctional facilities are adequately stocked with PPE. This is reviewed on a regular basis.
- As a proactive measure and in consultation with other correctional jurisdictions, the Department has procured a material type mask for staff and inmates to be worn voluntarily which is aligned with the Chief Public Health Officer's advice on reducing transmission of COVID-19. Proper PPE protocols remain in place where required. These masks do not take the place of the use of proper PPE.
- Regular communications are sent out to staff to advise of procedural changes and to ensure safe practices are highlighted. Occupational Health and Safety meetings are held on a monthly basis at all facilities and ensure engagement with committee members on updates specific to COVID-19 practices and protocols.
- The Corrections Service cancelled all staff leave in March 2020 due to Covid-19. Staff leave requests during this time were reviewed on a case by case basis. Staff leave for the summer months has been reinstated in correctional facilities and probation offices. Communication was circulated that leave is subject to operational requirements and may be suspended at any time due to Covid-19.

Facility Operations

- Safety procedures have been put in place to ensure high contact points within the facilities are sanitized several times a day. Cleaning protocols have been bolstered across all facilities.
- All facilities have contingency plans should positive COVID-19 cases occur within the facilities. There are a variety of operational contingencies that can be put into place including:
 - Isolating inmates who are sick in designated areas within the facilities;
 - Closing and/or repurposing the smaller facilities
 - Redeploying facility staff
 - As a last resort and only in the case of severe staff shortages, lock downs would be considered. This would in part be needed for the safety of redeployed staff s 20(1)(e)
 - Inmates who are symptomatic will be locked down and isolated outside the regular living units. Inmates would still be offered daily showers and fresh air with appropriate PPE supplied. The Corrections Service consults with the Office of the Chief Public Health Officer to determine the best courses of action for implementing isolation and maintaining inmate wellbeing.

Community Corrections

- Probation offices across the NWT are having clients report by telephone. Arrangements are flexible as not all clients have telephone services.
- One Staff member in each of the 3 regional offices are in place, maintaining an office presence to ensure responses to court are met without delay.
- Local RCMP detachments have been advised of this change in reporting and Probation Officers continue to liaise with police on any challenges.
- Regional Probation Managers are reviewing reporting requirements on an ongoing basis to ensure compliance with court orders.
- The Corrections Service is currently in the process of returning Probation Officers to community offices. This will only occur after consultation with Public Health and the WSCC. It is anticipated that Probation Officers will return to community offices the week of July 13, 2020.

Background

- Jurisdictions have developed innovative approaches in responding to COVID-19. Efforts are expanding to consider recovery plans for the corrections system.
- In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, coordination and collaboration between health and justice sectors has been crucial to ensure the health of individuals in custody is protected. Correctional systems have had to update practices and procedures to align with direction received, including recommendations and orders by public health officials.
- This has included measures within correctional centres to protect the safety and human rights of vulnerable populations and upon release to help keep communities safe.

- s 16(1)(c)

Conference Documents

- s 16(1)(c)

BUSINESS CONTINUITY PLANNING – COVID-19 RESPONSE

Issue

The Minister may be asked questions with respect to the continuity of the department's operations and its planning activities due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Key Messages:

- The Department of Justice is currently refining its operational planning in response to the threat of the COVID-19 pandemic within the Northwest Territories.
- The department is working closely with other GNWT departments and with Federal, Provincial, and Territorial counterparts on best practices and preparations. Examples include sharing of business continuity plans and operational procedures in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Several provincial/territorial counterparts have shared operational level planning as has Corrections Service Canada.
- The department's operational priorities when confronted with any emergency include:
 - Ensuring the safe and secure custody of inmates
 - Ensuring continuity of essential court operations
 - Reducing impacts as much as possible on vulnerable populations who receive services from the department or are impacted by its operations. **Note for Minister:** Officials from HSS, ECE, JUS and NWTJC are meeting this morning to discuss services provided to vulnerable populations in light of the pandemic.
- Staff safety is always of paramount concern, especially for our frontline service providers. The department has implemented a range of measures to protect staff, including advisories on mitigation best practices and procedures, assessment tools for COVID-19 indicators, potential service delivery changes (i.e. working remotely), and protocols in the event of client or staff exposure within the workplace.
- Departmental contingency plans will be utilized in the event of staff shortages and include a range of options for ensuring continuity of essential operations.
- The RCMP have their own emergency management planning committee in accordance with their operating standards, and have a continuity plan in place. The RCMP also participates within the Emergency Management Office (EMO) coordinated by MACA.
- The Territorial Planning Committee, also led by MACA, provides oversight of the NWT Emergency Plan and coordinates/leads emergency management planning for the GNWT and public agencies.

Current Status

Continuity of Operations

- The department has activated its Business Continuity Plan and is closely monitoring the COVID-19 situation while working with other GNWT Departments, Federal/Provincial/Territorial counterparts and emergency management officials, to both plan for and assess impacts on our operations.
- Corrections is an essential operation for the department and has been a focus of planning activities in recent weeks. Operational planning within Corrections started in January 2020. Plans are in place for the health and safety of inmates as well as contingency plans for staff shortages.
- Corrections Management including Facility Management will facilitate regular calls to provide status updates. The frequency will be dependent on level of activity, but will not be less than once per week.
- Corrections has existing procedures in place to handle cases of influenza and other respiratory illnesses such as the COVID-19 virus. Specific mitigation activities in response to COVID-19 are:
 - Enhanced screening of inmates upon intake utilizing a COVID-19 specific assessment tool
 - Increased health information signage
 - Reinforcement of standing orders and directives with respect to communicable diseases
 - Increased hygiene regimes (i.e. washing of hands, cleaning of high contact services, etc.)
 - Screening of visitors entering the building; those who appear to be symptomatic will not be granted access.
 - Bolstering of personal protection equipment supplies

Confidential to the Minister

- Corrections Senior Management is currently assessing approved leave within the correctional facilities. Direction may be required to recall essential staff to duty due to operational requirements. The department is working with the Department of Finance to determine messaging and the point at which notification would be sent.
- Corrections security protocols and contingency plans cannot be shared publically. Plans are in place to assess risk and respond accordingly via a variety of operational contingencies including:
 - Increasing temporary absences
 - Isolating inmates who are sick in designated areas within the facilities;
 - Closing and/or repurposing the smaller facilities
 - Redeploying facility staff

- As a last resort and only in the case of severe staff shortages, lock downs would be considered. This would in part be needed for the safety of redeployed staff who may have limited security training.
- Inmates who are symptomatic would be locked down and isolated. They would still be offered daily showers and fresh air with appropriate personal protective equipment supplied (as operationally sustainable). Corrections consults with the Chief Public Health Officer to determine the best courses of action for implementing isolation and maintaining inmate wellbeing.
- The Chief Judge of the Territorial Court and the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court each issued a directive on Friday, March 13th with respect to court operations. The directives:
 - Cancel all circuit courts until May 1st for Supreme Court and June 1st for Territorial Courts
 - Cancel all jury trials until May 1st
 - Require the utilization of video conferencing/phone appearances for a range of court matters
 - The full directives are available online on the NWT Courts website

Confidential to the Minister

- The Chief Judge and the Chief Justice are convening a joint criminal “Bench and Bar” meeting at noon on Monday, March 16. Representatives of PPSC, the defence bar, Courts Administration and the Territorial Prosecutor have been invited. It is reasonable to expect that the two directives could be adjusted as a result of that meeting.
- The department continue to engage with regional staff as part of its information sharing and preparedness activities.. Most recently teleconferences with all Corrections Managers (Probation Managers and Facility Wardens) and NWT Courts staff were held on Friday, March 13th.
- A summary of the department's services that will be maintained as essential is attached as Appendix A.

Potential Service Delivery Changes and Disruptions

- The department is making arrangements for several areas within the department to work from home (if required and feasible) to maintain service delivery. Several areas are able to perform functions over the phone and work from home to maintain service delivery, including portions of Community Justice and Policing operations, Legal Aid, Probations and corporate management functions.
- Communication plans are in place to respond to changes in any service delivered by the department (essential or not). In the event of service delivery changes or disruptions advisories are planned through notifications to key stakeholders, website updates, posting of signage and through corporate communications.

- In the event of severe impacts (and on a “worst case scenario” basis) several areas within the department may close depending on staff levels and the potential need to redeploy non-essential personnel to maintain essential operations. Areas that are subject to closure in these circumstances include:
 - Maintenance Enforcement
 - Rental Office
 - Office of the Public Trustee
 - OROGO
 - Legal Registries
 - Family Information Liaison Units
 - Corporate management functions
- Given that several of these areas have statutory mandates it could be necessary to introduce legislation to retroactively “bless” a shutdown.

Background

- The COVID-19 respiratory virus was first detected in Wuhan, China in December 2019.
- An outbreak was declared a Public Health Emergency of International Concern on January 3, 2020 by the World Health Organization (WHO).
- The COVID-19 viral disease was declared a pandemic by the WHO on March 11, 2020.

Appendix A

Department of Justice Essential Services: COVID-19 Response

Operating Area	Essential Services	Continuity of Delivery
Corporate Management Functions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legal Division to support HSS/MACA (emergency issues) • Legislative support to HSS/MACA (emergency issues) • Media/policy support to Minister and Department 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remote work capabilities enabled if required.
Coroner's Office	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emergency services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key Community Coroner's have been identified to assist in a back-up capacity if needed. • Remote work capabilities enabled if required (to provide support to community based Coroner's)
Public Trustee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distribution of payments on behalf of represented persons 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remote work capabilities enabled if required.
OROGO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incident Response 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remote work capabilities enabled if required.
Maintenance Enforcement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Payment distribution 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remote work capabilities enabled if required.
NWT Courts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service delivery pursuant to Chief Justice and Chief Judge's direction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prioritization of courts, remote work capabilities enabled for portions of service delivery, staff re-deployment

		identified if required.
Victim Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Victims of Crime Emergency Fund payments • Support to victim service workers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remote work capabilities enabled if required.
Correctional Facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safe and secure custody of inmates 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contingency plans implemented as needed.
Probation Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Court ordered client contacts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remote work capabilities enabled if required.



Department of Justice 2020 Transition Binder

Corrections

The Corrections Service provides safe custody and supervision of adults and youth offenders. This is achieved through the operation of correctional facilities and the supervision of offenders sentenced to community based orders such as conditional sentences and probation orders. The Corrections Service delivers culturally relevant programs to support offender rehabilitation and reintegration, with input and support of Elders, traditional liaison officers and First Nations staff.

CURRENT STATUS

The programming offered to offenders in NWT correctional facilities is planned as a considered response to an individual's risk assessment conducted as part of the case management process. The Department recognizes that in order to make a difference, programming in correctional facilities must be designed to address an offender's criminogenic needs. Programming is continually adjusted to address these needs and delivered in a way that recognizes the importance of Indigenous culture and takes into account the short time for which most territorial inmates are incarcerated. All correctional facilities and community corrections offices provide drug and alcohol, as well as violence and intimate partner violence programming toward offender rehabilitation and reintegration into their communities.

BACKGROUND

The Minister's role under this activity is to:

- Make statutory appointments to support the performance of functions outlined in legislation:
 - The Director of Corrections as per the *NWT Corrections Act*;
 - Youth Workers under the *Youth Criminal Justice Act*.
 - People to investigate and inquire into any matter connected with or affecting the administration and operation of the Corrections Service, or delegate this authority to the Director of Corrections as per the *NWT Corrections Act*.
- Establish or discontinue correctional facilities.
- Ensure the Corrections Service has the appropriate resources necessary to operate and carry out its mandate under the *Corrections Act*.
- Enter into an Exchange of Services Agreement with Correctional Services Canada (CSC) and Nunavut for the incarceration of offenders.
- Authorize the transfer of an inmate to a penitentiary (an operational authority which has been delegated to the Director).
- Enter into an Exchange of Services with CSC for community assessments and supervision of statutory-release and parole clients.
- Make regulations pursuant to the *Corrections Act and Youth Justice Act*.



Department of Justice 2020 Transition Binder

- Some refining to the Minister's role may be forthcoming arising from new corrections legislation which received assent in August 2019 but is not yet in force. One of the key changes to the Act is to establish oversight and independent decision making through the establishment of an Investigations and Standards Office and adjudicators. Another key change is the establishment of independent Community Advisory Boards.

Correctional facilities

Correctional facilities carry out judges' orders. They cannot make new orders, force offenders into custody, or hold offenders in custody after their sentences expire.

There are three correctional complexes in the NWT:

- The North Slave Correctional Complex (NSCC) in Yellowknife is comprised of an adult male unit and a separate youth unit. The two units share administration but are otherwise entirely separate.

The NSCC adult unit (capacity: 148) is a multi-level (minimum, medium, maximum) adult male correctional facility that provides placement and programming for a majority of the remanded inmates and higher risk inmates who require additional security measures. Female inmates can be temporarily housed in a dedicated section of the adult unit for short stays, such as related to court appearances or while awaiting transfer to the Fort Smith Correctional Complex Women's Unit in Fort Smith.

The NSCC youth unit (capacity: 25) is a co-ed youth correctional facility that provides placement and programming for all young offenders who are incarcerated in the NWT. This includes those remanded, as well as those sentenced to open and/or secure custody in the NWT.

- The South Mackenzie Correctional Centre (SMCC) in Hay River (capacity: 54) is currently a minimum security male correctional facility that provides placement and programming for lower-risk inmates with an enhanced focus on Indigenous programming and substance abuse treatment. This facility will be transitioned to operate as a Therapeutic Community. The transition is anticipated to take place sometime in the winter of 2020-21 once the necessary security enhancements to the interior of the building, perimeter fence and relevant training has been completed. No additional staffing resources are required for the operation of the Therapeutic Community. Presentations to the Hay River Community, government and non-government agencies have been completed.
- The Fort Smith Correctional Complex (FSCC) which houses separate units for adult male and female offenders respectively

The FSCC male unit (capacity: 21) is a minimum/medium adult male correctional facility that provides placement and programming for adult male inmates.



Department of Justice 2020 Transition Binder

The FSCC women's unit (capacity: 23) is a minimum/medium adult female correctional facility that provides placement and programming for adult female inmates with a gender responsive approach.

Most sentenced offenders in NWT correctional facilities are "territorial offenders," meaning they were sentenced in the NWT to terms shorter than two years.

Offenders who have been sentenced to terms longer than two years are "federal offenders". CSC makes the case-management and programming decisions about these offenders. Federal offenders are typically housed in federal penitentiaries; however, on a case-by-case basis they may serve portions of their federal sentence in the NWT, dependent upon security rating and programming needs. CSC makes recommendations to the Parole Board of Canada whether the offender is a good candidate for parole.

An increasing number of offenders are "remanded offenders", meaning they have not been found guilty of a crime but a judge has ordered them to be held in custody until their trial. Remanded offenders may voluntarily access rehabilitative programs.

Community Corrections – Probation Service

Probation is a court order that places the offender under the supervision and care of a probation officer instead of custody or following incarceration. Probation services include the supervision of both adult and youth offenders on probation, community supervision orders, conditional sentence orders, temporary absence permits, bail supervision, recognizance orders and undertakings. Probation services is provided to all NWT communities from 13 dedicated probation offices in the NWT as follows (each region has a probation manager):

- North Slave Region: Yellowknife, Behchokò.
- Inuvik Region: Inuvik, Norman Wells, Fort Good Hope, Tuktoyaktuk, Fort McPherson.
- South Slave Region: Hay River, Fort Smith, Fort Providence, Fort Resolution, Fort Simpson, Fort Liard.

Parole is an administrative decision to release an offender from custody under the authority of the Parole Board of Canada. Under the Exchange of Services Agreement with the CSC, probation officers supervise federal parolees in communities without parole officers.

More generally, probation staff are responsible for providing pre-sentence reports, progress review reports, report updates and other reports upon request to the territorial and supreme courts. Probation officers assist with reintegration planning of both adults and youth in custody who are transitioning to the community. Probation officers also deliver rehabilitative programming to adult offenders in the community.



Department of Justice 2020 Transition Binder

FACTORS

COVID-19

The Department of Justice has been actively exploring options available to reduce the number of inmates within NWT correctional facilities in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. This has included the granting of temporary absences for releasing inmates on a case-by-case and risk assessed basis.

In March 2020 and in consultation with the Chief Public Health Officer, visits and programming provided by community resources were temporarily suspended by the Corrections Service. Screening and safety measures were implemented in NWT correctional facilities in response to Covid-19. As of July 2020, visits and external programming was resumed in correctional facilities, while safety measures and screening remain in place.

In March 2020, probation offices were restricted for in person reporting by offenders, and the majority of probation staff worked from home. Reporting during this time occurred via telephone. As of July 2020, probation offices have reopened for offenders to report in person with appropriate safety measures in place.

Legal:

The *Corrections Act* (NWT) governs this activity. The legislative framework was modernized and Bill 45, *Corrections Act* received assent in the Legislative Assembly on August 23, 2019. The new legislation will come into force on a date to be fixed by order of the Commissioner, after the Corrections Service Regulations, all associated policy development and training has been completed. The new legislation incorporates significant changes in the field of corrections since the 1980s when the priority was good governance of correctional facilities whereas now the emphasis is on the rehabilitation of offenders.

Financial:

The Youth Justice Services Agreement and Intensive Rehabilitative Custody and Supervision Agreement partially fund the operation of the North Slave Correctional Complex-Youth Unit along with other areas within the department that have a focus on youth within the criminal justice system (probation and Community Justice Committees). These two agreements contribute just under \$2.8 million annually to Corrections.

Agreements with Nunavut and CSC allow Nunavut and federal offenders to be placed in NWT facilities where appropriate. The Department recovers the full cost of housing federal and Nunavut inmates through the agreements.



Department of Justice 2020 Transition Binder

Interdepartmental:

Looking at the personal characteristics of offenders, it is clear that the issues that can lead an individual to commit crime and become involved with the criminal justice system are many of the same as those being addressed by the health, housing, social services and education systems. It only makes sense that a coordinated approach holds the most promise for making positive changes in the life of offenders and the communities in which they reside.

KEY DATES

- **Corrections Act:** the department is anticipating the full implementation of the new *Corrections Act* during the summer of 2021. In addition, the department will be submitting a legislative proposal to amend the area of inmate discipline within the *Corrections Act*, more specifically surrounding the appeals of inmate discipline and the powers of the Director of Investigations and Standards. The Department does not anticipate any legal, political or other issues associated with the proposal as the changes are minor in nature. It is anticipated that the proposed bill can be introduced during the October/November 2020 sitting of the Legislative Assembly.
- **Corrections Service Regulations:** the drafting of the Regulations is nearing completion. The department anticipates completion by winter 2020-21, as these will come into force alongside the *Corrections Act*.
- **Therapeutic Community:** the department has been working towards the transition of the South Mackenzie Correctional Centre into a facility that operates under a Therapeutic Community model. The department anticipates the transition to occur winter 2020-21.



Corrections Service – Briefing

- 2020 Transition

Presentation Outline

- Corrections Service Overview
 - Operations, Demographics, Programs, Staff
 - Impact of COVID-19 on operations
- Therapeutic Community
 - SMCC
- NWT *Corrections Act*
 - Highlights and Implementation
- Next Steps
 - Business Plan, Priority areas

The Corrections Service

- 3 Facilities
 - North Slave Correctional Complex (NSCC) *Youth Unit and Adult Unit
 - South Mackenzie Correctional Centre (SMCC)
 - Fort Smith Correctional Complex (FSCC) *Men's Unit and Women's Unit
- 13 Probation Offices
 - North Slave Region
 - South Slave/Dehcho Region
 - Inuvik/Beaufort Delta/Sahtú Region
 - Probation offices serve all NWT communities



The Corrections Service has 3 Correctional Facilities and 13 Probation Offices

120 Funded FTE's at NSCC – Adult & Youth Units

Adult Unit capacity: 148

Youth Unit capacity: 25

44 Funded FTE's at FSCC – Men's & Women's Units

Men's Unit capacity: 21

Women's Unit capacity: 23

37 Funded FTE's at SMCC

SMCC capacity: 54

Total capacity (all facilities)

Adult = 246

Youth = 25

Affirmative Action Statistics

As of September 2020:

64% of our Management and Supervisory teams at the correctional facilities are Indigenous Employees

33% of our Program staff and 24% of our Corrections Officers are Indigenous Employees

Community Corrections

North Slave Region

Yellowknife(8)

Detah, Łutsek'e and Ndilq

Behchokq(2)

Gamèti, Wekweèti and Whatì

South Slave/Dehcho Region

Hay River(6)

Enterprise, Kakisa and K'atlodeeche FN

Fort Smith(2)

Fort Simpson(2)

Jean Marie River and Wrigley

Fort Liard(2)

Nahanni Butte and Trout Lake

Fort Providence(1)

Fort Resolution(1)

Inuvik/Beaufort Delta/Sahtú Region

Inuvik(8)

Uluhaktok, Aklavik, Paulatuk

Tuktoyaktuk(1)

Fort McPherson(1)

Tsiigetichic

Norman Wells(2)

Colville Lake, Tulita and Deline

Fort Good Hope(1)

The core responsibilities of our Probation Officers is to:

Provide community re-entry support in collaboration with facility case managers
Provide supervision for offenders while on probation
Deliver Criminogenic Programs to offenders (statistics captured in an upcoming slide)
Probation Officers also provide Bail supervision, and Parole supervision where Parole Officers are not present (everywhere but Yellowknife)

We have a number of Community Corrections regions in the Northwest Territories that are separated into three general regions.

North Slave Region

North Slave Region has 2 offices. The main office in Yellowknife which has a complement of 8 employees which also provides services to Dettah, Lutsel K'e and N'dillo.

There is also an office in Behchoko with 2 employees who provide services in Gameti, Wekweeti and Whati.

South Slave Region

South Slave region has 6 offices with it's main office in Hay River. The Hay River office has 6 employees who also cover Enterprise, Kakisa and Katlodeeche First Nation.

Fort Smith has 2 employees

Fort Simpson has 2 employees and they also cover Jean Marie River and Wrigley

Fort Liard has 2 employees and also cover Nahanni Butte and Trout Lake

We also have offices in Fort Providence and Fort Resolution which each have one employee.

Inuvik/Beaufort Delta/Sahtu Region

In the Inuvik Beaufort Delta region, the main office is in Inuvik with 8 employees that also covers Aklavik, Uluhaktok and Paulatuk

Tuktoyaktuk has 1 employee

Fort McPherson has 1 employee that also covers Tsiigetichic

Norman Wells has 2 employees who also cover Colville Lake, Tulita and Deline.

Fort Good Hope has 1 employee

Some of the challenges facing Community Corrections:

Human Resources; and

Isolated communities requiring significant travel to provide supervision and program delivery.

Human Resources is by far the biggest challenge facing Community Corrections, specifically in smaller isolated communities. There has been a marked decline in eligible applicants applying on Probation Officer positions in communities outside of Hay River, Yellowknife and Inuvik. Those selected are generally not staying as long.

Some communities require considerable travel for Probation Officers to meet with clients. These conditions make regular reporting and program facilitation challenging for Probation Officers.

Facility Demographics

NWT Inmates

- 2019-20 83% of adults in custody were Indigenous
- 2019-20 Average age adults: Males – 34; Females – 32
- Total count adult inmates – 105 (as of September 15th, 2020)
- Total capacity adult inmates – 246
- Total count youth in custody – 2 (as of September 15th, 2020)
- Total capacity youth – 25

This slide provides a picture of the inmate population in the NWT:

Statistics indicate that 83% of the adult inmates in NWT correctional facilities identify as Indigenous and this statistic remains fairly consistent from year to year.

In 2019-20, 83% of all males in NWT correctional facilities identify as Indigenous, and 88% of all females in NWT correctional facilities identify as Indigenous.

Similarly, as of September 15th, 2020: 100% of our young offenders in custody are Indigenous. Currently there are 2 in custody at the youth unit.

Statistics Canada recently reported that violent crime statistics increased by 13 percent in the NWT in 2018.

A vast majority of the inmates incarcerated in the NWT are young Indigenous men.

In response, NWT correctional facilities offer a range of programs that incorporate Indigenous culture and traditions. These programs are designed to help offenders address the issues that led to their incarceration and support reintegration into their communities.

Elders are a significant part of this programming as are land based programs and activities which aim to build on the positive steps an inmate takes while in the correctional facility.

Offender count data for 15 September 2020, as an example, indicates that:

The total count of adult inmates in NWT facilities on that day was: 105 out of a capacity for 246

The total count of Federal or Nunavut offenders in NWT facilities on that day was: 7

Offender count data for 15 September 2019, as an example, indicates that:

The total count of adult inmates in NWT facilities on that day was: 179 out of a capacity for 246

The total count of Federal or Nunavut offenders in NWT facilities on that day was: 20

There are other details that assist in giving us a picture of the inmate population:

Over the course of each inmate's stay in a correctional facility there can be numerous inmate transactions including admissions, transfers, releases, escorts for sentenced, remanded and intermittent inmates which are conducted on a daily basis. This has implications for how we program and how we staff facilities.

The remand population is challenging in providing required programming for rehabilitation and positive reintegration into the community as the time for doing so is short. Remands may attend criminogenic programs on a voluntary basis.

As the number of remanded inmates increases so does the associated requirement for more escorts outside of the facility including court appearances and medical treatment, which creates pressure on existing staff resources.

Average Sentence Lengths

Average Territorial (Adult) Sentence Length

(Based on 2019-20 Admissions data)

Males – 207 days
Females – 194 days

Average Youth Sentence Length

(Based on 2019-20 Admissions data)

Males – 188 days
Females – N/A

Average sentence lengths:

Based on NWT Corrections Service (Admissions data – ADULTS)

In 2019-20, the average adult Territorial sentence length is 207 days for males and 194 days for females.

In 2018-19, the average adult Territorial sentence length was 145 days for males and 164 days for females.

Based on NWT Corrections Service (Admissions data – YOUTH)

In 2019-20, the average youth sentence length was 188 days for males and the sentence length for females was unavailable.

In 2018-19, the average youth sentence length was 155 days for males and the sentence length for females was unavailable.

Average number of days in custody after Remission is applied:

In 2019-20, on average, a male adult inmate would serve approximately 138 days in custody after earned remission has been applied to the average sentence.

In 2018-19, on average, a male adult inmate would serve approximately 100 days in custody after earned remission has been applied to the average sentence.

The majority of case management and programming services are applied to offenders sentenced to 90 days or more.

Program Descriptions

- **Substance Abuse Management (SAM)***
- **Living Without Violence (LWV)***
- **Respectful Relationships (RR)***
- **Thinking Leads to Change (TLC)***
- Northern Sessions
- Change Management Maintenance Program
- Territorial Sex Offender Program
- Pre-Treatment Healing Program
- Red Road to Freedom
- Foundations for Success
- Mental Health First Aid
- Education
- Life Skills/Vocational Training



*Core criminogenic programming

Correctional programs are designed to target factors directly linked to offender's criminal behaviour in order to reduce re-offending. These programs address offender's needs through overall skill development and behavioural change. All Corrections programs integrate Indigenous culture and traditions in the way they are delivered. This is accomplished through the input of Elders, traditional liaison officers and Indigenous staff.

Programs delivered by NWT correctional staff are designed to take into consideration the needs of Indigenous offenders, average length of stay in custody and include evidence based criminogenic programs with Psychoeducational components (e.g. substance abuse, violence), educational/vocational programs and life skills programs. We have several programs available within our correctional facilities and since 2016 our probation officers have also been facilitating core criminogenic programming in the community.

Offenders who are unable to participate in criminogenic programming due to cognitive limitations are considered for a program equivalency plan.

Remanded inmates can access, on a voluntary basis, the same programs that are offered to sentenced offenders.

Substance Abuse Management (SAM) is available to male and female offenders with substance abuse identified as an area of need.

Living Without Violence (LWV) and Respectful Relationships (RR) is available to male offenders with generalized violence and relationship violence identified as an area of need.

Thinking Leads to Change (TLC) targets female offenders with anti-social and criminal behaviours.

Each of the core criminogenic programs (SAM, LWV, RR & TLC) were developed using a gender-responsive, trauma-informed, and cognitive-behavioural approach. Participant and facilitator feedback forms are integrated into each program.

Each of the core programs are between 10-12 sessions with each session scheduled to take between 2-2.5 hours.

PRE-COVID In the community, the program is generally delivered once-twice per week over a 5-10 week period while in the correctional centre, three-four sessions are generally delivered per week over a three week period.

For the most part, these programs are delivered in a group setting; however, they can also be delivered one-on-one when required.

The modular design of these programs supports the fact that offenders can start these programs while in custody and complete them when out in the community and vice-versa.

To further enhance the cultural considerations highlighted by the psychoeducational criminogenic programs the Department has developed and implemented Northern Sessions to be delivered in synchronization with the criminogenic programs.

Northern Sessions for Addictions and Violence are currently available to offenders at SMCC and the Division is looking to expand delivery into other locations. See Business Plan slide for more information.

Change Management: Maintenance Program utilizes the Wellness Wheel and provides structure for the ongoing review of information and tools from the criminogenic programs to help offenders maintain change in beliefs, thoughts, attitudes, behaviours, skills, and habits that originally led them to criminal behaviour.

Change Management is currently available to offenders who have completed one or more of the core criminogenic programs.

It is available at the NSCC, FSCC and Yellowknife probation and the Division is currently looking to expand delivery into other locations.

As a result of longer periods of remand incarceration, the serving time of sexual offenders is shorter making it difficult to provide the federal sex offender program to this population.

The federal program model takes approximately 5 months to deliver one program and unfortunately does not support continuous intake.

As a result, the Sex Offender Program model for Territorial inmates has went through some changes so as to target the needs of our sex offenders serving territorial sentences.

We have re-developed a previous program model used for sex offenders that is more suited to the needs of this specific group and takes into account the time they are actually in our custody.

The length of this modified program is 9 weeks.

Federally sentenced sex offenders will not be included in this program stream as they are under the supervision of CSC.

Pre-Treatment Healing and Red Road to Freedom are Indigenous traditional culturally based programs available at the SMCC.

Foundations for Success is available at FSCC and NSCC with plans to expand to the SMCC as well.

Mental Health First Aid training is available to inmates at the NSCC.

We also recognize the importance of offering programs and opportunities that support inmates in meeting their educational goals.

Program Descriptions

- **Substance Abuse Management (SAM)***
- **Living Without Violence (LWV)***
- **Respectful Relationships (RR)***
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- Northern Sessions
- Change Management Maintenance Program
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- Pre-Treatment Healing Program
- Red Road to Freedom
- Foundations for Success
- Mental Health First Aid
- Education
- Life Skills/Vocational Training



*Core criminogenic programming

We have institutional instructors who deliver education programming at the NSCC and FSCC and have a contract for services with a literacy instructor at the SMCC.

Our educational staff work closely with local high schools and colleges to offer a range of educational programming .

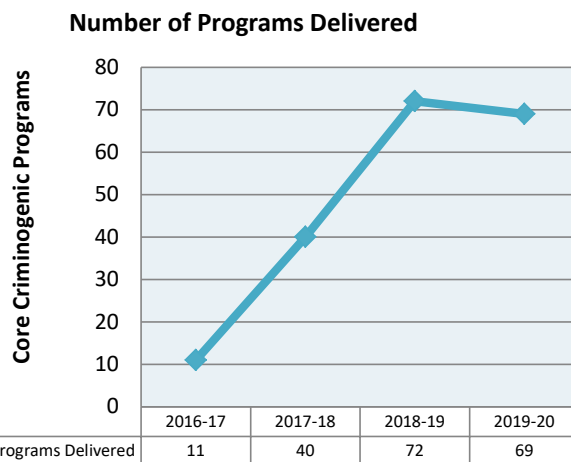
In addition, inmates may access distance learning with the assistance of the institutional instructors and those who are eligible for temporary absence may also attend education programs in the community.

In 2019-20, 184 inmates accessed the educational programming available within our adult correctional facilities.

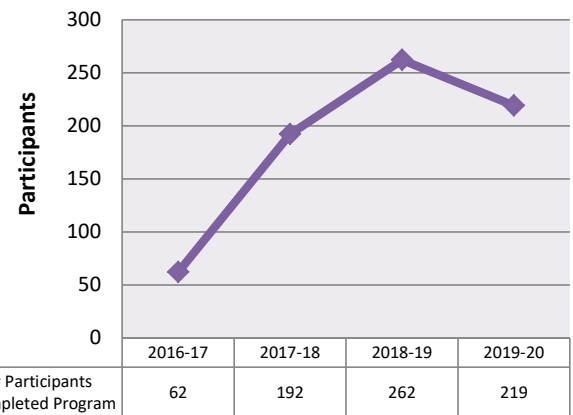
Life Skills and Vocational Training opportunities are available at all facilities through formal and informal sessions and workshops. These range from assistance in creating resumes to healthy eating programs.

Criminogenic Program Delivery Statistics

Government of
Northwest Territories



Number of Participants Completed Program



Since the implementation of criminogenic programs (**SAM, LWV, RR & TLC**) targeting Territorial offenders in 2016, over 700 participants have successfully completed programs to address identified needs.

This chart details the criminogenic programs (Substance Abuse Management, Living Without Violence, Respectful Relationships and Thinking Leads to Change) delivered in both custody and community probation offices and participant completion since implementation in 2016 to March 31 2020.

Since implementation over 700 participants have successfully completed programs to address criminogenic needs.

From this number, community corrections has delivered 83 programs in 12 different communities of the NWT, which has resulted in 201 community clients successfully completing programs to target their identified needs. Communities of delivery include: Yellowknife, Behchokò, Whatì, Inuvik, Fort Good Hope, Fort McPherson, Hay River, Fort Resolution, Fort Simpson, Fort Smith, Fort Providence, and Fort Liard.

Program schedules are developed based on client needs, they are then compiled from all locations on a quarterly bases and posted to the Corrections SharePoint site to assist case managers and probation officers in timely referrals to programs to ensure that the client receives the identified program at the right time.

COVID-19

Correctional Facilities

- Actively reducing the # of inmates in custody
- Medical screening
- Visits
- Staff safety
- Contingency plans in place

Probation Offices

- Restrictions on office access
- Staff working from home
- Clients reporting via phone (March – June)
- July 2020 *offices re-opened for in-person reporting



Correctional Facility Operations

Corrections is working closely with the Office of the Chief Public Health Officer to continuously assess procedures within the facilities and adjust operations as necessary to ensure the safety and wellbeing of both staff and inmates.

We have been actively reducing the number of inmates in custody through the use of temporary absences. Case-by-case and risk assessed basis.

All inmates entering NWT Correctional facilities are required to be medically screened.

Screening procedures include:

A COVID-19 specific screening questionnaire

Temperature check (as part of regular medical screening)

If an inmate is symptomatic they are isolated in identified cells and COVID-19 testing is conducted by health service staff. To date all tests for COVID-19 have come back negative, and no tests are outstanding.

Inmates are provided with reusable cloth masks and information pertaining safety precautions pertaining to COVID-19 (e.g. cleaning practices, physical distancing, etc).

From March – June in-person visits and access to external programming for inmates was subject to restrictions; however, in July 2020 these services were resumed for inmates with applicable safety measures and screening in place. This will continue to be monitored.

To further support inmates in maintaining contact with loved ones and supports out in the community, virtual visit stations have been implemented in correctional facilities.

Staff Safety

Daily screening at the beginning of their shift

Reusable cloth masks have been provided

Regular communications are provided to staff on any procedural changes and safety practices

OHS meetings are being held

Staff vacation leave resumed in June 2020 (was suspended in March)

Facilities have active cleaning protocols in place

Contingency plans are in place in the event of a positive COVID-19 case being identified in one of our correctional facilities.

Operational contingencies include:

Isolating inmates who are sick in designated areas within the facilities;

Closing and/or repurposing smaller facilities

Redeploying facility staff

As a last resort and only in the case of severe staff shortages, lock downs would be considered. This would in part be needed for the safety of redeployed staff who may have limited security training.

Any inmate who is symptomatic will be locked down and isolated outside the living units. They would still be offered daily showers and fresh air and ongoing consultation by Corrections with the Office of the Chief Public Health Officer would determine the best courses of action for implementing isolation and maintaining inmate wellbeing.

Probation Offices

In March 2020, probation offices were restricted for in person reporting by offenders, and the majority of probation staff worked from home.

Client reporting March – June occurred via telephone.

As of July 2020, probation offices have reopened for offenders to report in person with appropriate safety measures in place.

For the safety and security of all, we may need to once again implement restrictions surrounding access to our correctional facilities and community probation offices, in line with the current COVID-19 situation in the NWT.

COVID-19

Correctional Facilities

- Actively reducing the # of inmates in custody
- Medical screening
- Visits
- Staff safety
- Contingency plans in place

Probation Offices

- Restrictions on office access
- Staff working from home
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NWT Corrections Act

Highlights and Implementation

- Regulations/Policy Development
- Investigations and Standards Office
- Authorities for search and monitoring
- Limits on the use of separate confinement (use of adjudicators who are independent from the correctional facility)
- Employee code of conduct
- Clarify linkages between case planning and programming
- Establishment of community advisory boards
- Staff Training

Number: 1 Author: Presenter Subject: Presentation Notes Date: 4/22/2021 8:31:01 AM
Key changes in the new Corrections Act include:

Establish oversight by an Investigations and Standards Office and provide for independent decision-making in disciplinary matters and the use of separate confinement

The establishment of guiding principles for the Corrections Service

Provide for the establishment of independent Community Advisory Boards

Provide for Indigenous governments that have not enacted their own corrections legislation in the context of self-government legislation to be involved in the delivery of corrections programs and services

Increase authorities related to the search and monitoring of those in a correctional centre or seeking to enter a correctional centre

Clarify the appropriate use of separate confinement, including time limits, independent oversight and authorities for placement

Provide for the development of a Corrections Employee Code of Conduct that employees and service providers are required to follow

Clarify the link between case planning and programming for remanded persons, sentenced offenders in facilities, and offenders in community-based corrections

Provide for the establishment of a notification program that respects the rights of victims and includes a victim-offender mediation program

Legislative Proposal: The department will be submitting a legislative proposal to amend the area of inmate discipline within the Corrections Act, more specifically surrounding the appeals of inmate discipline and the powers of the Director of Investigations and Standards. The Department does not anticipate any legal, political or other issues associated with the proposal as the changes are minor in nature. It is anticipated that the proposed bill can be introduced during the October/November 2020 sitting of the Legislative Assembly.

Implementation of the new Corrections Act: which includes Regulations, policy development and staff training.

The drafting of the Regulations is nearing completion. We anticipate completion by winter 2020-21, as these will come into force alongside the Corrections Act.

We are anticipating the full implementation of the new Corrections Act to occur during the summer of 2021.

Transition of South Mackenzie Correctional Centre to the Therapeutic Community Model

- Therapeutic communities use active participation in group living and activities to drive individual change.
- There is an emphasis on social learning and mutual self-help.
- Individual participants take on some of the responsibility for their peers' recovery.

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Transition of the SMCC into a facility that operates under a Therapeutic Community Model

During the planning process and development of the therapeutic community, we are reaching out to as many community organizations, local governments, departments, agencies and non-profit organizations to build a support network to assist with community re-entry.

The Department has developed a work plan to organize the various elements of the transition which includes Operational Model development, Programming content, Structural Upgrades, Staff Training, Communication, Transition/Implementation stage and Community Re-entry planning.

Our goal is to ensure that where possible, resources, supports and mentors outside of the therapeutic community are connected with the resident and invited to participate and support in the transition process.

We will continue this engagement with presentations to government and community groups to assist and support implementation of the model at the SMCC.

The Therapeutic Community model uses:

active participation in group living and activities to drive individual change;

places an emphasis on social learning and mutual self help; and

Supports an environment where individual participants take on some of the responsibility for their peers' recovery.

The Program Framework designed for the Therapeutic Community has been developed using the "Seven Laws of Living" and the traditional Medicine Wheel which supports the cultural teachings of Indigenous peoples. The Framework incorporates opening and closing ceremonies, sharing circles, drumming, smudging and traditional land based teachings through the invitation of local Elders and an overall support towards community connectedness.

Guthrie House

The Department has reviewed research materials and impact analysis reports based on the Therapeutic Community model out of BC - Guthrie House, a pilot project established in 2006 on the grounds of the Nanaimo Correctional Centre.

A number of site visits to the Guthrie Therapeutic Community were conducted. The ADM Solicitor General, the Director of Corrections, SMCC management, corrections officers, and program staff have all participated in these visits over the last few years. Conversations were held with officials and staff at the Nanaimo Correctional Centre and with the inmates themselves, who were a part of the community.

SMCC construction updates

The main portion perimeter fence construction has been completed however, some works remains with an anticipated date of November/December 2020.

The interior retrofit is currently underway with completion anticipated for November/December 2020.

On grounds programming

The enhancements to the facility and property will allow for participation by sentenced inmates whose risk levels require such an environment; however, allows more freedom of movement within those boundaries which also provides additional programming space; including space for cultural and spiritual activities and areas for the residents to walk outside and reflect upon their day.

Enhanced security for program purposes

A unique classification has been created for the operation of the community taking into consideration the physical environment, the inmate population, proximity to victims of personal violence offences, and the offender's need for the program.

High security offenders, those whose current offence is a sexual offense, and those with a recent history of institutional violence, or a recent history of escape will not be eligible to participate in the therapeutic community due to security considerations.

Training/Opening

A training plan has been developed which includes the assistance of the John Howard Society out of Nanaimo (who currently handle the TC training items for BC Corrections). Staff training is anticipated to be completed winter 2021.

To allow for staff training, Corrections will organize and facilitate the movement of inmates out of the SMCC to NSCC or FSCC, and then transition the inmates back to SMCC.

Transition of South Mackenzie Correctional Centre to the Therapeutic Community Model

- Therapeutic communities use active participation in group living and activities to drive individual change.
- There is an emphasis on social learning and mutual self-help.
- Individual participants take on some of the responsibility for their peers' recovery.

The transition is anticipated to take place sometime in the spring of 2021, once the necessary security enhancements to the perimeter fence, interior building and relevant staff training have been completed.

No additional staffing resources are required for the operation of the Therapeutic Community.

Performance Assurance and Accountability Framework

- A system of measurements to guide and shape the operations of the Corrections Service by informing decisions on offender safety and supervision, staff training and risk.
- Increases transparency and accountability through regular reporting and communication.
- Defines Key Performance Indicators for both custodial and community corrections under the categories of safety and security, case management, programming, human resources, and administration.

The PAAF is used by the Department to align strategic goals, drive employee development, encourage communication and improve efficiency of operations.

Several quality assurance and performance compliance exercises have been initiated in the last few years under the umbrella of PAAF. Including:

Segregation and Separate Confinement Monitoring – Information from facilities is received by the Manager, Sentence Administration & Systems and reviewed twice weekly. This information is compiled and forms the basis of monthly, quarterly and annual data.

Monitoring and trend analysis of incidents. Compilation of quarterly Corrections Act related incidents reports from correctional facilities.

Monitoring and trend analysis of contraband related incidents. Compilation of annual contraband incident related reports from correctional facilities.

Monitoring of program schedules. Compilation of quarterly program schedules from each of the correctional facilities and probation offices.

Monitoring and analysis of program delivery – through the use of facilitator and participant feedback forms that are submitted to HQ upon completion of each program.

Compilation of quarterly program delivery statistics.

Full Operational Review of the FSCC (December 2018)

Implementation of Self-Auditing Report Exercises (2019-2020) – targeting each of the correctional facilities and probation offices. These exercises were developed through a quality assurance process and included a number of policy implementation questions for Wardens/Managers to respond to and provide proof of compliance documentation for verification. These exercises focus on compliance in the following areas:

- Case management and Program Delivery (risk assessments, primary needs, program interventions, case plans, release plans, monitoring progress)
- Mental health (screening, access to services and follow up)
- Security (surveillance, contraband, searches, frisks)
- Workplace Safety (occupational health and safety, inspections, fire drills)
- Overtime monitoring
- Training (tracking and planning)

These reviews and quality assurance exercises are analyzed and assist the Division in improved monitoring of its key requirements. Results of the reviews and analysis also assist with informing policy revisions and any identified staff training needs.

Human Resources/Corrections Service

- Workplace Assessment (HR Atlantic)
- Inter-departmental Working Group (HR and Corrections Service)
- Staff Training
- Supports

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The Department continues to look at effective and innovative approaches to promote inclusiveness, fairness and equality within the Corrections Service.

Human Resources/Corrections Service

Jurisdictions across Canada have seen increases in work related injuries, predominantly of a psychological nature. This has also been the case in NWT Corrections which has seen an increase in mental health related workplace accommodations (e.g. PTSD).

Due to the complexities within a 24/7 operating environment there are ongoing difficulties in the retention and recruitment of frontline staff.

The FPT Heads of Corrections FPT recently established a working group on Employee Wellness, Recruitment and Retention as jurisdictions. The NWT Corrections Service has representation on this working group.

Workplace Assessment (HR Atlantic)

A Corrections workplace assessment by an independent consulting firm, HR Atlantic, is underway for completion by November 2020. The purpose is to identify workplace issues and ways to address these productively for the benefit of all in the workplace.

Interdepartmental Working Group (HR/Corrections)

An inter-departmental working group with officials from the departments of Justice and Finance (Human Resources) has been established to identify ways forward arising from the review, including staff training requirements and recruitment and retention.

The target in the 2020-23 Business Plan identifies that a Human Resources Plan for Corrections will be established by the end of 2020-21 and all initiatives in the plan will be implemented by 2024.

Staff Training and Supports

In September and October 2020, Corrections Service supervisors and managers are participating in a Mental Health Leadership Training program so they are better equipped to support employees.

Staff requiring supports are also encouraged to access the GNWT Employee and Family Assistance Program or to participate in GNWT staff training related to mental health and wellness in the workplace.

Business Plan

- Sex Offender Programming
- Youth Criminogenic Programming
- Expansion of Northern Sessions
- Bail Supervision Program



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Sex offender programming

We are looking to expand, adopt or develop sex offender programming more suited to our Territorial offenders and the length of time that they spend in custody.

The current programming model being used is not sustainable because the program length and closed group approach does not match the circumstances and needs of NWT offenders.

2018-19, 1 program delivered to 4 offenders

2019-20, 1 program delivered to 5 offenders

Current, 1 program delivered to 3 offenders with a second program started in August

Our goal is to have a sex offender program model that can be delivered in custody and in the community while providing continued maintenance supports for those sex offenders in the community with the assistance of probation officers.

Youth Criminogenic Programming

We are currently researching criminogenic program models that would be suitable for youthful offenders in the NWT.

Ideally we would like to be able to find a model that is flexible for delivery in facilities and in the community and allows for continuous intake similar to what is being offered to adult inmates.

Northern Sessions

The content in the Northern Sessions was originally created and compiled by traditional counsellors from the SMCC. The materials used are a compilation of researched information, activities, conversations with Elders, spiritual leaders and their own personal stories.

Northern Sessions are designed to be delivered in harmony with the core criminogenic programs (SAM, LWV, and RR)

Since implementation in 2018-19; the SMCC has delivered the Northern Sessions on substance abuse seven times, with a total of 38 inmates successfully completing the course.

We are planning to expand the delivery of Northern Sessions to the NSCC, FSCC and community probation offices in Yellowknife, Hay River and Fort Smith in spring 2020-21.

Bail Supervision Program

We are in the preliminary stages of identifying potential methods, programs and supports to enhance community stakeholder involvement in bail supervision.

The goal of these approaches would be to reduce the number of accused persons detained in pre-trial custody, provide accused persons with additional supports to be successful while on remand – at the same time as maintaining public safety.

Currently, bail supervision is provided in all NWT communities through Probation Services with Probation Officers providing the supervision.

As of June 1, 2020, there were 167 clients on bail supervision.

Next Steps

- Corrections Act Implementation Plan
 - Regulations
 - Policy development
 - Staff training
 - Replacement of CNRTP
- Therapeutic Community Opening
- Health Services Transition

The next steps for Corrections include:

Implementation of the new Corrections Act: which includes Regulations, policy development and staff training.

The drafting of the Regulations is nearing completion. We anticipate completion by winter 2020-21, as these will come into force alongside the Corrections Act.

We are anticipating the full implementation of the new Corrections Act to occur during the summer of 2021.

Transition and Opening of the Therapeutic Community at the SMCC

Based on current timeframes, we anticipate that the transition will occur winter 2020-21.

NSCC

Workplace Violence (Threat/Risk) Assessment (operational audit) – currently underway. Anticipate final report by end of calendar year (2020).

The transition of inmate health services to Health and Social Services

continuity of care/information sharing

Transfer of current nursing FTEs, Health Services Supervisor and inventory transfer

Corrections will retain Psychological, Counseling services and a dental contract

Covid-19 has placed a delay on this transition – currently anticipating that this will occur spring 2021

Policy development will occur

Replacement of CNRTP

Currently have a contract in place with a subject matter expert – who is working on a new curriculum, and facilitation materials for our CNRTP

Recruitment and retention

Leadership and supervisory training

Staff and management wellness training (workplace accommodations)

Trauma Informed Care for new recruits and in-service staff

Continued training in the areas of compassion fatigue and mental health first aid

De-escalation training, unit management/dynamic supervision, officer safety.