



Inspection Report

Alouette Correctional Centre for Women



**INVESTIGATION &
STANDARDS OFFICE**
INDEPENDENT OVERSIGHT



Ministry of
Attorney General

Investigation & Standards Office

B.C. Ministry of Attorney General

Inspection Report: Alouette Correctional Centre for Women

Cycle 2 (2025 - 2027)

On-site Inspection Conducted February 3 - 5, 2026

Report Completed May 2026

We acknowledge with respect that the Justice Services Branch operates throughout B.C. on the traditional lands of Indigenous peoples. The BC Public Service is deeply committed to true and lasting reconciliation with Indigenous peoples in B.C.

Contents

- Executive Summary4**
- Inspection Overview6**
 - Internal Case Data..... 7
 - Document Review..... 7
 - On-site Inspection 9
 - Survey 10
- Identified Strengths.....13**
- Conclusion.....14**

Executive Summary

Mandate

Established by the *Correction Act*, the mandate of the Investigation and Standards Office (ISO) is to provide fair, independent oversight to BC Corrections. As part of the Ministry of Attorney General and independent from the Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General, the ISO has the authority to conduct investigations and inspections of correctional centres in British Columbia. Additionally, the ISO undertakes investigations into complaints from individuals in custody or under community supervision and conducts reviews of serious incidents, escapes, deaths in custody, disciplinary hearing decisions, and use of force incidents.

The ISO inspection model is comprehensive, evidence-based, and focused on the experience of individuals in custody and the conditions at B.C. correctional centres. The ISO has developed Inspection Standards, described below, which are applied to B.C. correctional centres to assess, monitor, and report on the conditions of confinement and the experiences of individuals in custody.

The ISO inspects five correctional centres per year, completing all ten correctional centres within a two-year cycle. To assess each of the ten provincial correctional centres, the Inspection Standards are guided by internationally recognized standards of confinement, primarily the *Nelson Mandela Rules*, in addition to more specialized expectations such as the *Bangkok Rules*, which focuses on the experience of women in custody. The Inspection Standards also incorporate various elements of the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*, *Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action*, *Yogyakarta Principles*, *United Nations' Principles for the Protection of Persons with Mental Illness*, and the *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities*.

The Inspection Standards and additional information about the ISO Inspection Model is available on the [ISO website](#).

Purpose

This inspection report details the third completed inspection within Cycle 2 of the ISO inspection cycle. The inspection of Alouette Correctional Centre for Women (ACCW) commenced off-site on November 5, 2025, with the on-site portion of the inspection conducted from February 3 - 5, 2026. Through on- and off-site data collection, the inspection team uses standardized assessment tools and multiple sources of evidence to determine if a centre has

met the defined Inspection Standards and to evaluate compliance with past inspection recommendations.

Upon completion of the inspection, data, and evidence analysis, the ISO identifies findings and makes recommendations, which are shared with BC Corrections. BC Corrections responds to the recommendations, specifying the acceptance status and detailing the action that will be undertaken to address or respond to each recommendation. The ISO monitors implementation by tracking progress on the action items. One year after BC Corrections responds to the recommendations, the ISO requests a formal update on the status of actions taken to address each recommendation.

Key Findings

Alouette Correctional Centre for Women meets expectations for **all 85** applicable Inspection Standards.

The inspection team identified strengths in the following areas:

- Staff respond to challenging behaviours using a trauma-informed and strength-based approach.
- Documentation and client log entries accurately and consistently capture all relevant information related to an individual's time in custody. All entries are detailed, thorough, comprehensive, and clearly written.
- Completed renovations to the separate confinement unit, resulting in notable improvements to the overall physical environment and enhanced opportunities for individuals placed in separate confinement.

Conclusion

The ISO would like to extend our sincere thanks to the staff and management at ACCW for their cooperation, professionalism, and the significant effort dedicated to preparing for and participating in the recent inspection. Your team's commitment to quality, transparency, and continuous improvement was clearly demonstrated throughout the process.

As ACCW met expectations for all 85 applicable Inspection Standards, no findings or recommendations have been identified. The report will therefore focus on the inspection process and the strengths highlighted by the inspection team.

Inspection Overview

Alouette Correctional Centre for Women (ACCW) was built in 2004, expanded in 2008 and again in 2012 to house sentenced and remanded women from all areas of the province. ACCW has a 188-cell capacity and is designed to house individuals with secure, medium, and open classifications. At the start of our review in November 2025, there were 130 individuals in custody at ACCW.

Table 1: Characteristics of Individuals in Custody at ACCW, November 2025¹

Category	Number	Percentage
Self-Identified Gender		
Not Stated (did not identify upon admission) ²	68	52%
Female	61	47%
Male	1	1%
Ethnicity		
Caucasian	62	48%
Indigenous	58	45%
Asian	3	2%
Black	3	2%
Other/Unknown	3	2%
East Indian	1	1%
Legal Hold Status³		
Remand	97	75%
Sentenced	33	25%
Security Classification⁴		
Secure	115	88%
Medium	7	5%
Population Designation		
General population (GP)	78	60%
GP Mental Health Needs (MHN) designation ⁵	44	34%

¹ Numbers and percentages are based on data from CORNET, BC Corrections' internal client management system.

² "Not stated" for self-identified gender refers to individuals who did not report their gender upon admission.

³ *Sentenced* refers to individuals serving provincial sentences. *Remand* includes individuals awaiting trial or sentencing, sentenced individuals who are before the courts on other matters, and those held on behalf of Correctional Services Canada.

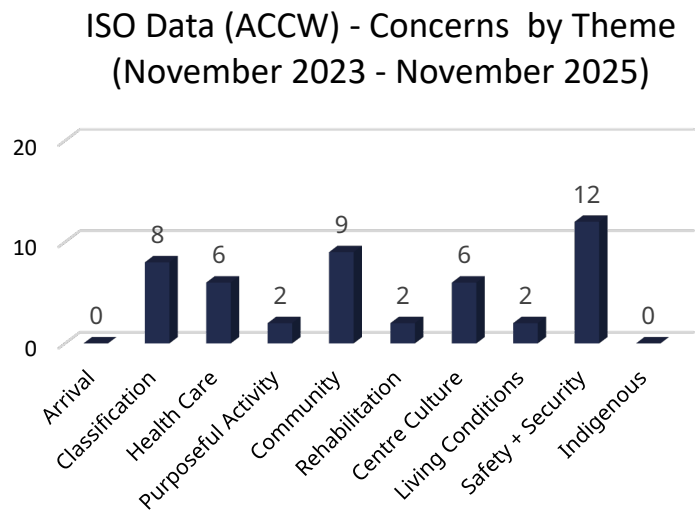
⁴ Security Classification and Population Designation exclude individuals in the "not stated" category.

⁵ The MHN designation is intended as a classification tool and does not encompass all individuals in custody who have identified mental health needs.

Internal Case Data

The inspection process commences with an analysis of the ISO data related to individuals in custody at ACCW between November 1, 2023, and November 1, 2025. During this time frame the ISO had 50 overall contacts with individuals housed at ACCW. The analysis also incorporated all recommendations and the annual progress update from the previous inspection conducted at ACCW in April 2024.

- 27 Telephone Calls
- 1 Early Resolution
- 23 Written Complaints
- 2 Disciplinary Hearing Reviews
- 1 Critical Incident Reviews
- 4 Previous Recommendations



The information above may include multiple complaints from the same individual and does not reflect the number of unique individuals with concerns.

Document Review

The inspection team conducted file reviews on 10% of the individuals incarcerated at ACCW selected through stratified random sampling. This method ensured the files selected included remanded and sentenced individuals, those classified as general population and protective custody, and those who identify as Indigenous or as belonging to a minority group.

The inspection team reviewed a diverse selection of documents and materials held by the centre. Concerns raised through the review of these materials, individuals' files, past inspection recommendations, annual progress updates, and/or the ISO internal data were assessed against the Inspection Standards. In response, an on-site Action Plan was developed to support the on-site inspection.

Use of Force

As part of the documentation review, the inspection team examined ten Use of Force (UOF) incidents, and five code yellow⁶ events that occurred between November 1, 2023, and November 1, 2025.

BC Corrections reviews every UOF incident to objectively assess staff actions and determine whether the force used was lawful and consistent with BC Corrections' training and policy. All incidents receive a primary review, and additional levels of review may occur depending on the seriousness of the incident.

Under sections 28(2)(c) and 28(2)(d) of the *Correction Act*, the ISO has the authority to investigate incidents involving the UOF in provincial correctional centres. This includes initiating an investigation into an incident respecting the administration of the *Correction Act*, as well as to investigate complaints from individuals in custody.

During the documentation review, the inspection team noted all codes and incidents were responded to appropriately, the documentation was completed thoroughly, and that primary and secondary reviews were applied properly for all UOF events.

Of note, the inspection team observed ACCW consistently responded to incidents in a gender-responsive manner that reflected an understanding of women's specific needs, including practices that prioritized women's safety and dignity and ensured ongoing verbal communication before and during the application of any force.

The inspection team has concluded ACCW meets the expectations set by the ISO Inspection Standards pertaining to Use of Force.

⁶ A code yellow refers to an event requiring immediate staff assistance, typically involving a fight or assault between individuals in custody, or an assault on staff.

Separate Confinement

As part of the documentation review, the inspection team reviewed the use of separate confinement at ACCW. The team reviewed weekly separate confinement monitoring data⁷ from October 2025 to December 2025, provided by BC Corrections. The data indicates that, on a weekly basis, nine individuals were classified to separate confinement, accounting for approximately 8% of the centre's population. Over the three-month period, a total of 20 individuals spent 15 days or more in separate confinement, and 18 of them had identified mental health needs.

Thirteen files of individuals classified to separate confinement were reviewed off-site, along with the files of all 12 individuals designated to separate confinement during the on-site inspection. Of the 25 files reviewed involving individuals classified to separate confinement, the inspection team determined placement paperwork and associated decisions were found to be appropriate; separate confinement rounds and time out of cell were documented consistently.

Additionally, individuals with mental health needs, classified to separate confinement due to their behaviour, were seen daily by the mental health team and, when required, were certified under the Mental Health Act and placed on the waitlist for the Forensic Psychiatric Hospital (FPH). At the time of the on-site inspection, two individuals in separate confinement had been certified and were awaiting placement at FPH. The centre PHSA HealthCare Manager advised the inspection team that wait times for admission to FPH are lengthy, particularly for women, due to limited bed availability.

The inspection team has determined ACCW meets the expectations set by the ISO Inspection Standards related to separate confinement.

On-site Inspection

The inspection team, comprising of one deputy director and two inspectors, conducted a site visit to ACCW from February 3 - 5, 2026. In addition to the ISO inspection team, the executive director of Correctional Health Services (CHS) within the Provincial Health Services Authority (PHSA) participated in the healthcare portion of the on-site inspection as a healthcare representative. This representative was responsible for identifying and addressing healthcare-related concerns connected to the ISO Inspection Standards. An Implementation Manager and Caretaker of Pathways for Indigenous Women, Girls, and 2SLGBTQIA+ with the BC First Nations Justice Council also joined the inspection team for one day to assess how the needs of

⁷ BC Corrections separate confinement monitoring data is collected as a snapshot on one day each week. Although this data is useful for monitoring trends, it is important to note that it is an approximation.

Indigenous individuals in custody are being met in relation to the ISO Inspection Standards. Their involvement as an external partner supports transparency, and accountability, strengthening the independence of the inspection process.

The inspection team interviewed 43 individuals in custody who were classified to separate confinement, supported integration placement, the mental health unit, and included those with protective custody and general population status. In addition, interviews were conducted with 23 staff members ranging from management to line staff and contractors from all areas of the centre.

In addition to interviews, the inspection team attended most areas of the centre to assess conditions and observe centre operations, including the admissions and discharge area, program spaces, all living units, separate confinement, healthcare, outdoor spaces and food service areas.

Survey

To capture the experience of all individuals, including those who may not have had the opportunity to speak with the inspection team, a confidential, voluntary survey was distributed on each unit. Surveys were anonymous and respondents were informed they were not obligated to answer all questions. The inspection team received 56 completed surveys, a response rate of 51%.

While the survey responses offer some insight, it is important to consider the relatively low response rate may not fully represent the perspectives of all individuals at ACCW. It should be noted the survey findings are derived from self-reported data, and the analysis focused on areas where corroborating evidence was present.

Table 2: Yes-or-No Question Results

Question	Yes
1. Do you feel your basic needs (including living space, hygiene, clothing, food, and exercise) are being met?	53%
2. Is healthcare accessible?	63%
3. Are there any staff you could turn to if you had a problem?	56%
4. Are you treated well by staff?	67%
5. Could you get mental health support if you wanted?	70%
6. Do you feel safe here?	78%
7. Do you feel your time here has been beneficial?	47%

In addition to the survey questions, respondents were invited to provide written feedback.

Table 3 highlights the most common responses:

Table 3: Written Feedback from Surveys

Overall, the participants described being treated well by all staff including healthcare and the mental health team.
Health and mental health services were viewed as accessible, though long wait times.
Participants expressed interest in the re-opening of medium custody unit.
Participants expressed interest in increased programming.
Participants noted the cost of canteen items and phone calls is disproportionately high relative to their hourly work wage.

In summary, the positive views of staff at ACCW captured in the surveys align with what the inspection team observed during the inspection. Respondents described staff as respectful, kind, compassionate, and attentive to their needs with written comments highlighting healthcare services and staff as key strengths at ACCW.

In addition, job opportunities were highlighted as a significant strength at ACCW. Survey respondents noted they are able to access job placements upon request and that a variety of work programs and opportunities are available, particularly for those residing on the unit classified as a right living unit.

Survey results showed low scores related to basic needs, primarily due to concerns about food quality and portion sizes. The inspection team conducted an on-site visit to the kitchen. Kitchen

contractors were observed working alongside women in custody with medium security status who have been assigned kitchen duties. The kitchen was clean and well-organized; meals were weighed to ensure appropriate portions aligned with the provincial menu requirements. The kitchen contractor reported that any issues identified with food quality or portion sizes are addressed promptly. The inspection team found no evidence of insufficient portions or quality concerns and determined ACCW meets the expectations outlined in the ISO Inspection Standards for food services.

Survey respondents expressed concerns about programming, which contributed to the low proportion of individuals who felt their time in custody had been beneficial. Although individuals would like more programming, the inspection findings conclude ACCW meets the expectations set by the Inspection Standards related to education, vocational training, and rehabilitation activities.

Respondents highlighted concern with the medium living unit being closed. Alouette Correctional Centre for Women management advised there is currently no dedicated medium-security unit due to low numbers of women classified at this level. At the time of the review, only eight individuals in custody were assessed at the medium level, which the centre informs is not sufficient to operate a full unit. Medium-classified individuals continue to receive the security clearances associated with medium custody, for example, they are eligible to work in the kitchen and on the grounds.

Survey respondents reported concerns about delays in accessing healthcare services. Correctional Health Services (CHS) acknowledged delays and advised that filling permanent staffing positions at ACCW is a priority. To maintain service continuity in the interim, CHS has filled vacancies with temporary healthcare staff. The ISO is encouraged by CHS's ongoing efforts to establish permanent staffing at ACCW. During the on-site inspection, healthcare services were observed to be maintained effectively by both the regular and temporary staff. The inspection findings conclude ACCW meets the expectations set by the Inspection Standards related to access to healthcare.

Lastly, respondents raised concerns regarding canteen and phone prices. This issue has been brought to the attention of BC Corrections, as it has been identified in previous inspections. According to BC Corrections, pricing for the Call Control System aligns with and is comparable to cost-per-call models in other jurisdictions. The provincial canteen list is reviewed bi-annually, including an assessment of all items available for provincial distribution and their associated pricing. The ISO encourages BC Corrections to continue exploring alternative contracting options to reduce costs or, alternatively, to consider wage increases for individuals in custody to help mitigate the impact of these expenses.

Identified Strengths

The following strengths illustrate a sample of successful practices currently in place at ACCW:

- Off-site file reviews, documentation, and on-site observations highlight that staff demonstrate strong knowledge in utilizing a strength-based, trauma-informed approach when responding to challenging behaviours from individuals in custody. In addition, the Intensive Case Management Plans for individuals on restrictive placement options were well developed. These plans clearly identified and managed the needs, factors, or behaviours requiring additional supports or interventions. The plans focused on individuals' strengths and positive behaviours and incorporated the use of peer mentors to promote pro-social and meaningful interactions.
- Documentation and client log entries accurately and consistently include all relevant information related to individual's time in custody. All documentation is detailed, thorough, comprehensive, and clear. The documentation incorporates well-supported rationales, uses strength-based language, and outline clearly defined, individualized, and attainable goals. This includes, but is not limited to:
 - Separate Confinement paperwork
 - Supported Integration Placement documentation
 - Intensive Case Management Plans
 - Indigenous and/or Mental Health Needs Considerations forms
 - Admission, classification, closing, transfer, and monthly summaries
 - Sentenced Case Management Plans and Inmate Needs Assessments
- Alouette Correctional Centre for Women has recently completed renovations to the area individuals are located when separately confined, significantly improving the physical conditions of the space. The updated unit includes fresh paint and new lighting, televisions in all cells, a dedicated program room, and interview rooms equipped for both virtual and in-person visits for professionals. The redesign also allows the separate confinement area to be divided into five "mini-units," enabling the centre to separate individuals based on contact concerns rather than behavioural issues, providing a space that more closely resembles a living-unit environment.

Conclusion

Based on the inspection findings, ACCW demonstrated compliance for all 85 applicable Inspection Standards assessed. Correctional staff, contractors and individuals in custody actively participated throughout the process, contributing to its overall success.

The inspection identified several strengths at ACCW, including staff's use of a trauma informed, strength-based approach; consistently clear, detailed, and comprehensive documentation practices; and renovations to the area individuals are located when separately confined that improved the physical environment and increased opportunities for out-of-cell time.

