

FOR RELEASE  
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## **Minister of Justice directs an inspection of the Whitehorse Correctional Centre**

Minister of Justice Tracy-Anne McPhee will direct that an inspection of the Whitehorse Correctional Centre take place pursuant to a never-before-used section of the Yukon Corrections Act, 2009 – and that a report be made to the Deputy Minister of Justice.

The inspection will review policies and practices that may have an impact upon the mental health of inmates – including those related to placement, treatment, and available programs. The inspection will also examine how such policies and practices can be strengthened.

The provision of the Corrections Act, 2009 under which the inspection will be carried out authorizes the inspector to enter any part of the correctional centre and to examine anything and any record in the correctional centre, apart from personal medical records. The inspector is also expected to gather input from staff and stakeholders and consider legislation, academic findings, and best practices in their report.

A person with appropriate expertise, independent of the Whitehorse Correctional Centre, will be appointed by the Minister to conduct the inspection.

The Deputy Minister of Justice must respond in writing to the report, including any recommendations, within 90 days along with the actions that will be taken in response.

### **Quotes**

"We want to learn about any service, program or legislative gaps in our service delivery model and how we can better respond to inmates who have mental health concerns. By acting now, we can improve the situation of these inmates in the future. We can always do better - and we will."

*–Tracy-Anne McPhee, Minister of Justice*

### **Quick facts**

- WCC has implemented a national best practice by not placing anyone in separate confinement beyond 15 days. Only one inmate has been separately confined for more than 15 days since policy and practice were changed in 2015. This was under exceptional circumstances and by court order.
- Case managers work closely with separately-confined inmates in an effort to return them to regular living units at the earliest opportunity.
- Those who are separately confined spend at least two hours a day out of cells. They have access to visits, Elders, mental health and health services when needed.
- All Corrections staff members receive training in working with mentally-ill inmates.
- The Whitehorse Correctional Centre physician, psychologist, psychiatrist and case management staff work closely with community resources, Mental Health Services and the Yukon Review Board to secure services and continuity of care for mentally-ill clients.

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