



Auditor General
MANITOBA

Report to the Legislative Assembly

Preparing Incarcerated Individuals for Transition from Custody

Independent Assurance Report

WEBSITE VERSION



March 2025

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March 2025

Honourable Tom Lindsey
Speaker of the Legislative Assembly
Room 244, Legislative Building
450 Broadway
Winnipeg, Manitoba R3C 0V8

Dear Honourable Speaker:

It is an honour to submit my report, titled *Preparing Incarcerated Individuals for Transition from Custody*, to be laid before Members of the Legislative Assembly in accordance with the provisions of Section 28 of *The Auditor General Act*.

Respectfully submitted,

Tyson Shtykalo, FCPA, FCA
Auditor General

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Auditor General's comments

Successfully reintegrating incarcerated people back into the community is vital to promoting public safety and giving these individuals the best opportunity to lead good lives.

The Correctional Services Division (the Division) is responsible for the safety and security of adults in custody. It is also responsible for preparing incarcerated individuals for their transition back into the community upon release.

Fulfilling these responsibilities is challenging.

The number of people held in Manitoba's jails is increasing, and the factors that lead to an individual's incarceration are complex. Indigenous people continue to be over-represented in Manitoba's jails and street gangs are prevalent. Mental health and addictions issues are significant.

Some good supports have been developed for inmates, however, these are only helpful to the extent that inmates access them. Additionally, connections to supports after release will aid in their transition to the community.

The Division's case management process currently focuses on sentenced inmates, limiting the help remanded individuals get to address the factors that brought them into contact with the criminal justice system. Most individuals in provincial custody are on remand—the case management process must change if their needs are to be considered.

This report includes 10 recommendations that will help the Division to better prepare incarcerated individuals to transition into the community.

I would like to thank the Division's management and staff for their cooperation and assistance throughout this audit, and I extend my appreciation to my audit team for their efforts in completing this important work.



Tyson Shtykalo, FCPA, FCA
Auditor General



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Report highlights

Why we did this audit

- The factors that lead to an individual's incarceration are complex. Addressing these issues is critical to successful reintegration into the community.
- Successful reintegration promotes public safety and the wellbeing of inmates.
- We wanted to determine whether the Correctional Services Division was preparing incarcerated individuals to transition from custody to the community.

Conclusion

The Correctional Services Division needs to do more to prepare incarcerated individuals for release from custody.

Our report includes
10 RECOMMENDATIONS.

What we found

Case management process

The case management process needs to be improved

- While health- and safety-related assessments are timely, other needs assessments are not always timely.
- Most inmates are held on remand and therefore do not receive formal assessments to guide their case planning and interventions.
- Group programming is limited, and often not tied to assessed needs.
- There is limited data and few performance measures to assess whether interventions are working.

Custody release plans

Custody release plans are done but do not effectively prepare inmates for release

- In many cases the plans did not include meaningful identification of long-term needs and actions needed to address those needs.

Supports for transition to the community

There are a lack of supports for inmates released from custody

- There is insufficient communication and collaboration between staff in correctional centres and Probation Services to help ensure a smooth transition from a correctional centre to the community.
- Continuity of care is lacking for inmates because medical services in correctional centres are separate from those same services in the community.
- There is little evidence of inmates being connected to outside resources while in custody.

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Background

In Canada, accused people awaiting trial and those sentenced to 2 years less a day in custody, or to probation or conditional sentences served in the community, enter the provincial corrections system. This system is administered in Manitoba by the Correctional Services Division within the Department of Justice (the Department).

Legislative framework

The Correctional Services Act establishes principles for conduct, decisions, and training relating to the administration of correctional services. It also establishes the responsibilities of the Commissioner of Correctional Services and custody facility heads, including inmate intake, case/release planning, security, and rehabilitation.

The stated purpose of *The Correctional Services Act* is to contribute to a safe, just and peaceful society by providing for:

- The management of custody sentences and supervision orders imposed on persons, with the appropriate degree of custody, supervision, and control essential for public safety.
- The safe, secure, and humane accommodation of persons who are in lawful custody.
- Appropriate programs, services, and encouragement to assist offenders to lead law-abiding and useful lives.

Provincial corrections system in Manitoba

The Correctional Services Division promotes public safety by delivering correctional services and programs both in the community and in custody. The Correctional Services Division is responsible for the safety and security of adults and youth serving custodial sentences or detained in custody pending a court decision, as well as the provision of community correctional services and programs. Total expenditures for the Correctional Services Division were budgeted at \$241 million in 2023/24.

The Probation and Restorative Justice branch (Probation Services) is responsible for delivering probation services throughout Manitoba, preparing pre-sentence reports for the benefit of court judges, as well as overseeing the government's services and initiatives related to restorative justice. This branch has approximately 293 full-time employees, and accounts for approximately 15% of the Correctional Services Division's expenses.

The Custody Corrections branch (Custody Corrections) manages adult offenders sentenced to less than 2 years custody and those remanded to custody. It also manages youth held in custody under *The Youth Criminal Justice Act* and provides services to help inmates reintegrate into society. It operates 6 adult correctional centres and one youth centre. This branch employs over 2,100 full- and part-time correctional staff, and accounts for approximately 85% of the Correctional Services Division's expenses.

People who are on **remand**, or remanded to custody, are detained in custody while awaiting trial or sentencing.

Adult correctional centres

Custody Corrections operates 5 adult correctional centres in Manitoba, as well as the Winnipeg Remand Centre. All these facilities hold both **remanded** and sentenced inmates, and 3 provide intake of individuals directly from law enforcement (**SEE FIGURE 1**).

Figure 1 – Adult correctional centres in Manitoba

Adult correctional centre	Primary population	Rated capacity	Intake facility
Headingley Correctional Centre	Male	549	No
Milner Ridge Correctional Centre	Male	524	No
Winnipeg Remand Centre	Male and female	289	Yes
Brandon Correctional Centre	Male and female	252	Yes
Women's Correctional Centre	Female	196	No
The Pas Correctional Centre	Male and female	114	Yes

Population in custody

According to data collected by the Department, in 2023 82% of adults sentenced to time in custody were identified as men and 18% as women.

Indigenous people are overrepresented in Manitoba's jails. Based on data obtained from the Department, 82% of inmates sentenced in 2023 were First Nations or Metis. In comparison, First Nations and Metis people make up 18% of Manitoba's population.

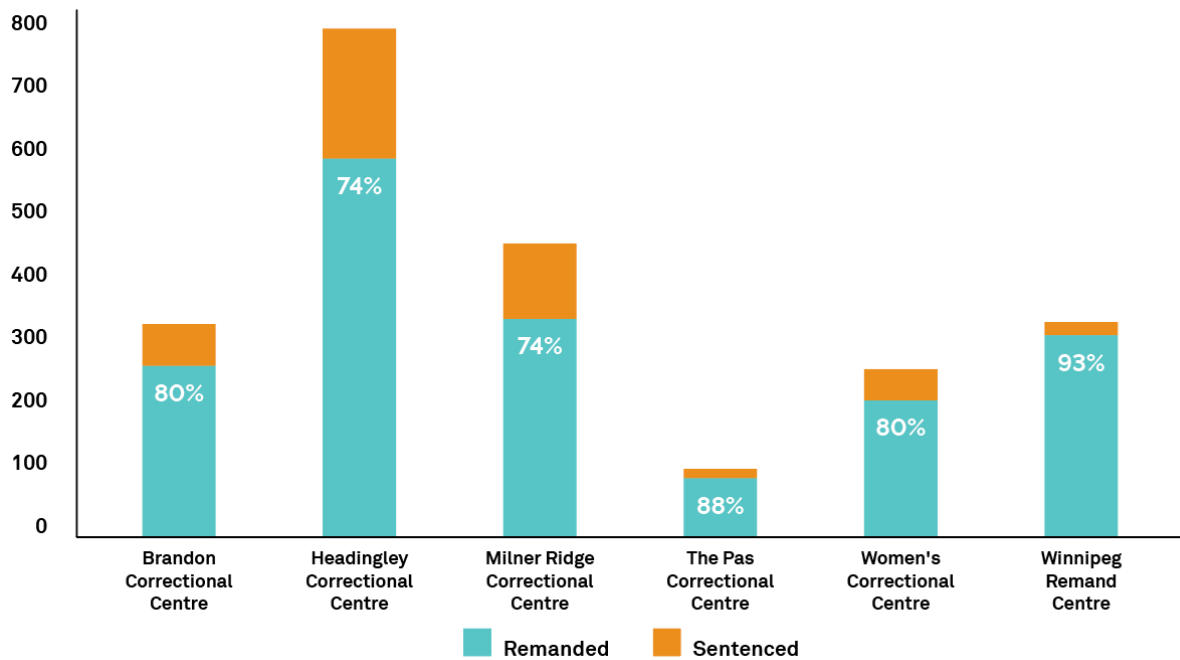
Mental health, addictions, and problematic substance use are common underlying factors among those in contact with the criminal justice system. According to the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH), mental illness rates are about 4 to 7 times more common in prison than in the community. Data obtained from the Department shows that 91% of inmates who completed a needs assessment in 2023 reported a problem with drugs, alcohol, or both. Six per cent of these inmates were identified as having a diagnosed serious mental disorder.

According to Custody Corrections, on average 17% of inmates in provincial custody are affiliated with gangs—and as many as 25% at one correctional centre. Many of these individuals must be kept separated for the safety of all inmates and staff. We were told that as gangs have become more diverse and complex, maintaining this separation has become more challenging for correctional centres.

In Manitoba, most inmates in custody are held on remand. This includes inmates held in all adult correctional centres (SEE FIGURE 2).

The average time a person is sentenced to custody in a provincial jail is short—on average less than 2 months. This complicates efforts to provide programming and underscores the importance of beginning to focus on release as soon as inmates arrive.

Figure 2 – Snapshot of remanded and sentenced inmates on August 7, 2024



Data provided by Correctional Services Division

Case management model

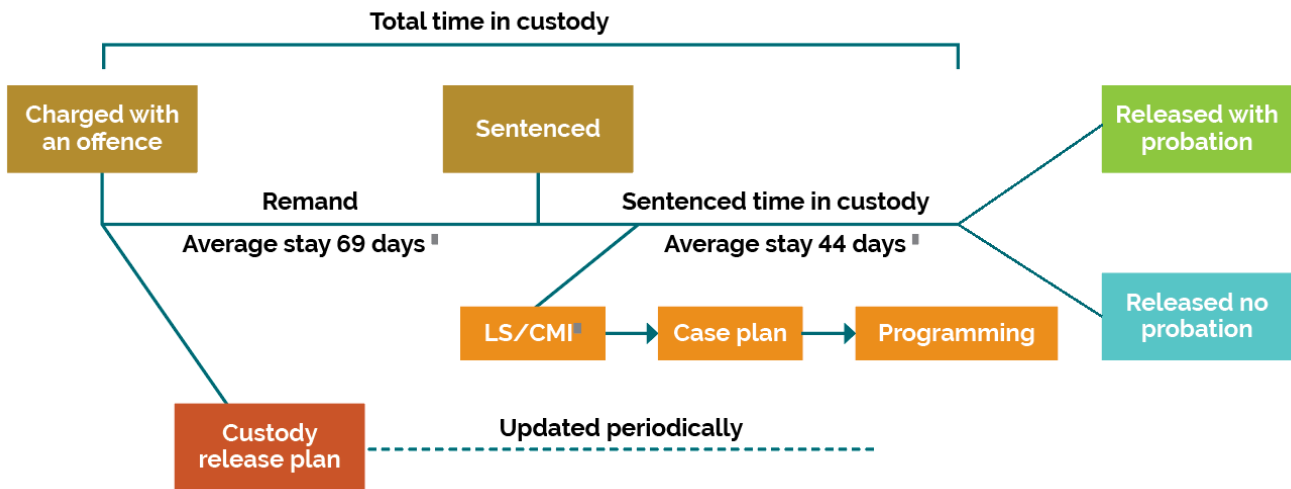
The Correctional Services Division uses a case management model to manage the risk presented by an offender in a manner that most effectively protects the public and effects change in the offender's criminal behaviour. This model states:

- Criminal behaviour is learned.
- Behaviour can change.
- Criminal behaviour is caused by multiple factors.
- There are strong predictors of criminal behaviour known as criminogenic needs factors.

The Correctional Services Division's Case Management Policy provides staff with information on how to:

- Assess the risk, needs and responsivity considerations presented by an offender.
- Develop case plans with the offender.
- Provide interventions (including supervision) to reduce recidivism.

Figure 3 – General flow of inmate through correctional system



¹ Average time spent in each respective status reported by the Department. Because some individuals do not serve time in remand and some do not serve additional time post sentencing, they cannot be added together to show total time in custody.

² LS/CMI (assessment of criminogenic needs) required within 28 days of sentencing.

Correctional Services Division defines **interventions** as an influencing force or act that occurs in order to modify an offender's criminal behaviour.

Corrections Case Management Policy

Under this model, all correctional officers are responsible for both security and supervision, and case management. Case management includes conducting assessments, providing supervision, developing case plans and providing **interventions** to address offender's criminogenic and non-criminogenic needs and court-mandated conditions.

Health services

Custody Corrections is also responsible for providing treatment to all inmates for immediate health concerns upon arrival in a Custody Corrections facility. This starts with a medical assessment on admission, and treatment as required. Health services are provided by Corrections staff, or contracted out, rather than by the Department of Health. Where continuity of care is required, Corrections must work with the relevant providers outside of the Corrections system.

Preparing for release from custody

As per *The Correctional Services Act*, facility heads are responsible for "making arrangements that will help the inmates of the facility to relocate in the community." The Correctional Services Division's Case Management Policy requires every person admitted to custody to have a custody release plan. Planning for release is to begin from the time an inmate enters custody and is to continue to be reviewed and revised until their release. Where an inmate has a probation sentence following their time in custody, responsibility is transferred to a probation officer on release from custody.

Objective, scope and approach, and audit criteria

Objective

Our objective was to determine whether the Correctional Services Division was preparing incarcerated individuals to relocate in the community.

Scope and approach

The audit examined the work Manitoba's Correctional Services Division did to prepare incarcerated individuals to relocate in the community, specifically the work that Custody Corrections did with incarcerated individuals to deal with those issues that brought them into conflict with the law, and to live law abiding and useful lives in the community upon release.

We assessed the work done in 5 adult correctional centres in Manitoba, as well as considering transitions to Probation Services, and coordination with other departments or agencies. While we considered the Winnipeg Remand Centre, it houses mostly remanded inmates, and has limited programming available, therefore we did not assess a sample of people held in that facility.

We did not assess youth involved in the criminal justice system, or the operations at the Manitoba Youth Centre.

We reviewed inmate files, interviewed department staff, visited correctional centres, benchmarked practices against other jurisdictions, and analyzed data collected by the Department.

We selected a sample of 35 inmates who had been sentenced to time in custody during the 12 months ended December 31, 2023. This was not a representative sample. To assess case management processes, the sample was selected to focus on inmates who were sentenced and spent a relatively longer time in custody. On average the inmates in our sample, who were released by March 2024, spent a total of 183 days in custody, with an average of 138 days of this as sentenced time in custody and 45 days on remand.

Audit criteria

To determine whether the Correctional Services Division was preparing incarcerated individuals to relocate in the community, we used the following criteria:

Criteria	Sources
1.1 Comprehensive needs assessments are completed in a timely manner for all inmates upon admission to custody.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The Correctional Services Act.</i> • Correctional Services Division Case Management Policy.
1.2 Interventions are provided to address inmates' identified needs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The Correctional Services Act.</i> • Correctional Services Division Case Management Policy. • UN Office on Drugs and Crime – Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners Rule 4.
1.3 Every inmate has a custody release plan that addresses their individual needs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The Correctional Services Act.</i> • Correctional Services Division Case Management Policy. • UN Office on Drugs and Crime – Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners Rules 107 & 108.
1.4 There is a transition of supports from in-custody to community supports.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The Correctional Services Act.</i> • Correctional Services Division Health Services Policy. • Manitoba Cross-Departmental Protocol for High Risk / High Needs Adults. • UN Office on Drugs and Crime – Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners Rules 87 & 110.

The Correctional Services Division needed to do more to prepare incarcerated individuals for release from custody

The Department of Justice (the Department) follows a case management model to manage risks presented by offenders. The goals of this model are to protect the public and change criminal behaviour. Given that inmates do not spend a significant amount of time in provincial correctional centres and even less time post-sentencing, there is limited time to work through and deliver this model. It is important to use the time inmates are in custody to deliver as many interventions as possible, and to ensure a smooth transition to supports in the community. This can lead to reduced recidivism and positively impact public safety.

We concluded that the Department needed to do more to prepare incarcerated individuals for release from custody. We based this conclusion on the following findings:

- Criminogenic needs assessments were not always done in a timely manner (**SECTION 1**).
- The case management process needs improvement, and programming and interventions were limited (**SECTION 2**).
- Custody release plans were prepared but did not effectively prepare inmates for release (**SECTION 3**).
- Supports for inmates transitioning from custody to the community were lacking (**SECTION 4**).

1 Not all needs assessments done in a timely manner

The Correctional Services Division's Case Management Policy defines assessment as a process of gathering information to classify offenders' level of risk to re-offend, risk of harm to self or others, and to determine security and criminogenic needs.

Custody Corrections branch (Custody Corrections) conducts 2 broad groups of assessments – those related to health and safety factors (risk of harm to self and others, security needs), and those related to criminogenic factors (level of risk to re-offend, criminogenic needs).

Health and safety assessments are applicable to all inmates in a facility, while criminogenic needs assessments are applicable only to sentenced inmates.

We found that health and safety assessments in our sample were completed in a timely manner. However, assessments in our sample related to criminogenic needs were not always timely, and were sometimes not done at all.

Assessments at intake:

- Security assessment – completed upon admission to determine security risk.
- Suicide risk estimation – completed upon admission to determine suicide risk.
- Health assessment – completed by a Corrections Nurse on admission to a facility (including transfers).

1.1 Health and safety related assessments were timely

Security assessments and suicide risk assessments are required to be completed for all inmates when they are admitted to a correctional centre. These assessments were conducted for all inmates in our sample, with almost all assessments completed upon intake to a custodial centre.

All inmates are also required to have a health assessment when they are admitted to a correctional centre, including transfers between different correctional centres. All inmates in our sample had a health assessment completed within a few days of admission.

Concerns with health services

Medical units in some facilities have limited hours. While this did not impact the timeliness of the assessments in our sample, it may impact operations elsewhere in correctional centres.

Three of the adult correctional centres (Winnipeg Remand Centre (WRC), The Pas Correctional Centre (TPCC), and Brandon Correctional Centre (BCC)) process inmate intakes 24 hours per day, 7 days per week, but the medical units for TPCC and BCC do not maintain these same hours. Medical staff told us that health assessments for intakes processed during off hours are delayed until the next working day and that any intakes requiring urgent medical care during this time would be taken to a local hospital, accompanied by correctional officers. This reduces the number of correctional officers available “on the floor” in the correctional centre.

1.2 Criminogenic needs assessments were not always timely

The Correctional Services Division's policy requires a Level of Service/Case Management Inventory (LS/CMI) assessment to be completed 4 weeks after an inmate is sentenced. Of the 32 inmates in our sample who required this assessment, 13 (41%) did not have one done within that timeframe.

LS/CMI assessment

The Correctional Services Division's case management model uses the LS/CMI assessment to inform programming and other interventions while in custody, and for release planning.

The LS/CMI is an in-depth assessment, which may be completed in custody, or in the community by Probation Services. The assessment can take several days to complete in a custody setting. Only staff with specialized training are permitted to complete these assessments.

Per the Correctional Service's Division case management policy, **criminogenic needs** are aspects of an offender's situation that when changed, are associated with changes in criminal behaviour. The LS/CMI rank orders the top dynamic criminogenic needs of the offender while also considering the

offender's criminal history (which is considered static because it cannot be changed). Case management activities—from developing the case plan and providing interventions, to release planning—are all to address the highest rated (up to 4) criminogenic needs.

Non-criminogenic needs are also identified (for example if an inmate does not have housing or has been a victim of abuse). Based on this model, addressing non-criminogenic needs is not associated with changes in criminal behaviour. However, addressing these needs is not irrelevant. Some of the critical non-criminogenic needs of the offender may need immediate attention because they either increase the risk to reoffend, or may cause safety concerns.

LS/CMI assessment not completed in a timely manner

The Correctional Services Division's policy requires an LS/CMI assessment to be completed within 4 weeks after an inmate is sentenced.

An LS/CMI assessment was required to be completed in the Correctional Centre for 32 of the 35 inmates in our sample. We found that these assessments were not performed in the time required in 13 cases (41%), and were on average 48 days late. In addition, 4 of these assessments were never completed. This impacts the ability to plan interventions, and to ensure that each person's needs are addressed in custody, and more importantly that those needs can continue to be addressed as they transition to the community.

Staff told us that completing an LS/CMI can be a time-consuming process, and hard to balance in a correctional officer's case load. For example,

The 8 criminogenic needs:

Companions: Criminology has long recognized the influence of friends and acquaintances on an individual's behavior, values, and attitudes. Having criminal friends is one of the single best predictors of criminal behavior.

Education and employment: Both the monetary and social rewards associated with school and work settings can exert powerful influences on the individual.

Antisocial pattern: Covers a multi-faceted and wide range of personal, behavioural and emotional need factors that have been shown to be predictive of criminal and recidivistic behaviour.

Family marital: Significant others in family and marital relationships serve as interpersonal sources of reward for prosocial behaviour and costs for criminal behaviour.

Pro-criminal attitude: Possessing a pro-criminal attitude is a major indicator of criminal behaviour. This need area is concerned with what and how a person thinks and feels about them self and others in regard to violations of the law and alternatives to law violations.

Recreation and leisure: The old adage "idle hands are the work of the devil" is consistent with a general personality and social learning explanation of criminal conduct. Failure to develop prosocial leisure pursuits increases the risk of criminal conduct as a means of satisfying the need to fill one's time in exciting ways.

Substance abuse: Substance abuse creates obstacles to pro-social behaviours and interactions. Severe abuse can interfere with performance in school or work, alter social networks, create family and marital stress and can even impact directly on criminal behaviour through distribution and the need to obtain money illicitly to support a habit.

Criminal history: Has a significant impact, but is considered a static need, as it cannot be changed.

Sourced from documents provided by the Department

correctional officers may have to pause the assessment due to urgent security matters in the facility or put it on hold due to breaks in their shift schedule. The length of the assessment depends on the inmate's circumstances and the number of external contacts required to verify information.

Each correctional centre has standing orders; essentially policies developed by, and specific to, each facility. We noted inconsistencies for when, and how quickly, an LS/CMI needed to be completed, both between correctional centres, and compared to the Correctional Services Division's policy. This may contribute to confusion as to when this assessment must be completed.

An assessment of an inmate's needs is completed to inform their case plan, including the different interventions that are available in custody, as well as to inform their custody release plan and areas to continue to focus on as they transition out of the custodial centre. Where an assessment is not done, there is not an objective focus to addressing an inmate's individual needs.



Recommendation 1

We recommend that the Correctional Services Division's policy and standing orders are reviewed periodically to ensure that they remain up to date, and time standards and other universal requirements are consistent.

2 Case management process needs improvement

The mandate of the Correctional Services Division is twofold: it must manage custodial sentences with the appropriate degree of custody, supervision and control—safety and security; and at the same time provide appropriate programs, services and encouragement to assist offenders to lead law-abiding and useful lives. When resources are limited, the focus tends to be immediate safety and security. However, it is important to recognize that public safety is impacted by the quality of interventions in the short time people are in custody. The success, or lack thereof, of these efforts has an impact on both the public, and the individuals themselves.

We found that:

- The case management process does not address people on remand, or those with short custodial sentences.
- Programming and other interventions were limited and often not tied to identified criminogenic needs.
- There were several key challenges to providing interventions.
- There was limited data and performance measures to determine whether interventions were having the desired impact.

2.1 Case management process does not address people on remand, or those with short custodial sentences

Our sample testing focused on sentenced individuals. However, most people in provincial jails are not sentenced. Based on data from the Department of Justice (the Department), an average of 75% of individuals in provincial jails in 2023 were on remand. People held on remand have not been convicted of an offence. This number has been increasing over the years, a trend that is consistent across the country.

In addition, almost half the inmates who were sentenced in 2023 were released on the day they were sentenced, with time served. This has some adverse impacts on the Department's ability to prepare these inmates for their release back to the community, including that:

- Their date of release is not known, complicating potential efforts to connect them to supports on release.
- They are not guilty of an offence; therefore, they do not have a criminogenic needs assessment done, and they are less likely to be connected to programming.

The Correctional Services Division does not control who is sent to an adult correctional facility, but the increase in the remanded population is a significant challenge for them to address. Our 2023 audit of the efficiency of court services found a number of opportunities for improved efficiency in the delivery of court services that could help address this issue.

Time is of the essence in assessing and addressing criminogenic needs. Assessments are only performed for inmates sentenced for 28 days or more, and often do not occur well into most custody stays due in part to lengthy times to disposition from the courts system and resultant time held on remand.

This means that even if criminogenic needs assessments are done according to the Correctional Services Division's policy, there may not be enough time left in an offender's sentence to provide interventions targeted to their identified criminogenic needs. This renders the case management model used by the Correctional Services Division ineffective for most inmates.



Recommendation 2

We recommend that the Correctional Services Division review and adjust their Case Management Policy as necessary to consider the significant number of inmates who spend time in custody while not sentenced.

2.2 Programming and other interventions limited and often not tied to identified needs

We found that programming and other interventions were limited, and where they were provided there was often not a clear link to identified criminogenic needs. Level of Service/Case Management Inventory (LS/CMI) assessments are not completed for individuals on remand, and only for inmates who were sentenced to more than 4 weeks in custody. Where these assessments were done, in many cases the interventions provided were not tied to needs assessments.

An intervention is defined by the Correctional Services Division's Case Management Policy as an influencing force or act that occurs in order to modify an offender's criminal behaviours. In practice, these interventions included:

- One-one case management activities, including assignment of cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) workbooks and life skills modules.
- Group programming.
- Spiritual and cultural activities.
- Education or work opportunities.

Seven of the 8 criminogenic needs are considered **dynamic**. These factors can be changed or influenced. The 8th criminogenic need, criminal history, is considered a criminogenic need, but it is static, it cannot be changed.

Interventions not driven by identified criminogenic needs

As per the Correctional Services Division's Case Management Policy, effective correctional treatment targets **dynamic** criminogenic needs in the development of comprehensive case plans. Given the short period of time that most inmates are in a correctional centre, time is of the essence. We therefore expected that case plans would be completed quickly to identify interventions available to the inmate while in custody that would address their most important criminogenic needs.

There was inconsistent guidance for how quickly a case plan was required to be completed, however generally it was within a month of being admitted to custody. We assessed a sample of sentenced inmates to determine how quickly a case plan was prepared, and whether it addressed identified criminogenic needs.

Case plans were not started within the time required for 23 (66%) of the 35 inmates in our sample. For 4 of these inmates, a case plan was never developed while they were in custody. The time it took to start a case plan ranged from 2 to 329 days after being admitted to an adult correctional centre. Without a case plan, case managers are limited in their ability to fulfil policy requirements, and more importantly to identify relevant interventions for inmates while they are in custody.

Where a case plan is developed, we expected that it would address how the inmate could best address their highest ranked criminogenic needs. Of the 28 inmates in our sample that required that

an LS/CMI assessment be done, 17 (61%) had case plans that addressed their identified criminogenic needs. If the case plan does not lay out interventions that address the needs of the inmate, they are unlikely to happen.

Group programming limited

There were 6 core programs offered in the 5 adult correctional centres in Manitoba. These programs were typically offered in a group setting, for up to 12 inmates. As per the Correctional Services Division's policy, providing programming is an essential component of case management.

Of the 35 inmates in our sample, 17 (49%) never accessed any group programming while in custody, despite spending an average of 163 days in custody. Of the 18 inmates who did access programming they first accessed it on average:

- 95 days after being admitted
- 46 days after being sentenced

Of the 28 inmates in our sample who had an LS/CMI done, less than half (13/28) took at least one program tied to their criminogenic needs.

Of the 15 who did not have programming related to their assessed needs, 13 took no programming at all.

Barriers to group programming:

The nature and quantity of programming an inmate receives may be limited by factors outside of an inmate's identified needs. This includes staff availability and the physical space to provide this programming. Exacerbating this, inmate separations within facilities (including the inability to physically put inmates together due to gang membership, do-not-contact orders, or other factors) further limited access to programming.

Given these issues, the correctional programming that corresponds with an inmate's needs may not even be offered during their time in custody. Further, as inmates' top needs are not collectively tracked, there is no data to prioritize programming that meets inmate needs.

Further, group programming is voluntary, and an inmate must want to take it for it to be effective. The Division uses the **stages of change** model, which helps to identify an individual's motivation to address each of their criminogenic needs. While case managers can help inmates through the stages of change, it is ultimately up to each individual.

5 stages of change

- Pre-Contemplation: *"I'm not willing to make a change"*
- Contemplation: *"I'm thinking about making a change"*
- Preparation: *"I'm preparing and determined to change"*
- Action: *"I'm doing it ...changing; Why didn't I do this before?"*
- Maintenance, Relapse & Recycle: *"I have to keep working at this; I know what to do and I'm not going to give up; practice, practice, practice"*

Divisional policy / guidance

Core programs:

Coming to Terms is a short-term informational program that assists participants to realistically evaluate their alcohol and/or other drug usage, and the effect this is having on their lives and on the lives of those around them. 10 sessions (1.5-2 hours each session).

End to Aggression (ETA) The intent of this program is to have a consistent, provincial wide anger management program. It contains core content to be presented to an adult male client population. 10 sessions (1.5-2 hours each session).

Introduction to Healthy Relationships is an informational cognitive behavioral program designed for participants who have been charged with intimate partner violence. 2 sessions (1.5-2 hours per session).

Nobody's Perfect Parenting Within a group setting, parents participate in facilitated sessions that promote positive parenting; increase parents' understanding of children's health, safety, and behaviour; help parents build on the skills they have and learn new ones; improve parents' self-esteem and coping skills; increase self-help and mutual support; bring them in contact with community services and resources; and help prevent family violence.

Reclaiming Our Identity is a self-awareness program that promotes personal growth and identity through education of the historical impacts of colonization discrimination, racism, the residential school system, The Sixties Scoop, intergenerational trauma and/or abuse endured by Indigenous people in Canada, otherwise known as Turtle Island. 8 sessions (1.5-2 hours per session).

Thinking Awareness Group is a short-term program designed to provide participants with an introduction to the concepts of cognitive behavioral theory and teach the basics of relapse prevention using non-offence specific scenarios. 10 sessions (1.5-2 hours per session).

Workbooks and life skills modules not tracked

The limited availability of programming, among other barriers, makes other case management activities and interventions even more important. The Correctional Services Division's policy stresses the importance of one-to-one interventions provided directly by case managers. We also considered spiritual activities, such as attending a drumming circle or sweat, as interventions. We found that 21 (75%) of the 28 inmates in our sample who had needs assessments had interventions while in custody that addressed at least some of their identified criminogenic needs.

A significant part of Custody Corrections' approach to addressing inmates' criminogenic and other needs includes use of cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) and life skills workbooks. There are 7 CBT workbooks, one addressing each of the dynamic criminogenic needs (see list of criminogenic needs on page 12). These workbooks are to be used during case management meetings following a risk/need assessment. They are to address medium to very high-risk criminogenic needs.

There are also 17 life skills intervention modules, intended to be delivered by correctional officers as 1-hour information sessions. Some subject matter includes anger management, goal setting, and parenting.

Some of these materials were becoming quite dated. For example, we were provided a life skills workbook that was last updated in 2006, and the CBT workbooks were dated between 2014 and 2017. It is important that these materials are periodically reviewed and updated to ensure that they remain relevant and as effective as possible.

We noted in our sample that when correctional officers offer workbooks to inmates, or when inmates complete some or all of a workbook, progress is logged in inmates' running records. However, running records are essentially blocks of text recorded in the Corrections Offender Management System (COMS). This does not allow any related tracking or monitoring of workbook use and does not provide an opportunity to assess their impact on recidivism.

Further, even though group programming was being tracked, there was no data being tracked around the effectiveness of programming taken. Nor was data being tracked to determine whether inmates were being provided interventions that addressed their identified criminogenic needs. See **SECTION 2.4** for further discussion around the Correctional Services Division's use of data.



Recommendation 3

We recommend that the Correctional Services Division track data on the use of workbooks and life skills modules provided.

Education and work programs

'Education and employment' is 1 of the 7 dynamic criminogenic needs (**SEE DEFINITION IN SECTION 1.2**). We noted that only Headingley Correctional Centre (HCC) provided programming that addressed this criminogenic need. This was provided through the program Supporting Employment and Economic Development (SEED), but was only offered once in 2023.

However, this need was addressed in other, albeit limited ways. For example, there was a CBT workbook that addressed education and employment, and most correctional centres offered opportunities to upgrade schooling or to obtain a high school diploma.

All correctional centres also offered some work opportunities. For example, kitchens were operated by inmates. There were also other limited work opportunities available such as laundry, and some yard maintenance.

The Correctional Services Division has a partnership with Sunrise School Division to offer upgrading, and high school diplomas. In 2023:

- HCC issued 24 mature student diplomas.
- Milner Ridge Correctional Centre (MRCC) had 15 graduates.
- Women's Correctional Centre (WCC) has had 8 graduates.

The Pas Correctional Centre (TPCC) and Brandon Correctional Centre (BCC) both offer educational programming but had no graduates in 2023.

Through Mancor Prison Industries (Mancor) the Correctional Services Division previously offered specific industry training for inmates under the supervision of qualified trades instructors. The purpose of Mancor was to teach inmates marketable trades to increase their chance of post-release employment. The work experience gained also formed a basis for entry into accredited training programs. Mancor was discontinued in 2018. We were told that the loss of Mancor programs created a large gap, noting the importance of providing routine, and purpose as well giving inmates the opportunity to find pride in their work.

We found that other jurisdictions offered more work opportunities and even offered training through community colleges. Some unique programs we heard about included employment coordinators using virtual reality to 'try on' different job skills; and programs that aligned inmates with organizations for employment post-release.



Recommendation 4

We recommend that the Correctional Services Division assess how the education and employment criminogenic need can best be addressed, in particular any gaps related to employment opportunities.

Therapeutic communities

Therapeutic communities are environments in which participants live together in an organized and structured way to promote change toward recovery and reintegration with the community.

HCC and WCC have 24/7 therapeutic communities that operate outside of the general custody population, where participating inmates do full-day programming geared specifically towards their criminogenic needs. This includes:

- Winding River (HCC) – addictions recovery. Program was evaluated in 2015 by an independent academic and was found to have a positive effect on (decrease in) recidivism.
- Walking Bear (WCC) – addictions recovery. Program design was based on Winding River.
- Assiniboine Treatment Centre (HCC) – programming for sexual offenders.

Therapeutic Community	Participants in 2023
Walking Bear	85
Winding River	128
Assiniboine Treatment Centre	27

We note, however, that these programs are not available to all inmates, as applicants are required to meet criteria, including being at appropriate stage of change, to be accepted. These programs represent exceptional opportunities for inmates but are only a fit for inmates who are ready for and want to make a change. Most inmates do not access a therapeutic community while in custody. This is why it's important to have other interventions available to inmates, when they are ready.

Need for supports around trauma and mental health

We expected the Correctional Services Division to identify and establish programs that addressed the needs of the people held in provincial correctional centres. There are at least some group programs (or other interventions) designed to address all 7 dynamic criminogenic factors. However, these interventions are voluntary. A person must be ready and willing to participate to benefit. Staff told us that often trauma and mental health must be addressed before a person is ready to consider further interventions.

Data demonstrates the need

Data from inmates who completed an LS/CMI assessment in 2023 reported the following issues (current or past):

- 91% – drug or alcohol problem
- 25% – physical abuse
- 13% – sexual abuse
- 18% – emotional abuse
- 13% – neglect

In addition, Indigenous people comprised 82% of sentenced inmates in Manitoba's correctional centres in 2023. Canada's residential school system and historic treatment of Indigenous people has left a legacy of intergenerational trauma for survivors, their families, and their communities.

Some resources

Correctional centres do have some staff resources in place to deal with trauma and mental health concerns. For example mental health nurses, spiritual care providers, as well as staff psychologists and contract psychiatrists may be able to help inmates with these needs. We noted a number of vacancies, including 7 spiritual care provider positions that remained unfilled at the end of 2023; this included no spiritual care providers (chaplains or Elders) in the Pas Correctional Centre (TPCC).

While we heard from staff that the resources in place were not enough to meet demand, the Correctional Services Division does not track data on the demand for these resources. As a result, we were unable to conclude on their adequacy.

The Correctional Services Division introduced the program Reclaiming our Identity in 2019. This program, described in **SECTION 2.2**, is available to all inmates. It may help some Indigenous inmates to better understand how they are affected by intergenerational trauma from colonization.

We were told that the approach taken by Custody Corrections to deal with trauma relies on the case management work of correctional officers in addition to the resources noted above. However, there is no required counselling background for the job, and no further mandatory training on trauma or counselling is provided beyond officers' initial 8-week core training program.

Other jurisdictions we scanned face similar challenges. We identified some alternate approaches taken by some jurisdictions. For example other jurisdictions had:

- Social workers who worked with inmates in the custodial facility, and continued to work with them after they were released.
- Positions such as 'release coordinator' and 'reintegration officers' stressing the importance of continuing in the community the work that was started in custody.
- More dedicated mental health supports, along with stronger connections to their health ministry.

Custody Corrections has identified occupational therapists as another resource that might help in this scenario.

Healing lodges

Management told us that the Correctional Services Division's long-term approach to dealing with trauma includes construction of healing lodges. The Province of Manitoba announced on September 26, 2022, that healing lodges are planned for The Pas Correctional Centre (TPCC) and Brandon Correctional Centre (BCC), supported by a total of \$1.4 million in capital funding and \$1.2 million in annual operating funding.

During our site tours and interviews, we noted:

- The building that TPCC initially planned to use for the healing lodge was closed and undergoing remediation due to the discovery of mold throughout the building.
- Inmates at TPCC are frequently transferred, making most stays short. This is not conducive to making the best use of a healing lodge, which is likely to serve longer-term inmates, and additional hiring would be necessary to staff it.
- Difficulties staffing programming and spiritual care positions across correctional centres. Staffing healing lodges may also prove to be difficult, particularly in Northern Manitoba.
- A building had yet to be constructed at BCC to host its healing lodge.

Healing lodges have a precedent in Federal corrections settings. With the significant population of Indigenous people in Manitoba's provincial jails, this is an important initiative. It will be critical for the Correctional Services Division to set these up effectively, including consulting with affected communities, and ensuring connections to ongoing supports when people leave the correctional centres.



Recommendation 5

We recommend that in implementing the planned healing lodges, Correctional Services Division ensures:

- a. Objectives are set for the program.
- b. Connections are put in place to continuing supports in the community.
- c. Data is collected and monitored to assess the effectiveness of programming, and to support changes as needed.

2.3 Challenges to providing interventions

There are many challenges that the Correctional Services Division faces in providing good case management and appropriate interventions to inmates. Of significant note are staffing issues, and aging facilities that often do not provide adequate space for case management activities, exacerbated by the changing profile and security classification of inmates.

Access to appropriate space may impact case management activities

We visited all adult Correctional Centres in the province and observed that space existed for case management activities, including custody release planning, at each correctional centre, but it varied significantly. We were told that different issues could affect use of that space, including:

- Competition for space with other activities (for example programming).
- Separations—inmates who must be kept apart for safety and security reasons.
- The negative influence of others in the general population, which may keep inmates from wanting to be seen using separate spaces for programming or case management for fear of what other inmates may think or say.

Staffing shortages and redeployments

Staff at all 5 adult correctional centres in Manitoba told us that staffing issues impacted their ability to offer programming. As of May 2024, there were:

- 6 of 47 (13 %) programming staff positions unfilled across all facilities; vacant since 2023 and prior.
- 7 spiritual care positions (including 5 Indigenous traditional ceremony providers, or Elders) unfilled across facilities since 2023.

We were told that program staff at 2 facilities were routinely re-deployed to cover other staffing shortages. During our tour of one of these facilities, we observed a program staff member in the midst of redeployment, working in a non-programming area of the facility. While we were told that redeployments are a last resort, this practice is disruptive.

Static security is when staff supervise inmates from outside, and only enter living units every half hour.

The Correctional Services Division uses a direct supervision model. This means that corrections officers are in the unit with inmates during unlocked hours. In order to do direct supervision safely, 2 corrections officers must be on the unit at a time. When there are staffing shortages, this is not possible, and the unit must revert to **static security**. We were told that this has an adverse impact on safety and security, as well as on case management, or the rehabilitative aspect of their mandate.

2.4 Limited data and performance measures

We found that the Correctional Services Division had limited data and performance measures to assess the outcomes of its interventions.

It had some data with respect to programming interventions (facilitated classroom-based programming was tracked in COMS) but it did not use this data to measure whether the programs were keeping inmates from returning to the corrections system. Data was not tracked for workbook-based programming, which formed a significant portion of the Correctional Services Division's case management approach.

Without data on the effectiveness of programming and interventions in reducing recidivism, it is difficult for the Correctional Services Division to assess the effectiveness of programming and to prioritize programming given the limited resources and time available to deliver it.

Recidivism calculation inadequate

The Department reports adult recidivism rates annually, including a performance measure: decrease in recidivism rates among adults following completion of a custodial sentence. Per their annual report, this measure is calculated on a quarterly basis by taking the number of adults re-convicted to a custodial term divided by the number of those adults who had completed a prior custodial sentence in the 2-year period starting from the same quarter 2 years prior.

In the absence of better data and more robust performance measures, the Correctional Services Division is left with recidivism as a sole measure of how effectively it is preparing inmates for release from custody. This performance measure has limitations, including that:

- There is no set definition of recidivism; different jurisdictions in Canada all calculate it in different ways, therefore it is difficult to directly compare Manitoba's performance to other jurisdictions.
- The recidivism rate reported by the Department has hovered around 20% in the past 3 fiscal years. While we did not test a representative sample, we noted in contrast to these results that 34 of 35 inmates whose files we examined in our sample were repeat offenders.
- Manitoba's backlogged court system could artificially lower its results (average time to disposition for the Provincial Court in fiscal year 2023-24 was 212 days). A shorter time to disposition would result in more offenders sentenced within the two-year window used in Manitoba's calculation.
- The calculation also does not capture all inmates held in correctional centres on remand, or re-involvement with the justice system.

The Department could augment its recidivism performance monitoring by looking at additional considerations, including:

- Longer or varied recidivism periods.
- Trends in how long inmates take to re-offend or otherwise make contact with the justice system.
- Contact with other social agencies outside of the corrections system.
- Differences in outcomes based on programming or other interventions provided.

Legacy database will not meet needs

The Correctional Services Division uses COMS to record case management activities, as well as other information on inmates, for both Custody Corrections and Probation Services. This is a legacy system, implemented in 1999. We noted several concerns related to this system, due to its age. For example, the system:

- Is not able to track data on many fields that may be relevant to the Department of Justice, to evaluate effectiveness of programming and interventions, or to measure different relevant performance indicators.
- Has suffered technical issues recently, including during our audit period.
- Has fixed fields so it cannot be used to track relevant data on changing populations of inmates.
- Lacks input controls meaning required fields can be left blank.

Beyond these concerns, vendor support for COMS ends January 1, 2026.

The COMS database was not built with the purpose of collecting or analyzing data in mind. Given the issues noted with this system, the Correctional Services Division should consider whether updates to this system are needed to address **RECOMMENDATION 6**.



Recommendation 6

We recommend that the Department collect appropriate data, and use it to:

- a. Quantify the need for resources and interventions.
- b. Inform and guide updates to interventions provided.
- c. Assess the effectiveness of interventions provided, including impacts on inmate outcomes such as reinvolvement with the Justice, and other systems.

3 Custody release plans were done but did not effectively prepare inmates for release

The Correctional Services Division's policy requires a custody release plan (CRP) to be completed for each offender. Plans are prepared electronically in the Corrections Offender Management System (COMS), using a standard template (SEE FIGURE 4), and are to be provided to each inmate upon release from custody.

We found that correctional officers ensured CRPs were completed for all inmates in our sample. However, the quality of plan content was often insufficient to ensure that inmate needs continued to be addressed as they transitioned out of custody.

Plans begin with basic information (for example an inmate's address and immediate needs) upon admission to custody and are to be reviewed and revised throughout the case management process to reflect identified needs and related contacts and resources.

3.1 Custody release plans done for every inmate, but not always timely

In most cases, updates to CRPs are more important than how quickly one is initiated. CRPs prepared at admission are unlikely to be complete - for example, individuals admitted to custody while under the influence may not be able to provide relevant information.

The Correctional Services Division's Case Management Policy requires that release plans "*(continue) to be reviewed and revised as necessary until the offender's release*". Updates are important to reflect work done during the case management process (such as identification of criminogenic or other needs, and related interventions initiated while in custody) and provide a roadmap to continue this work upon release from custody.

A CRP was completed for all 35 inmates in our sample. We found that 33 (94%) were initiated in a timely manner, and 34 (97%) were updated after initiation.

Figure 4 – Custody Release Plan Template

Custody Release Plan	
Name:	
Current Date:	
Plan for Release	
Address:	
Probation Services appointment date:	
Probation office address and phone number:	
Court Ordered Appearances:	
Court address and phone number :	
Employment and Income Assistance(EIA)appointment date:	
EIA office address and phone number:	
Employer Name/Start Date:	
Employment Plans:	
School Name/Start Date:	
School Plans:	
Other Community Workers:	
Other Appointments (Medical, Counseling etc.):	
Immediate Needs	
Transportation:	
Clothing:	
ID (Birth Certificate, SIN etc.):	
Other/Urgent Concerns :	
Sources of Support and Phone Number	
1.	
2.	
3.	
Steps to help you stay out of Custody	
1.	
2.	
Provide copy of the custody Release Plan to the offender/young person prior to release *Attach list of court Ordered conditions*	

Source: Correctional Services Division Case Management Policy, Appendix – Custody Release Plan Template

3.2 Release planning must better support inmates to transition into the community

The Case Management Policy notes that "The offender's release is a serious transfer of responsibility and communication between custody and community staff (Probation Services) focuses on the offender's risks and criminogenic needs factors and responses to interventions". This statement sets a tone for the depth and breadth of the content that needs to be included in custody release plans.

Criminogenic needs often not addressed

As noted in **SECTION 1.2**, 28 of the 35 sentenced inmates in our sample received a Level of Service Case Management Inventory (LS/CMI) assessment. Release plans for 19 (68%) of these inmates did not include any substantive guidance or assistance towards addressing at least one identified criminogenic need.

CRPs that address factors that bring individuals into contact with the corrections system (criminogenic factors) are more likely to be effective in keeping them from returning to custody than CRPs that do not address criminogenic factors.

Few collateral contacts

A collateral contact is a source that is knowledgeable of, or involved with, an inmate. The Case Management Policy requires that "*wherever possible, case managers involve the offender and appropriate family, community agencies, collaterals etc. in the development and implementation of the (case) plan, as well as plan updates*". Where case plans establish actions for the offender to take after release from custody (for example treatment or ongoing programming), we expected custody release plans should also involve collateral contacts in their implementation.

We noted very limited evidence of case managers making arrangements or communicating with outside agencies.

Only 5 of 35 CRPs (14%) showed evidence of connection to an outside agency, such as NNADAP (National Native Alcohol and Drug Abuse Program), or employment and income assistance (EIA). In these cases, custody release plans reflected work that had been done to set up appointments for inmates to attend upon release from custody. In some cases, we also noted examples of phone numbers and contact names being provided for these and other agencies, but no appointments set up.

Inmates can face barriers to coordinating their own appointments upon release from custody, such as literacy levels, addiction and problematic substance use, and lack of access to a phone or e-mail. We were told that there is a balance that needs to be struck between accountability for their own needs and providing support. This is because inmates will be fully accountable for their own decision making once released to the community, compared to the custody environment where they have little personal agency.

Our interviews corroborated that custody case managers would complete custody release plans, but typically did not contact outside agencies which could provide ongoing support.

Rudimentary content

We noted inconsistencies in how well work was documented across CRPs examined in our sample.

The Case Management Policy does not include specific instructions for how to complete custody release plans, however some facility standing orders and other documents provide some guidance. This guidance stresses the importance of filling out each section, specifying goals, and including a brief explanation of how the inmate will accomplish their goals.

CRPs include a section listing steps to stay out of custody. Often these steps were vague and rudimentary. For example:

- Quit drinking
- Stay sober, follow conditions
- Stay out, don't get caught

Only 11 (31%) of the 35 CRPs we examined had *steps to help you stay out of custody* that we assessed follow good practices identified in departmental literature. While robust answers in this area require cooperation from the inmate, it is nonetheless incumbent upon the case manager to work with the inmate to progress through stages of change and arrive at better answers through motivational interviewing.

Further, other needs such as housing were also not addressed in the CRPs we examined. Data we obtained from the LS/CMI database for sentenced inmates in custody in 2023 suggests that a need for housing exists—14% indicated 'yes' to 'homeless or transient' and 18% indicated 'yes' to 'accommodation problems'. CRPs require the inmate to provide an address where they will reside on release. All CRPs we examined had this section filled out. However, in some of the files in our sample the address was just a location, for example Thompson, MB, and in other cases it was a homeless shelter. In another case it was for a community from which the inmate was banned.



Recommendation 7

We recommend that the Department ensure:

- a. Where needs (criminogenic and/or non-criminogenic) are identified that would contribute to successful reintegration, that they be included in an inmate's Custody Release Plan.
- b. Actions are taken to address these identified needs, and documented.

4 Supports for inmates transitioning from custody to the community lacking

The Correctional Services Act states “facility heads are responsible for making arrangements that will help the inmates of the facility to relocate in the community.” Inmates only spend a short time in provincial custody—on average less than 2 months serving a sentence. There is little time, and many barriers to providing interventions in custody, as noted throughout this report. This emphasizes the importance of enabling a supported transition from custody into the community.

We found that:

- Better collaboration was needed between Custody Corrections and Probation Services.
- There was little evidence of Custody Corrections connecting inmates to outside resources.
- Medical services were not connected outside of correctional centres.
- Correctional Services Division must start the work before release – others need to continue it.

4.1 Better collaboration needed between Custody Corrections and Probation Services

Good communication and collaboration between Custody Corrections and Probation Services staff is required by policy and is imperative to ensure a smooth transition from a correctional centre to the community. We assessed whether there was adequate communication between these branches of the Correctional Services Division, and whether they worked together to ensure the most effective plans for transition to the community.

We found that there was a lack of communication and collaboration between custody case managers and probation officers.

There were 20 inmates in our sample that had probation following their time in custody. Case managers are required to communicate with Probation Services at least twice in these cases – once when the inmate comes into custody, and again on release. However, the Correctional Services Division's Case Management Policy suggests that case managers and probation officers work together to develop the most effective case plan and custody release plan.

Of the 20 inmates in our sample, there was documentation in the Corrections Offender Management System (COMS) of communication between the case manager and the probation officer in 18 cases. The extent of this contact varied, in some cases there was significant communication documented, but in more than half there were 2 or less contacts documented. The Correctional Services Division's quality assurance standards considered at least 4 points of contact to be 'sufficient', but the majority (16 of 20 or 80%) had 3 or fewer contacts. Most contacts were simply notifications of incarceration or release, and not fulsome discussions.

The amount of information documented also varied. In only 5 of the 20 instances (25%) it was clear that the corrections officer/case manager communicated to the probation officer about the inmate's release. Our interviews, with staff from both Custody Corrections and Probation Services, corroborated the fact that communication and collaboration between the two branches was lacking.

No probation following custodial sentence

Regardless of the extent of communication prior to release, probation officers can and do assist inmates with accessing supports (for example addictions treatment, housing, employment and income assistance (EIA)) after release from custody. Staff told us that inmates who do not have probation after they are released from custody are less likely to follow through with custody release plans made to access services upon release.

Based on data provided by the Correctional Services Division, 16% of inmates in custody have a probation order following their time in custody. This leaves many people without access to a probation officer for support when they leave a custodial centre.



Recommendation 8

We recommend that Correctional Services Division support individuals as they transition from custody to the community by providing continuous points of contact (either through Corrections staff or using outside agencies) in the correctional centre and in the community after release.

Responsible reintegration initiative

The Responsible Reintegration Initiative (RRI) is intended to reduce recidivism and improve public safety by releasing selected inmates early on a temporary absence; and then intensively working with those inmates to help them reintegrate to the community, including connecting to supports in the community (such as assistance with housing and employment).

This is an important program that was started in 2017. It is a key initiative of the Criminal Justice System Modernization Strategy, and by all accounts beneficial for inmates who take part. In 2023, only 46 inmates accessed this program.

While we were told that this program worked well and had an excellent success rate, the Correctional Services Division did not measure performance of the RRI program beyond simply tracking whether participants were able to complete their temporary absence without having it revoked. They did not track whether RRI had any further impact in keeping participants from making subsequent contact with the justice system. It is important that more robust data be collected to determine effectiveness, and to support more resources if indeed it is having the impact it is believed to have.

4.2 Little evidence of connecting inmates to outside resources

We found little evidence of inmates being connected to outside resources while in custody. The Case Management Policy states that planning for release begins when an offender enters custody and continues until their release. We expected this planning to include connecting individuals to resources and supports in the community, and that this would be documented in both custody release plans as well as in the running records in COMS.

Correctional Officers document their activities, including all interactions with inmates, in running records in COMS. We looked specifically at 'collateral contacts' in COMS. Only 3 of 35 inmates in our sample (9%) documented in their running records that they had made arrangements, or communicated with, outside agencies.

As noted in **SECTION 3.2**, we also reviewed the custody release plans (CRPs) for the 35 inmates in our sample and found that 5 (14%) had evidence of inmates being connected with an outside agency.

4.3 Medical services not connected outside of Correctional Centres

Custody Corrections has its own medical facilities, including staff, with no involvement from the regional health authorities (RHAs). Medical staff in custody correctional centres do not have the same access to inmate medical records that RHA-administered facilities do. This means that in some circumstances, corrections medical staff must spend extra time requesting and sending medical records to and from other health-care facilities, affecting timeliness and continuity of inmate healthcare.

In addition to this, medical staff in correctional centres maintain records in paper files. This means any medical treatments provided while a person is in custody are invisible to their record in the community.

This lack of connection to the greater health care system can negatively impact continuity of care for people as they move into, and out of, a correctional centre.



Recommendation 9

We recommend that medical staff in correctional centres obtain access to, and use, electronic charting used by the regional health authorities.

4.4 Correctional Services Division must start the work – others need to continue it

The average sentence served in a custodial centre in Manitoba is less than 2 months. This short stay, combined with the other issues providing interventions to inmates while in custodial centres (identified in this report), create a significant challenge for the Correctional Services Division.

The mandate of Custody Corrections ends on the day that an inmate is released. To ensure that any work started in a custodial centre continues in the community, the Correctional Services Division must rely on others to continue the work, and to provide required supports.

Once in the community, many different parties play a role. These include:

- Other departments – This includes the Departments of Families; Housing, Addictions and Homelessness; and Health.
- Community Service Organizations – Many of the agencies that provide significant support for individuals when they are released from custody are not a part of government. This support is critical, and even more impactful when it can be coordinated before inmates are released.
- First Nations and the Federal Government – A significant number of inmates are released to live on reserves. Having a plan in place and resources to support these individuals is critical.
- Cities – Large cities such as Winnipeg, Brandon, and Thompson in particular have a significant stake. These are the communities to which most inmates are released.

Given their mandate, the support that the Correctional Services Division can provide is limited after an individual is released. During our audit, we found little evidence of connecting inmates to outside agencies while they were in custody. Having these connections in place before they are released positively impacts the chances of a successful reintegration to the community.



Recommendation 10

We recommend that the Correctional Services Division make connecting to outside agencies a priority while inmates are in custody by:

- a. Engaging and coordinating with outside agencies.
- b. Increasing outside agencies' participation in the custody release process.
- c. Documenting these interactions.

Additional information about the audit

This independent assurance report was prepared by the Office of the Auditor General of Manitoba on the Correctional Services Division. Our responsibility was to provide objective information, advice and assurance to assist the Legislature in its scrutiny of the government's management of resources and programs, and to conclude on whether the Correctional Services Division complies in all significant respects with the applicable criteria.

All work in this audit was performed to a reasonable level of assurance in accordance with the Canadian Standard for Assurance Engagements (CSAE) 3001—Direct Engagements set out by the Chartered Professional Accountants of Canada (CPA Canada) in the CPA Canada Handbook —Assurance.

The Office applies Canadian Standard on Quality Management 1, which requires the Office to design, implement and operate a system of quality management, including policies or procedures regarding compliance with ethical requirements, professional standards and applicable legal and regulatory requirements.

We have complied with the independence and other ethical requirements of the Code of Professional Conduct of the Chartered Professional Accountants of Manitoba, which are founded on fundamental principles of integrity, objectivity, professional competence and due care, confidentiality and professional behavior.

In accordance with our regular audit process, we obtained the following from management:

- confirmation of management's responsibility for the subject under audit
- acknowledgement of the suitability of the criteria used in the audit
- confirmation that all known information that has been requested, or that could affect the findings or audit conclusion, has been provided

Period covered by the audit

The audit covered the period between January 1, 2023, and December 31, 2023. This is the period to which the audit conclusion applies. However, to gain a more complete understanding of the subject matter of the audit, we assessed data and examined certain matters that preceded, and in some cases extended beyond the audit coverage period.

Date of the audit report

We obtained sufficient and appropriate audit evidence on which to base our conclusion on February 19, 2025, in Winnipeg, Manitoba.

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Summary of recommendations and responses from officials

This section provides a summary of all the recommendations we made, along with the responses from the Department of Justice.

Recommendation 1

We recommend that the Correctional Services Division's policy and standing orders are reviewed periodically to ensure that they remain up to date, and time standards and other universal requirements are consistent.

➤ Response of officials:

The department agrees with this recommendation. The Correctional Services Division has created a program and policy branch from within existing resources. One focus of the branch is review and update policies and procedures on a regular basis. To that end, the division has committed to reviewing all policies every three years to ensure alignment with current priorities and that process is already well underway.

Recommendation 2

We recommend that the Correctional Services Division review and adjust their Case Management Policy as necessary to consider the significant number of inmates who spend time in custody while not sentenced.

➤ Response of officials:

The department agrees with this recommendation, in part. For context, upon admission to custody, inmates already receive several assessments related to health, wellness, placement and overall needs. As indicated in the report, a large proportion of the inmate population (generally around 80%) is detained in custody on remand status. Many of these individuals are in custody for only a short period of time with a timeline unsuitable to complete extensive assessments. The department utilizes this time to stabilize individuals who are generally in poor health and work with those individuals to plan for their release. Even with an influx of new resources specific to completing assessments, the length of time available to complete this work and make it meaningful before release is insufficient. With that said, the department is committed to searching for potential options to provide some form of brief assessment where the incarceration timeline is such that it is feasible to do so.

Recommendation 3

We recommend that the Correctional Services Division track data on the use of workbooks and life skills modules provided.

» Response of officials:

The department agrees with this recommendation. The Correctional Services Division is currently in the process of scoping replacement of an existing legacy database. A more sophisticated data analysis framework is contemplated as part of this work.

Recommendation 4

We recommend that the Correctional Services Division assess how the education and employment criminogenic need can best be addressed, in particular any gaps related to employment opportunities.

» Response of officials:

The department agrees with this recommendation. The Correctional Services Division is currently in the process of scoping replacement of an existing legacy database. A more sophisticated data analysis framework is contemplated as part of this work. Further assessment will be completed once there is more data available on a go forward basis. In the interim, the division continues to search for partnerships and opportunities to enhance education and employment skills for inmates both while incarcerated and upon their release.

Recommendation 5

We recommend that in implementing the planned healing lodges, Correctional Services Division ensures:

- a. Objectives are set for the program.
- b. Connections are put in place to continuing supports in the community.
- c. Data is collected and monitored to assess the effectiveness of programming, and to support changes as needed.

» Response of officials:

The department is committed to implementing this recommendation, while setting realistic expectations in relation to making connections for continuing supports in the community. The department does not have a mandate to provide many of the community-based services noted in this recommendation. Given the path to balance as outlined by the Government, it will be important for the department to provide the services required of its' mandate, to avoid duplication of services, and to work with other departments to make linkages to programs that exist from within finite resources.

Recommendation 6

We recommend that the Department collect appropriate data, and use it to:

- a. Quantify the need for resources and interventions.
- b. Inform and guide updates to interventions provided.
- c. Assess the effectiveness of interventions provided, including impacts on inmate outcomes such as reinvolvement with the Justice, and other systems.

➤ **Response of officials:**

The department agrees with this recommendation. The Correctional Services Division is currently in the process of scoping replacement of an existing legacy database. A more sophisticated data analysis framework is contemplated as part of this work.

Recommendation 7

We recommend that the Department ensure:

- a. Where needs (criminogenic and/or non-criminogenic) are identified that would contribute to successful reintegration, that they be included in an inmate's Custody Release Plan.
- b. Actions are taken to address these identified needs, and documented.

➤ **Response of officials:**

The department agrees with this recommendation, noting specific realities in relation to custody release planning, assessment and case management that may be difficult to overcome. Notwithstanding those realities, the department agrees that a review of the current Custody Release Plan document is warranted to search for opportunities that could benefit inmates further.

Recommendation 8

We recommend that Correctional Services Division support individuals as they transition from custody to the community by providing continuous points of contact (either through Corrections staff or using outside agencies) in the correctional centre and in the community after release.

➤ **Response of officials:**

The department agrees to this recommendation, in part. As noted in the report, only 16 percent of inmates had mandated justice services to follow upon their release for custody. As a result, these types of connections would be on a voluntary basis and outside the scope of the department's mandate to provide services to those individuals with an active sentence/supervision order. With that said, the department intends to look for further opportunities to enhance current justice programs such as the Responsible Reintegration Initiative (RRI). The department will also continue to work with other departments to attempt to link inmates to programs that exist in the community.

Recommendation 9

We recommend that medical staff in correctional centres obtain access to, and use, electronic charting used by the regional health authorities.

➤ **Response of officials:**

The department agrees to this recommendation in principle, however the Department of Health, Seniors and Long-Term Care will need to be consulted on the recommendation and other opportunities to streamline and improve health related services.

Recommendation 10

We recommend that the Correctional Services Division make connecting to outside agencies a priority while inmates are in custody by:

- a. Engaging and coordinating with outside agencies.
- b. Increasing outside agencies' participation in the custody release process.
- c. Documenting these interactions.

➤ **Response of officials:**

The department agrees to this recommendation, in part. Correctional Services cannot be successful in isolation without the assistance of many others who provide important services in our communities. While our staff have a key role to play in helping people reintegrate into society, their efforts are only as good as the community-based services that they can refer people to upon their release from custody. To that end, the department is committed to continuing to find ways to work with partner departments and community agencies to obtain access to services for those being released from custody centres in Manitoba.

» Vision

Government accountability and public administration excellence for Manitobans.

» Mission

To provide independent information, advice and assurance on government operations and the management of public funds.

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Innovation – We promote innovation and creativity in what we do and how we do it.

Teamwork – We work as a team by sharing each other's knowledge and skills to reach our goals.

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The Office of the Auditor General of Manitoba acknowledges with respect that we conduct our work on the ancestral lands of Anishinaabeg, Anishinewuk, Dakota Oyate, Denesuline, and Nehethowuk Nations, and on the National Homeland of the Red River Métis. We respect the Treaties that were made on these territories, we acknowledge the harms and mistakes of the past, and we dedicate ourselves to move forward in partnership with Indigenous communities in a spirit of reconciliation and collaboration.



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