

Chapter

4

Correctional Service Canada
Reintegration of Male Offenders

All of the audit work in this chapter was conducted in accordance with the standards for assurance engagements set by the Canadian Institute of Chartered Accountants. While the Office adopts these standards as the minimum requirement for our audits, we also draw upon the standards and practices of other disciplines.

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Correctional Service Canada

Reintegration of Male Offenders

Main Points

4.1 Correctional Service Canada has substantially implemented many of the recommendations we made in our 1999 audit. It has made more time available for offenders to participate in needed programs while incarcerated. It has improved the quality of the reports it prepares for the National Parole Board to decide whether an offender should be released conditionally into the community. In the community, the Service has made a significant improvement in meeting its standards for frequency of contact with offenders on parole. Senior management commitment and leadership have been important in achieving these results.

4.2 In two areas that are critical to reintegrating offenders effectively, however, Correctional Service has been slow to address our recommendations of previous audits. Not enough programs are available to offenders in the community to meet the need. The Service has made little progress in implementing key aspects of its approved national strategy for providing offenders with appropriate employment programs.

4.3 We found three other important areas that need attention where we did not make a recommendation in 1999:

- The Service has not fully tested the inter-rater reliability of the tools it uses to assess an offender's needs and the risk he presents.
- Parole officers are critical to the successful reintegration of offenders, but the level and quality of their training is weak.
- Turnover among parole officers appears high, with a potential impact on offender reintegration operations.

4.4 Since 1994, we have conducted five audits that examined various practices for reintegrating male offenders into the community, a vital part of the Service's mandate. In our two most recent audits we have reviewed the same areas to determine how much progress the Service has made on addressing our previous recommendations. The audit reported here looks specifically at how Correctional Service has acted on our 1999 recommendations.

4.5 In 1999 we recommended that the Service improve its timeliness in acquiring official documents needed to assess offenders when they enter institutions. We said it needed to be more efficient in preparing casework to meet the offender's first date of eligibility for parole. It needed to clarify and implement a strategy for employment programs geared to reintegrating offenders. And we said it should improve the quality of its reports that the

National Parole Board uses to grant the conditional release of offenders into the community. We also noted the need for better adherence to national standards for frequency of contact with offenders in the community.

Correctional Service Canada has responded. Correctional Service has generally accepted our recommendations. Its responses indicate what it is doing or plans to do to address them.

Introduction

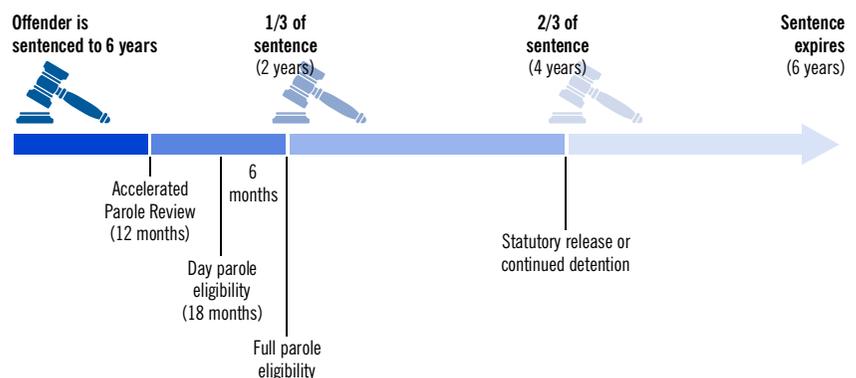
4.6 Correctional Service Canada has two main responsibilities: the incarceration of offenders and their safe reintegration into the community. The Service spent \$492 million on reintegration activities in 2001–02—about 33 percent of its total spending, roughly the same proportion it spent on reintegration in 1997–98.

4.7 The *Corrections and Conditional Release Act* says that the purpose of conditional release is to contribute to public safety by releasing offenders at a time and in a manner that increases their chances of successfully reintegrating into the community. The Act gives the National Parole Board authority to grant the conditional release of offenders on full parole when they have served one third of their sentence. Offenders become eligible for day parole six months before the date of their eligibility for full parole (Exhibit 4.1). Under Accelerated Parole Review, offenders who are serving their first federal sentence and were not convicted of a violent crime or serious drug offence can be released on day parole after serving one sixth of their sentence, unless there are reasonable grounds to believe they will commit a violent offence before their sentence ends.

4.8 After serving two thirds of their sentence, most offenders who have not been paroled are entitled by law to be released into the community (statutory release), where their supervision continues until the sentence expires. In a small number of cases, Correctional Service will recommend to the National Parole Board that an offender be kept in prison until the end of his sentence. The Board detains an offender when it is likely that, if released before his sentence ended, he would commit an offence involving death or serious harm, a sexual offence against a child, or a serious drug offence.

4.9 Most offenders under supervision in the community are subject to conditions such as refraining from the use of alcohol and from associating with criminals. If an offender breaches any of these conditions and the

Exhibit 4.1 Milestones in a fixed-term sentence of six years



Source: *Corrections and Conditional Release Act*

supervising parole officer feels that the risk to the community has been raised to an unacceptable level, the National Parole Board may revoke the offender's parole and have him returned to prison.

The process for reintegrating male offenders

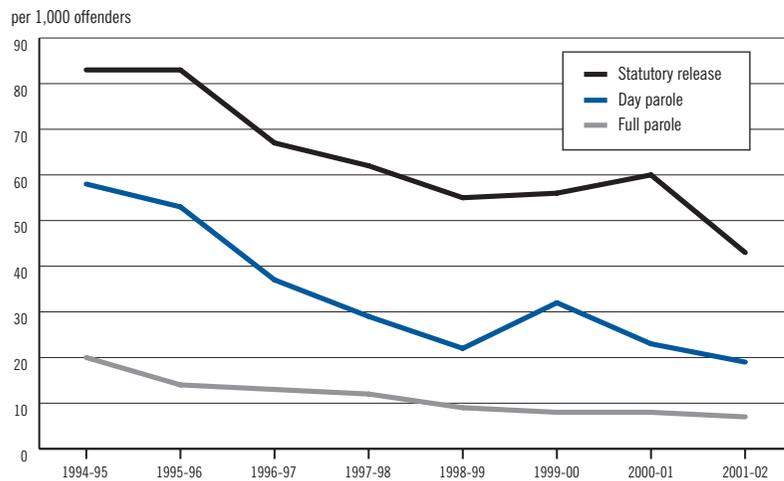
4.10 Correctional Service uses a case management process to manage the reintegration of offenders. The process has a number of stages that include the following:

- obtaining official documents required for assessing the security risk and the needs of each offender;
- assessing the offender to identify the factors that led to his criminal behaviour and developing a correctional plan to address those factors;
- assigning and scheduling the offender to participate in reintegration programs and other interventions to prepare him for release hearings before the National Parole Board;
- assessing whether participating in programs and other interventions has helped reduce the risk that the offender will commit another offence after being released;
- making recommendations to the National Parole Board on the offender's suitability for conditional release into the community;
- releasing the offender—on parole by the National Parole Board or, by law, after two thirds of the sentence (statutory release), or at the end of the sentence (warrant expiry);
- providing supervision, further programs, and assessment in the community until the end of the sentence; and
- reporting to the National Parole Board if an offender in the community presents an elevated risk that warrants a review by the Board.

Trends in the offender population

4.11 The number of male offenders in federal correctional institutions and under supervision in the community has declined over the last few years, while the split between the two groups has remained fairly constant at 60 percent and 40 percent respectively (Appendix). A total of about 500 fewer offenders were admitted to federal prison in 2001–02 than in 1997–98, and the total number of releases declined by about 1,000 during the same period. As we reported in 1999, offenders continue to be released at a later point in their sentences—as illustrated by the growing proportion of releases that are statutory releases.

4.12 National Parole Board data covering the period 1994–95 to 2001–02 indicate that the conviction rate for violent offences by offenders supervised in the community appears to have declined. Exhibit 4.2 outlines this decline among offenders on day parole, full parole, and statutory release.

Exhibit 4.2 Conviction rates for violent offences by supervised offenders*

*Supervised offenders includes offenders on parole or statutory release, temporarily detained in a federal penitentiary, or unlawfully at large.

Source: National Parole Board Performance Monitoring Report 2001-2002 — July 2002

Focus of the follow-up

4.13 The purpose of this follow-up audit was to assess the extent to which Correctional Service Canada has acted on recommendations made in Chapter 1 of our 1999 Report. In 1994 and 1996 we had reviewed all aspects of the reintegration process, from the admission of offenders into federal institutions to their supervision in the community after release.

4.14 We reported in 1999 that while the Service had made a concerted effort to respond to previous observations, it still needed to make the following improvements:

- more timely acquisition of official documents for initial assessment of offenders;
- more timely casework preparation to meet the offender's first parole date;
- a clear operational strategy for offender employment programs;
- better quality of reports to the National Parole Board to grant the conditional release of offenders into the community; and
- improved adherence to national standards for frequency of contact with offenders in the community.

4.15 Some quantitative information in this chapter is based on data provided by Correctional Service. We have attempted to assess these data through a process of analysis, comparison, and discussion. Unless otherwise indicated in this chapter, these data should be treated as unaudited.

4.16 Further details on our audit objective and criteria are presented in the About the Follow-up at the end of the chapter. As in our previous audits, this audit did not include issues specific to Aboriginal offenders.

Observations and Recommendations

Assessing offenders at intake

4.17 The first step in managing an offender's case is the intake assessment process, which determines the appropriate level of security for the offender. A correctional plan is also prepared, outlining the factors that led to the offender's criminal behaviour and the programs he will need to address them. The Service must complete the correctional plan as soon as possible after the offender enters federal custody; late completion leaves little time for offenders serving short terms to participate in the programs they need to become eligible for release.

Inter-rater reliability of assessment tools needs more testing

4.18 The Custody Rating Scale is the assessment tool used to determine what level of security an incoming offender warrants. If an instrument has a high inter-rater reliability, different parole officers assessing the same offender will likely assign him to the same security level. If its reliability is relatively low, different parole officers will probably assign the same offender to different security levels. Assigning an offender to a higher level than necessary can reduce opportunities for him to participate in reintegration programs. It also increases the cost of incarceration.

4.19 In 1999, we found that Correctional Service had adequately verified that the Custody Rating Scale was scientifically valid for assessing male offenders; however, it had not thoroughly tested its inter-rater reliability. The use of an unreliable instrument could call into question the testing of its validity.

4.20 As part of its ongoing research activities, the Service recently undertook a preliminary test of the Custody Rating Scale's inter-rater reliability among a small number of parole officers. Initial results showed that about 25 percent of the officers assigned higher security levels to the same offender. Given the potential impact of a problem with inter-rater reliability, these preliminary test results are a concern and reaffirm that the Service needs to do further work.

4.21 Our follow-up found that Correctional Service has yet to complete a full test of its Custody Rating Scale for its inter-rater reliability in classifying male offenders. Periodic ongoing tests of inter-rater reliability are required to assess the adequacy of the way the tool is applied, the current training given to those using it, and controls on the quality of its results.

4.22 Recommendation. Correctional Service Canada should fully test the inter-rater reliability of the tools it uses to assess male offenders at intake and should take the necessary action indicated by test results.

Correctional Service’s response. Correctional Service Canada’s research confirms the predictive validity of the assessment tools it uses. The Service accepts the suggestion that additional research should be done on inter-rater reliability and this is included in the 2003–2004 Research Plan.

Timely preparation of offenders’ correctional plans is still a challenge

4.23 In the past, our Office has examined the completion of the offender’s correctional plan from two perspectives: timely acquisition of documents required to assess the offender and the amount of time needed to analyze this information and complete the correctional plan.

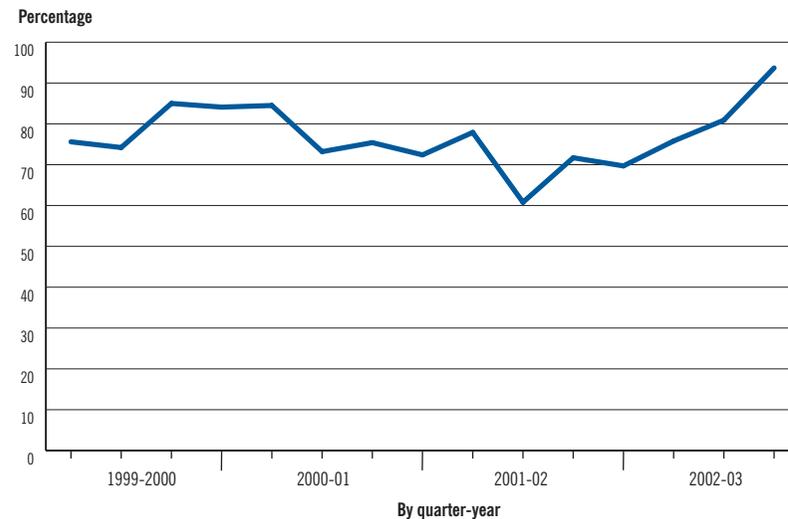
4.24 The Service must gather information on the offender and the offence from its own records and from outside agencies. Its policy requires that it have three documents available to assess the offender’s risk and needs: the offender’s criminal history (for example, police reports); an official version of the offence (for example, the judge’s comments); and the Post-Sentence Community Assessment (prepared by community parole officers). All official documents are needed far enough in advance to prepare the offender’s correctional plan on time.

4.25 In 1999 we noted that while the Service had reduced some of the delays in acquiring these documents, in about one quarter of the cases it did not meet its own standards for timeliness. We recommended that the Service find ways to further reduce the delays in getting the necessary information on offenders. Our follow-up found that Correctional Service’s current data show a further reduction in the average number of days it takes to acquire official information on offenders (Exhibit 4.3).

Exhibit 4.3 Average number of days to receive police reports, judge’s comments, and post-sentence community assessments (1999–2002)

Time period	Average number of days		
	Police reports	Judge’s comments	Post-sentence community assessments
1999–00	34	34	30
2000–01	25	35	27
2001–02	21	31	23

4.26 As of April 2001, Correctional Service standards require that the correctional plan be completed within 70 days of the admission date for offenders serving less than four years and within 90 days for the rest. The Service still has difficulty meeting its standards for timely completion of correctional plans (Exhibit 4.4). In 2001–02, only about 70 percent of all correctional plans were completed on time. The Service has reviewed its completion rate for the current year to date and found that nationally, it has improved to 84 percent.

Exhibit 4.4 Percentage of correctional plans completed on time (April 1999–December 2002)

Source: Correctional Service Canada

4.27 More timely acquisition of required official documents represents an improvement in one aspect of completing correctional plans on time. However, a study of the offender intake process conducted for the Service in 2002 concluded that better scheduling and assignment of resources may be necessary to complete all correctional plans on time as required.

4.28 Recommendation. Correctional Service Canada should identify the measures needed to meet its existing standards for on-time completion of correctional plans and should take the necessary corrective action.

Correctional Service's response. We have focussed our attention on this area and have already seen improvement. We will continue to monitor on a monthly basis and take appropriate action as required.

Case management

There is more time for offenders to complete programs before their first parole eligibility date

4.29 In 1999 we recommended that Correctional Service Canada improve the efficiency and timeliness of its case management process and the preparation of its reports on offenders to meet its approved standards.

4.30 We had estimated in 1996 that, on average, three rehabilitation programs were prescribed for low-risk/low-need offenders, and the shortest possible time in which they could complete the three programs was 105 days. We calculated that offenders serving a two- to three-year sentence had only 19 days to complete the programs before their earliest date of eligibility for parole. By 1998, this had improved to 60 days, and in 2001–02 to 79 days.

4.31 These results suggest that most offenders who require rehabilitation programs are now more likely to complete them on time. Further, some offenders start critical programs in the Intake Unit while they are still awaiting placement in an institution. More timely completion of all

correctional plans would allow added time for reintegration programs, and this would help offenders meet their parole eligibility dates.

Some offenders remain incarcerated after they become eligible for parole

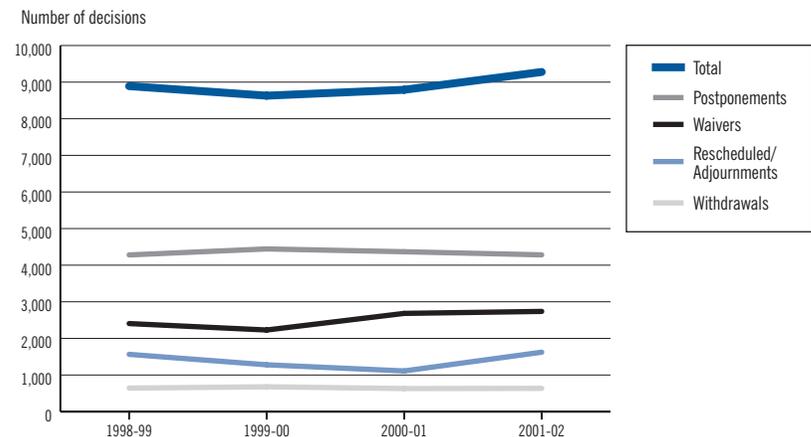
4.32 Parole hearings can be delayed for several reasons—for example, if an offender feels that the National Parole Board is unlikely to release him, if he has a court case or an appeal pending, or if Correctional Service is unable to provide the required programs in time to prepare the offender for release. The National Parole Board can also adjourn a hearing if it does not have the required documentation in time for members to prepare for the hearing.

4.33 Exhibit 4.5 shows that from 1998 to 2002, the numbers of annual withdrawals, postponements, and administrative adjournments of hearings (in combination with rescheduled hearings) have been fairly stable. However, waivers (an offender's waiving of his legal right to a hearing) have increased somewhat. In 2001–02 almost 9,300 of the possible 36,400 decisions on the release of offenders were delayed.

4.34 In 1999 we recommended that Correctional Service Canada regularly analyze the reasons for the number of offenders who remain incarcerated beyond their first date of eligibility for parole. That year, Correctional Service conducted a national study of 1,300 offenders still incarcerated after their date of eligibility for full parole in order to examine the validity of the waivers, postponements, and withdrawals of parole hearings.

4.35 The study indicated that in most cases, the reasons for the delays were beyond Correctional Service's control—for example, release was not recommended; the offender had refused programs; or offenders serving short terms did not have time to complete the programs prescribed in their correctional plans. Correctional Service did determine that seven percent of the delays were caused by factors within its control, such as insufficient program capacity or problems with scheduling. The Service concluded from

Exhibit 4.5 Waivers, withdrawals, postponements, and adjournments (1998-2002)



Source: National Parole Board

its study that not many good candidates for release were being detained unnecessarily. National and regional monitoring will continue, with periodic sampling of offenders who are past their date of eligibility for full parole.

4.36 Despite the improvement that the study showed, almost 100 offenders still were not prepared for release in time for their parole eligibility dates. The *Corrections and Conditional Release Act* requires that the Service maintain offenders at the lowest level of custody possible, including supervision in the community. Delayed releases have cost implications, since it is more expensive to keep offenders in prison than in the community. However, protecting society must always remain the paramount concern.

4.37 Recommendation. Correctional Service Canada should eliminate all delays within its control that affect the timely preparation of offenders for their first dates of eligibility for parole.

Correctional Service's response. As acknowledged in the chapter, there are very few offenders who are good candidates for release who see their parole review delayed due to reasons within the Service's control. It is also important to recognize that the overriding principle in federal corrections legislation is the protection of the public, and therefore our work in preparing offenders for their parole review is grounded on that principle. The Service recognizes the importance of timely preparation of offenders and will continue to examine the reasons within its control for delays and take appropriate action.

Senior correctional officers are still not fulfilling their case management responsibilities

4.38 Managing offenders' cases in the institutions requires teamwork between senior correctional officers (who also have security duties) and parole officers. Their collaboration and exchange of information are crucial to understanding changes in offenders' behaviour—information that parole officers use in preparing reports for offenders' hearings before the National Parole Board.

4.39 In 1996 and 1999, we observed that senior correctional officers were not consistently carrying out the case management duties as required by Correctional Service policy. Among other things, these officers were expected to complete clear, concise reports for case management purposes, inform colleagues about significant incidents and behavioural changes of inmates, and participate in assessing inmates. We recommended that these officers perform the case management duties required of them by policy.

4.40 Recently, Correctional Service adjusted its division of case management responsibilities. As a result, many of the senior correctional officers' responsibilities for case management reporting were shifted to the institutional parole officers. While the Service made this operational decision over a year ago, it has just started the process of rewriting and re-evaluating the job description for senior correctional officers.

4.41 The new division of responsibilities still requires that senior correctional officers observe changes in offenders' behaviour. Their case management responsibilities now are mainly to record monthly the offender's

behaviour and progress against his correctional plan objectives; after a successful temporary release of an offender into the community, to submit reports for subsequent releases; and to recommend private family visits.

4.42 An internal audit of case management in 2001 examined, among other things, one function that senior correctional officers are still required to do—recording offenders' progress and behaviour monthly, on time, and at the required standard of quality. The content of most of the reports reviewed by the internal auditors did not meet the Service's requirements.

4.43 Recommendation. Correctional Service Canada should complete the rewriting and re-evaluation of the job description for senior correctional officers and ensure that they fulfil the case management duties still assigned to them, as reflected in the approved division of case management responsibilities.

Correctional Service's response. Correctional Service has a commitment to review and update the senior correctional officer (CX02) work description by September 2003.

Quality of reports to National Parole Board for release decisions has improved

4.44 In deciding whether or not to grant the conditional release of offenders from prison, the National Parole Board examines reports and file information pertaining to the offender. Among other things, it places a lot of importance on the quality of the parole officer's analysis in reports from Correctional Service. In 1999, we concluded that the quality of these reports was a concern. We recommended that Correctional Service address known deficiencies in the quality of its reports to the National Parole Board.

4.45 In this follow-up audit, we used the same methodology to determine to what extent the Correctional Service reports help Board members make informed decisions on the conditional release of offenders. We selected a random sample of reports sent to the National Parole Board for release decisions from 1 January to 30 June, 2002. We examined whether the reports had enough information so that a Board member could base a decision solely on their content (good reports); whether they had some gaps in information or analysis that would require additional review of the offender's file (adequate reports); or whether they were of so little value or so unclear that a decision would require a full review of the file (poor reports). We also selected a sample of reports on offenders who presented a higher risk and had greater needs when the decision on their release was before the National Parole Board. We tested this sample separately to determine whether the quality of these reports differed.

4.46 We found that the quality of reports to the National Parole Board has improved since our 1999 audit (see Exhibit 4.6). In 1999, we rated 11 percent of all reports sampled as poor in quality. In 2002, 6 percent were rated poor. However, one in eight files on the higher-risk offenders contained reports that did not provide sufficient information to Board members. We suggest that the Service continue to monitor this area to maintain the current level of improvement and strive to achieve better quality in its reports.

Exhibit 4.6 Improved quality of reports to the National Parole Board on offenders

Report quality	Total population		High-risk offenders only	
	1999 Sample	2002 Sample	1999 Sample	2002 Sample
Good	43%	56%	42%	47%
Adequate	46%	38%	42%	40%
Poor	11%	6%	16%	13%

4.47 An internal audit review in 2001 of the case management process also examined the reports sent to the National Parole Board for decisions on releasing offenders. The review focussed on compliance with Correctional Service's policy and procedural requirements for the case management of offenders serving short terms. The review indicated that the reports did not meet the Service's current requirement to include an assessment of the offender's progress against his correctional plan, the impact of programs taken, and changes in the offender's attitude and his adjustment to incarceration.

4.48 One of the problems we found in 1999 was inconsistent control over the quality of these reports to the National Parole Board. Unit managers (who supervise teams of correctional and parole officers) were responsible for quality control but could not fulfil that role, partly because they lacked enough background and training in case management.

4.49 During our recent field visits, we found that the level of Correctional Service's quality control over reports to the National Parole Board was still uneven. The Service told us it is developing a training course for unit managers that focusses on quality oversight and feedback.

Programs for offenders

4.50 The Service has a wide range of rehabilitation programs for offenders to reduce the risk that they will reoffend. These programs can be divided into two broad categories: intervention and employment. Intervention programs have been developed to address the offenders' characteristics that have led to their criminal behaviour. They deal with such areas as substance abuse, family violence, and sex offences.

4.51 Employment programs are designed to make an offender more employable when he is released. They include vocational training, prison industries, and institutional work in areas such as the kitchen, laundry, and maintenance.

4.52 In 1996 we concluded that both intervention and employment programs lacked a management framework that would enable senior management to assess these programs and strategically reallocate funds to those that work best.

4.53 In 1999, we reported that Correctional Service had a framework in place for evaluating the effectiveness of intervention programs. It had begun setting up panels of internationally recognized experts, who provided accreditation of a few national and local programs. Since then, all but three of 38 core programs for offenders in the institutions have been accredited. The Service has also made a concerted effort to standardize the array of available programs by replacing non-accredited local programs with accredited national programs.

Implementation of the strategy for employment programs is just beginning

4.54 Research shows that the risk of reoffending is much higher among offenders whose employment patterns have been unstable. To help offenders become more employable, the Service provides a series of employment programs and job training.

4.55 In both 1996 and 1999, we recommended that Correctional Service develop and implement a coherent strategy for providing employment programs. After six years, it has a strategy but has only just begun to implement it.

4.56 In April 2000, the Service consolidated all employment programs for offenders under the responsibility of Corcan, a special operating agency within the Service. In December 2000, Corcan formalized its employment strategy in the Employment and Employability Program. It redefines the way Correctional Service values and assigns work and vocational placements. The success of this employment strategy requires the involvement and co-operation of the Service's regional and institutional operations with Corcan.

4.57 The goal of the Employment and Employability Program is to ensure that offenders are ready for the job when they are released into the community. Its purpose is to give offenders the chance to develop employment skills, gain certified work experience, and understand what is expected in private-sector employment—for example, the pace, the quality of work, and the hours of work.

4.58 Under this strategy, employment is now viewed as a core rehabilitation program like any intervention program. As such, it requires

- assessing to what extent a lack of employment skills has been a critical factor in the offender's criminal behaviour;
- ensuring that employment programs are designed to remedy these deficiencies;
- placing the offender in an appropriate employment program;
- evaluating the offender's progress; and
- providing follow-up support in the community.

4.59 Assessing the offender's needs. During intake assessment, Correctional Service traditionally has assessed the extent to which an offender needs steady employment to help him avoid reoffending. It now has

further tools to evaluate the offender's aptitude for and interest in developing work skills. This should help identify those who would be served best by employment programs.

4.60 Placing the offender in an appropriate program. The offender case management team in the institution uses the intake assessment results to refer offenders to appropriate employment opportunities while they are incarcerated. However, in the current system there are more offenders with identified employment needs than there are openings in related programs. If employment training is to operate on the same basis as other reintegration programs, then within the institution there must be a fundamental shift in attitudes about employment for offenders. The Service must have the capacity to train for employment all offenders whose assessments show the need. Other offenders who may simply want to work or who can provide specific skills to an institutional program can then be accommodated if capacity permits.

4.61 Program quality. Corcan has enhanced the employment programs in the institution by introducing new standards of work, reflecting job performance requirements that are consistent with industry standards. It is planning to realign all Correctional Service programs of employment and job skills training to increase the "job readiness" skills of offenders with identified employment needs. For example, it will offer general work skills that will make the offender more employable (punctuality, problem solving, teamwork) and practical skills (food preparation, carpentry) through on-the-job training.

4.62 Evaluating the offender's progress. Corcan has developed a standardized tool for evaluating the extent to which an offender's participation in employment programs has made him more employable. This Offender Performance Evaluation is currently being implemented across the country. The offender's progress will be monitored and reported regularly.

4.63 Follow-up in the community. As part of the Effective Community Corrections initiative, Corcan received \$5 million to improve its employment services to offenders in the community. It has increased the number of employment counselling offices from 12 to 25 across most major urban centres. Corcan reported in its Annual Report for 2001–02 that it helped 1,100 offenders find employment and enrolled 500 offenders in full-time education. However, it has no way to identify which regions, institutions, and programs have successfully trained offenders and then placed them in jobs in the community.

Vocational training for offenders needs to be restructured

4.64 Vocational training is one component of employment programs. Even though it parallels what Corcan offers to offenders, traditionally it has been managed independent of Corcan in the institution. Vocational training typically teaches specific skills such as welding or carpentry, and in some institutions offenders can obtain external certification of skills they have learned.

4.65 In April 2002, Correctional Service made Corcan responsible for vocational training in order to integrate it better with other components of the Service's Employment and Employability Program. Corcan estimates that vocational training programs serving about 550 offenders across all regions cost \$3 million to \$4 million a year.

4.66 Corcan presented a position paper to Correctional Service's senior management on restructuring vocational training. However, no strategy for vocational training has been approved and no funds have been allocated.

4.67 Recommendation. Correctional Service Canada should fully implement employment training of offenders as a core rehabilitation program, with particular attention to improving the provision of employment programs and vocational training to meet the identified needs of offenders.

Correctional Service's response. Action was taken effective 1 April 2003 to require that the results of a specialized employment assessment, which was developed in 2002, be addressed in each offender's correctional plan. Offenders with identified employment deficits will be referred to appropriate employment and vocational programs.

There are not enough programs for offenders in the community

4.68 We found that once offenders are released into the community, there are not enough programs to follow up on those taken inside the institution. Research shows that many intervention programs that deal with factors contributing to criminal behaviour are more effective when delivered in the community than in an institution.

4.69 Our audits in 1996 and 1999 noted that many programs required by offenders in the community were not available. For example, in 1999 the Service estimated that fewer than 20 percent of released offenders who had substance abuse problems were receiving the treatment programs they needed. We recommended that the Service ensure an appropriate balance of intervention programs between the institution and the community.

4.70 The Service has indicated that it has somewhat increased the availability of community programs but problems persist. In 2002, using the same test it conducted in 1999, Correctional Service estimated that only about 1,000 (45 percent) of the 2,200 offenders in the community who needed a substance abuse program were receiving this treatment. Waiting lists are a concern.

4.71 Exhibit 4.7 outlines expenditures for 1998–99 and 2001–02 on reintegration programs for offenders, both in the community and in the institutions. At first glance, spending on community programs increased from about \$11 million to about \$16 million from 1998–99 to 2001–02. Despite this increase, spending on community intervention programs has stayed at about 17 percent of the total spending on all intervention programs. However, it should be noted that there are more high-risk offenders in institutions who require more expensive, high-intensity programs.

Exhibit 4.7 Spending on reintegration programs for offenders (1998–99 and 2001–02)

Reintegration Programs	Expenditures (\$000)			
	Institution		Community	
	1998-99	2001-02	1998-99	2001-02
Psychology	11,664	16,484	4,065	4,107
Program management and administration	7,354	10,369	232	2,516
Personal Development – Offenders	11,310	13,387	1,245	690
Aboriginal programs	4,059	5,996	102	808
Living skills	6,550	8,505	737	1,440
Substance abuse programs	3,953	5,542	2,176	2,367
Sex offender programs	5,617	5,945	1,690	1,848
Violence Prevention	665	2,827	0	184
Women's programs	138	557	0	77
Family Violence	954	1,544	509	573
Special Needs Program	740	783	11	116
Counter Point Program	0	0	0	810
Ethno-cultural programs	0	41	0	1
TOTAL	\$53,004	\$71,980	\$10,767	\$15,537

Note: Figures include reintegration program expenditures for both male and female offenders. Psychology also includes assessment and a variety of mental health services not directly related to offender reintegration programs.

Source: Correctional Service Canada

4.72 Offering follow-up programs for offenders in the community presents critical challenges. The duration of programs is long and their admission dates are fixed; they are offered only during the day and typically only in larger urban centres; offenders may move to another location; and there may not be enough participants to warrant offering a program. Some of these challenges relate directly to using the same structure and approach for programs in the community as for those in institutions, where the Service has more control over conditions.

4.73 As part of the Effective Community Corrections initiative, the Service undertook a \$1.6 million, four-year program to deal with these challenges. It is developing a Community Maintenance Program with more flexible treatment for offenders. Activities funded under the program could address some of the known difficulties of delivering programs in the community.

4.74 The program is now going into its third year. However, the significant lack of community program capacity that existed seven years ago continues today. We expected far more progress in this area.

4.75 Recommendation. Correctional Service should set a reasonable target to further increase the number of offenders who receive the intervention programs they need in the community and should review progress to meet the target within a year.

Correctional Service’s response. Every released offender has a correctional plan developed to respond to an assessment of his or her particular risks and needs. The Service addresses the offenders’ needs through a combination of its own programs, community-based programs, specialized services, and other interventions. The Service will develop a plan to increase offenders’ participation in Service-developed community programming and will monitor its progress.

Community supervision

Supervision of offenders in the community is improving

4.76 Supervision in the community is the final step in the process of reintegrating offenders—the last point at which the system can directly influence or control them. It is when they are under supervision in the community that offenders are least separated from the public and therefore present the greatest risk to society. When problems occur here, the consequences can be severe and are usually highly publicized.

4.77 The Service has standards governing the minimum frequency with which community parole officers are to meet with offenders. It is important to maintain adequate contact with offenders in the community, particularly offenders who require a high level of supervision.

4.78 In 1999 we tested the Service’s ability to meet its standards for frequency of contact with such offenders. We found that it had failed to meet its minimum standard in 10 percent to 20 percent of cases, depending on the region. We recommended that the Service ensure that its parole officers meet the standard for frequency of contact.

4.79 Our follow-up found a significant improvement since then in the frequency of contact with offenders, the result of a concerted effort by management. Correctional Service has measured its progress in a series of self-audits, and in 2000–01 it found that in 5 percent to 12 percent of cases across all regions, the standard was not met.

4.80 In 2002, the Service reviewed the frequency of contact from March to July in a representative sample of files on offenders in the community. The results indicated a much higher level of adherence to national standards. Only about one to four percent of the files, by region, did not meet the minimum standard. The field data we reviewed indicated a rate of adherence in a range similar to what the Service found in its most recent review.

4.81 In its 2002 review the Service also collected information concerning the types and levels of “collateral contacts” with offenders in the community (collateral contacts are contacts by the community parole officer with the offender’s family members, employer, psychologist, program delivery officers, and the police, among others). They found that over the review period a large

number of collateral contacts had occurred. Among other things, collateral contacts add value because they enhance the parole officer's knowledge of the offender and his level of risk.

Approaches vary in managing offenders who need a high level of supervision

4.82 In 1994 and in 1999, we noted that the Service was using several different approaches to manage offenders who needed a high level of supervision in the community. However, it had not evaluated the effectiveness of the different approaches.

4.83 We found in this follow-up audit that approaches to managing offenders who need a high level of supervision still vary widely from one location to another. In major urban centres, team supervision units handle these cases. In other areas, parole officers are assigned equal numbers of these offenders. Some area offices assign this group only to more experienced staff.

4.84 Correctional Service recently reviewed the approaches it uses to manage offenders who require a high level of supervision in the community. It has approved national practices for supervising those who may require more structure and control. These practices outline, for example, criteria to identify the target group, the required frequency of contact, collateral contacts, and an appropriate approach to treatment. However, they do not define the experience and competency that parole officers need to manage these cases.

4.85 We had also recommended previously that in evaluating its approaches to managing offenders who need a lot of supervision, the Service identify and implement the approaches that are the most cost-effective in various specific circumstances. The Service completed a preliminary evaluation of its community supervision practices in October 2002, six months after implementing its national guidelines.

Human resources concerns

Rate of institutional parole officer turnover appears high

4.86 During our audit, regional managers and staff frequently mentioned the high rate of movement, rotation, and turnover of parole officers. They attributed the instability of the workforce to factors such as the frequent rotation of staff within and between institutions and community offices, the number of job vacancies, and the number of acting appointments. A variety of factors affect staff turnover. Operational managers can control some of them by, for example, reassigning parole officers to address changes in workload. Others are generated by staff themselves, such as departures or leave for family-related reasons.

4.87 Each staff move creates a chain reaction—work must be reallocated, temporary acting replacements found, the long process of staffing a permanent replacement initiated, and both the temporary acting replacement and the future incumbent trained. As we have noted in this chapter, training of parole officers and quality control need improvement, issues that heighten the impact of high staff turnover on operational stability and case management.

4.88 Senior management at Correctional Service headquarters acknowledged some concern about the high staff turnover and the use of acting appointments. While it had collected few data to assess the extent and impact of parole officer turnover, the Service had examined term and acting positions in order to reduce their number. With the Service's assistance, we collected some preliminary data on institutional parole officers from its human resources data system to assess whether these concerns had validity.

4.89 The information we received on all 41 institutions with six or more parole officers showed that from 1999 to 2002, parole officers had an average annual turnover rate of about 14 percent. Eleven of the institutions had annual turnover rates of 20 percent or higher among parole officers.

4.90 In June 2002 we also examined data on the number of appointments to act in parole officer positions. These data are important because employees appointed to act in positions may not have all the knowledge and skills the positions require. In the 41 institutions we examined, about 14 percent of all parole officers were in acting appointments. Furthermore, in 12 of the institutions at least 20 percent of parole officers were acting in their positions.

4.91 Our review of turnover rates and acting appointments among parole officers was limited, as it was based on unaudited data from headquarters. However, the preliminary results did reinforce some of the concerns raised during our field visits, particularly the high rate of parole officer moves within some institutions. High turnover and the use of acting appointments are interrelated: lower staff turnover would reduce the need for acting replacements.

4.92 Recommendation. Correctional Service Canada should more thoroughly examine the turnover rate among parole officers, assess the impact of turnover and how it is being managed, and take the steps needed to address its findings.

Correctional Service's response. Correctional Service will more closely examine the turnover rate of parole officers and take appropriate action where necessary.

Training for parole officers needs improvement

4.93 The cornerstone of effective offender reintegration is the knowledge and competency of parole officers. It is they who ensure that offenders are properly assessed, accurate reports are prepared, and offenders get the supervision they need in the community. In 1996 we found that training for parole officers was inadequate. We noted that many had not received the eight-day orientation training for parole officers until after they had started the job. By 1999, the Service indicated that it was now providing parole officers 10 days of orientation training, and more of them were participating. It was also planning to provide refresher training to experienced parole officers.

4.94 In our current follow-up audit we noted that orientation training for parole officers still runs 10 days. This training is essential to provide new

parole officers with basic, job-specific knowledge of the reintegration process from the intake of offenders to their supervision in the community. Our field work found that many new parole officers still do not receive orientation training before they start the job. A recent review by the Service showed that 20 percent of parole officers appointed in the last year did not receive orientation training and an additional 15 percent did not receive it in the time required. These results clearly indicate the need for substantive improvement.

4.95 Parole officers in the community told us that the 10 days of orientation training did not cover all the areas of their jobs adequately. Only the last two days of the course dealt with community supervision, and the content was considered superficial.

4.96 As we have noted in this chapter, inter-rater reliability of assessment tools used at offender intake is critical to determining the offender's level of security and needs for effective reintegration. Sufficient parole officer training and learning are key ingredients of inter-rater reliability. We looked at how well current orientation training for parole officers taught and tested these competencies. We found that parole officer orientation provided only a practical overview of these critical instruments. By comparison, a similar offender assessment instrument (the Level of Service Inventory) used in numerous jurisdictions worldwide (United States, Britain, and Australia) requires more extensive training and officer testing to ensure that it is applied as intended.

4.97 Correctional Service's national headquarters has not given the regions detailed guidelines for structured on-the-job training, and we found that training on the job is uneven. Only some offices provide structured training; most training on the job is provided by the more experienced parole officers.

4.98 To be effective on the job, parole officers need continued training to enhance their skills. This can include training in risk assessment, supervision of sex offenders, crisis management, defusing of hostile situations, and negotiation. Correctional Service has not identified those who should receive this enhanced training and when.

4.99 Some parole officers have not received the enhanced training they need. Most told us that it is left up to parole officers to seek out enhanced training on their own initiative in the annual review of their performance. Even then, finding funds and time for training can be difficult.

4.100 To address the known concerns about the training of parole officers, senior management recently approved five additional days of development each year, starting in 2003–04. The training will be developed nationally to enhance parole officers' understanding and application of effective correctional practices. The Service says that three days of the training will be in the classroom and the two final days will be a combination of on-line training, conference attendance, and external courses.

4.101 The Service has also increased its funding for staff training, and it will provide added specialized training on-line to enhance the present orientation

training for parole officers. In addition, it provides supervisors of parole officers with professional development to enhance the quality of community supervision and will provide safety training for parole officers in the community.

4.102 Recommendation. Building on its recent efforts, Correctional Service Canada should ensure that all parole officers working at different points in the reintegration process (at offender intake, in the institution, and in the community) receive the training they need to perform their specific duties.

Correctional Service's response. The Service has already recognized this need and, to that end, it has introduced a national training standard of five days annual training, which will provide parole officers with additional specialized training on the clinical aspects of their duties.

Conclusion

4.103 In 1999 we concluded that Correctional Service was moving in the right direction with initiatives to make its practices and results more consistent across all of its regions.

4.104 Today, the Service has made good progress in several areas that we have raised previously:

- It takes less time to acquire critical documents.
- It has more time to complete the case management process for offenders in institutions.
- The quality of reports to the National Parole Board continues to improve.
- It has made a significant improvement in meeting its standards for frequency of contact with offenders in the community.
- It has developed and evaluated national guidance on supervising offenders who need a high level of supervision in the community.

4.105 However, the Service needs to improve further in other areas where we made recommendations in 1999. It still needs to

- provide enough programs for offenders in the community when they need them;
- implement its strategy for employment and vocational programs; and
- ensure that senior correctional officers fulfil their duties in case management.

4.106 During this follow-up we also identified some related areas that need attention where we did not make recommendations in 1999. Correctional Service needs to

- thoroughly test the reliability of the tools it uses to assess offenders at intake;

- improve the training of parole officers to meet the requirements of the job;
- assess and address the apparently high turnover of parole officers; and
- complete offenders' correctional plans to meet existing standards.

4.107 A future direction for reintegration of offenders. Correctional Service has modified the structure of its reintegration process several times over the past decade. In September 2002 it approved the latest step in the evolution, called “operating regimes.” This is a new approach to help specific groups of offenders achieve their correctional goals with the aid of a specialized team of correctional staff. A key part of this new model is to increase offenders' responsibility for their behaviour and for their active involvement in achieving the objectives of their correctional plans.

4.108 Several operating regimes are planned: one for highly disruptive offenders in maximum security institutions; a transition regime for offenders preparing for release to the community; and a number of separate operating regimes in the community based on offenders' needs and potential for reintegration. However, operating regimes will succeed only to the extent that the Service builds on the improvements it has already made in its reintegration practices and addresses those areas we have identified that still need improvement.

About the Follow-up

Objective

The objective of this follow-up audit was to assess the extent to which Correctional Service Canada has acted on recommendations made in Chapter 1 of our 1999 Report. Specifically, we assessed the extent of improvement in the following areas of offender reintegration:

- official documentation received at intake,
- reliability of risk assessment tools,
- timeliness of case management,
- quality of reports to the National Parole Board,
- availability of programs for offenders in the community,
- implementation of the employment strategy, and
- supervision of offenders in the community

Audit scope

Our examination focussed on the critical components of the reintegration process for male offenders that contribute to effectively reintegrating offenders into the community as law-abiding citizens. We also examined the extent to which parole officers working with offenders throughout the reintegration process have the necessary knowledge, skills, and experience to perform the duties of their jobs. The audit did not include issues specific to male Aboriginal offenders.

Audit criteria

We expected the following:

- Risk assessment instruments used to identify an offender's criminogenic factors and level of security throughout the sentence are valid, reliable, and properly applied.
- Accurate, timely, and complete information on the offender both from external sources and from within Correctional Service are available to complete the offender's correctional plan.
- Good-quality, timely intervention and employment programs are provided by qualified individuals to offenders while they are incarcerated and while under supervision in the community.
- Information on offenders' progress against their correctional plans is collected on an ongoing, timely basis and is accurate and complete.
- The Service regularly analyzes the reasons why offenders remain incarcerated past their first date of parole eligibility.
- Complete, timely, and accurate reports are provided to the National Parole Board to grant conditional release to offenders at their first date of parole eligibility and at subsequent reviews.
- Parole officers maintain contact with and supervise offenders in the community at a level that is appropriate and consistent.
- Parole officers working at different points in the reintegration process (at intake, in the institution, and in the community) possess the necessary knowledge, skills, and experience to perform the tasks and duties of their jobs.
- Correctional Service has the accurate and timely performance information it needs on all operational aspects of the reintegration process, including human resource indicators, to make informed management decisions.

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Appendix Offender Population, Admission, and Release Trends (1997–98 to 2001–02)

Offender Population	Offender location	1997–98	1998–99	1999–00	2000–01	2001–02
	Institution ¹	13,125 (61%)	12,776 (60%)	12,474 (59%)	12,419 (59%)	12,306 (60%)
	Community ²	8,235 (39%)	8,656 (40%)	8,792 (41%)	8,579 (41%)	8,276 (40%)
	Total	21,360	21,432	21,266	20,998	20,582

Note: ¹ Institutional figures do not include escaped offenders (154 in 2001-02).

² Community figures do not include offenders deported upon release and provincial offenders under federal supervision. Included are offenders unlawfully at large (646 for 2001-02) and offenders on parole who have been temporarily detained (850 for 2001-02).

Offender Admission	Type of Admission	1997–98	1998–99	1999–00	2000–01	2001–02
	Warrant of committal	4,224	4,418	4,128	4,057	3,926
	Revocation* without offence	2,223	1,852	1,951	1,724	1,704
	Revocation* with offence	1,004	1,105	1,108	1,115	962
	Revocation* with outstanding charge	—	—	5	287	370
	Total admissions	7,451	7,375	7,192	7,183	6,962

Note: *Conditional release suspended and offender returned to federal prison.

Offender Releases	Type of Release	1997–98	1998–99	1999–00	2000–01	2001–02
	Day parole	2,474	2,673	2,659	2,305	2,084
	Full parole ¹	540	396	290	215	224
	Statutory release	4,773	4,340	4,429	4,568	4,690
	Warrant expiry	398	333	266	214	196
	Total	8,185	7,742	7,644	7,302	7,194

Note: ¹These figures do not include offenders who change from day parole to full parole. They are shown below.

	1997–98	1998–99	1999–00	2000–01	2001–02
Day parole to full parole	1,034	1,130	1,147	932	837

Source: Correctional Service Canada

