



FOR RELEASE
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Audit of Yukon Corrections addresses successes, opportunities for improvement

WHITEHORSE—The Office of the Auditor General of Canada has released its performance audit report on Yukon Corrections. The audit's examination period spanned from April 2012 to March 2013 and focused on the Department of Justice's planning and operation of the Whitehorse Correctional Centre (WCC) as well as the department's responsibilities for offenders who are sentenced to the WCC or under community supervision. This time frame includes the period of transition that accompanied the opening of the new WCC.

"We are pleased that many initiatives addressing the recommendations outlined in the report are already being implemented or have been completed," Minister of Justice Brad Cathers said. "The Department of Justice and the Corrections branch appreciate the receipt of this report and the opportunity it presents for further improvement."

The portion of the Auditor General's report assessing the planning and operation of the WCC is favourable and yielded no recommendations, stating that current and future correctional needs of Yukon are being met by the \$70 million facility.

The audit report's recommendations regarding case management and programming, which are based on a review of 25 offender files, identify key areas for improvement. These include: the provision of core programming; integrated offender management for offenders transitioning from WCC to community supervision; risk/needs assessments for offenders whose crimes include sexualized assault or domestic violence; and training for corrections staff in Yukon First Nations history and culture.

"The provision of core programming for offenders facing short sentences at WCC remains a challenge," Corrections branch director Tricia Râtel said. "Yearly reviews of the implementation of our Integrated Offender Management policy have put Corrections in a better position to ensure offenders are getting the programming they require, regardless of whether they are under community or WCC supervision."

Enhanced training opportunities for corrections staff at WCC and the Offender Supervision and Services unit are reducing gaps in risk assessment and program delivery for offenders serving sentences for domestic or sexualized violence. The Corrections branch has also established a sex offender case management team that meets every two weeks to review active sex offender files.

Specialized training in Yukon First Nations history and culture has already been completed by the majority of corrections staff.

"This audit measured the department of Justice against our own policies and mandates," Cathers added. "As we aspire to safe Yukon communities, it's important that we continue work proactively to reduce gaps in correctional service delivery."

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