



**INVESTIGATION &
STANDARDS OFFICE**
INDEPENDENT OVERSIGHT

Cycle 1

2023 - 2025

ISO Inspections of B.C. Provincial Correctional Centres

Cycle 1 Report



Ministry of
Attorney General

Investigation & Standards Office

B.C. Ministry of Attorney General

Inspections - Cycle 1 Report (2023 - 2025)

Report Completed September 2025

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

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Introduction

Who We Are

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 investigates complaints from individuals in custody or under community supervision, reviews serious incidents, escapes, and deaths in custody, reviews disciplinary hearing decisions, and monitor use of force incidents.

In 2023, as part of its inspection mandate, the ISO introduced the Systemic Quality Review Framework (SQR Framework) - the first of its kind in Canada. Under this framework, the ISO developed a comprehensive set of inspection standards covering many aspects of the correctional centres. These [Inspection Standards](#) are applied to B.C. correctional centres to assess, monitor, and report on the conditions of confinement and the experiences of individuals in custody.

Since 2023, the ISO has completed ten inspections. This report provides an overview of the SQR Framework development, rates of compliance with the Inspection Standards for the ten B.C. correctional centres in Cycle 1, and plans for moving forward with Cycle 2. Specifically, we discuss areas of concern, systemic trends, and positive findings.

While all centres manage populations with diverse and complex needs, it is important to recognize that each correctional centre operates within a unique context shaped by a range of factors, including geography, age, design, security classification, population demographics, and the availability of resources and services. For example, we were told during our inspections that some correctional centres in remote or rural areas may face higher staffing and recruitment challenges, while urban facilities often manage larger populations with varying needs, such as organized crime or gang considerations. Similarly, correctional centres that house specific populations—such as women or individuals on remand status—must tailor their operations to meet those needs.

These contextual differences significantly influence both the strengths and challenges of each facility. As such, direct comparisons across correctional centres are neither practical nor appropriate for the purpose of this report. In recognition of this, the Cycle 1 report focuses on identifying generalized trends and system-wide patterns rather than evaluating or singling out individual correctional centres. The ISO's goal is to highlight common issues and

promising practices that can inform broader strategic planning and support improvements across the correctional system as a whole.

Looking ahead to Cycle 2 (2025–2027), the ISO is committed to publicly reporting on each individual correctional centre. These reports will include detailed findings and centre-specific recommendations, enhancing transparency and accountability across the system.

Background and Development

The [*Nelson Mandela Rules*](#) are the *United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners*, revised and adopted in 2015 and named in honour of Nelson Mandela, who spent 27 years in prison and became a global symbol of dignity and justice. The rules emphasize respect for human dignity, prohibit torture and inhumane treatment, restrict separate confinement when possible, and require access to adequate health care. While not legally binding, the rules serve as a global benchmark for correctional centre conditions and prisoner rights.

In 2016, the Office of the Ombudsperson released a report titled: [*Under Inspection: The Hiatus in BC Correctional Centre Inspections*](#). This report recommended inspections of correctional centres be conducted by a body independent from the prison administration, as required in the *Nelson Mandela Rules* 83 to 85.

In 2018, the province issued an Order in Council authorizing the ISO to conduct inspections, and in 2019, BC Corrections engaged the ISO to begin development work. Formal research and development commenced in 2021. By 2023, the ISO had officially implemented the Inspection Standards as an independent, external model - both in an attempt to address the Ombudsperson's recommendations and to complement BC Corrections' internal quality review processes. In response, the SQR Framework was developed as a comprehensive, evidence-based inspection process focused on the experiences of individuals in custody and the conditions within B.C. correctional centres. It incorporates a wide range of Inspection Standards covering all aspects of correctional centre operations.

Notably, health care services in provincial correctional centres are provided by the Provincial Health Services Authority, making health care service delivery out of scope for our inspections. Rather, the Inspection Standards focus on correctional centres' health care-related responsibilities, including ensuring individuals in custody have access to necessary health care services and collaboration between correctional centre and health care staff is occurring.

Our Approach

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 incorporated 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*.

Each standard describes the treatment and conditions a correctional centre is expected to achieve, starting with admission through to release and community reintegration. The inspection team uses standardized assessment tools and multiple layers of evidence to determine if a centre has met the defined standard.

The inspection process involves three phases:

- 1. Preparatory Work:** This involves a thorough review of internal case data and a systematic file review of individuals in custody, along with a general review of related internal centre documents. This information is used to develop an action plan for the inspection. The ISO provides notice to the warden of the correctional centre, who ensures a staff liaison is appointed.
- 2. On-site Inspection:** This includes interviews with individuals in custody, staff, contractors and relevant third parties, The ISO also distributes voluntary confidential surveys to individuals in custody and completes a thorough physical inspection of the centre to assess conditions and observe operations.

As required in the Ombudsperson's report recommendations, the ISO will be including external agencies in our inspections. While we were able to include a contractor from the Indigenous health care field in some Cycle 1 inspections, we will aim to increase contractor or external agency involvement in all Cycle 2 inspections.

Inspection Standards - Themes

1. Arrival in Custody
2. Classification
3. Health Care
4. Programming and Purposeful Activity
5. Community Contacts and Connections
6. Case Management and Release Planning
7. Correctional Centre Culture
8. Accommodations and Living Conditions
9. Safety and Security
10. Indigenous Culture

The ISO has successfully secured funding to engage approved external agencies and has identified and contacted several suitable partners. While some agencies were unable to commit due to ongoing market and resource constraints across the province, we will maintain these connections for potential involvement in Cycle 2.

- 3. Report, Recommendations, and Monitoring:** The ISO analyzes all the information gathered and evaluates how each centre meets the Inspection Standards. Based on this assessment, the ISO develops and issues recommendations as appropriate and provides a written report to the centre, BC Corrections leadership, as well as Ministry of Attorney General senior leadership. In keeping with our commitment to administrative fairness, BC Corrections is given the opportunity to review the draft recommendations before the report is finalized. They are also invited to submit any additional feedback or evidence relevant to the Inspection Standards under review.

Once the report and recommendations are provided, the centre and/or BC Corrections leadership are responsible for providing a response to the ISO indicating whether the centre and/or BC Corrections agree, partly agree, or reject each recommendation, and any actions taken or planned, with a timeline for completion as appropriate. The ISO reviews the content of the recommendation response table and monitors its implementation by tracking completion of action items.

Any issues identified that require immediate action are discussed with the warden while the inspection team is onsite, and monitoring continues until the ISO is satisfied that the issue has been resolved.

If the centre and/or BC Corrections reject a recommendation and the ISO is not satisfied with the rationale, we collaborate with the centre and/or BC Corrections leadership to address the issue and, if necessary, escalates it through the ministry's leadership chain of command for further action.

One year following submission of the individual centre reports, the ISO requests a formal update from the centre and/or BC Corrections leadership on the status of actions taken to address each recommendation. We continue to monitor implementation of recommendations until we are satisfied the issue has been sufficiently addressed. Overall, we have found BC Corrections has addressed our recommendations in an efficient and timely manner throughout Cycle 1.

Furthermore, the ISO may also conduct unscheduled or thematic inspections if necessary. The decision to conduct a thematic inspection will be based on previous inspections, complaints from individuals in custody, or serious incidents.

Indigenous Overrepresentation

Indigenous people are disproportionately represented in correctional facilities across Canada, and B.C. is no exception. Tackling this challenge requires addressing not only the impacts of colonialism and systemic discrimination but also implementing culturally relevant programming, improved community relationships, and systemic reforms within the corrections system itself. Our reviews have shown that BC Corrections is continuously reviewing and implementing programming related to the Indigenous populations. In turn, and in conjunction with our [*Declaration of Commitment*](#), the ISO is committed to continue to track data and issue recommendations collaboratively to centres in hopes of contributing to meaningful change in the lives of Indigenous people involved with the justice system.

Continuous Improvement

The ISO has made changes and updates throughout Cycle 1 as we progressed through the inspections. It became evident that certain processes could be simplified to enhance efficiency without compromising the quality and evidence of the assessments. Streamlining allowed for quicker reviews and more timely feedback, benefiting both the inspection team and the correctional centres being assessed.

Specifically, the inspection team worked to condense and merge some Inspection Standards, which made the review process more precise and practical. By refining the Inspection Standards, the team could focus on the most relevant aspects of the centres, ensuring the evaluation was both thorough and realistic in terms of what was being assessed.

Another critical change was the improvement of survey distribution practices. Feedback from the individuals in custody is vital to understanding the impact of operations and services from their perspective. The inspection team took steps to optimize survey reach, ensuring that a broader and more representative sample of responses was gathered. Adjustments have included better targeting of survey participants, more comprehensive survey distribution across different units or demographics, and continuing to ensure responses were anonymous and voluntary, which likely improved the quality and reliability of the feedback received.

The ISO is committed to a continuous review of the inspection process to allow for alignment with relevant practices and emerging trends facing correctional management, while maintaining the focus on international standards of confinement and the individuals in custody. As the inspections continue into Cycle 2 and more data becomes available, the inspection process can evolve based on feedback and experiences gained during Cycle 1, leading to improved methodologies in subsequent cycles.

Cycle 1 Overview

Our Process

BC Corrections operates ten correctional centres throughout the province, housing an average of 1,800 adults total at secure, medium, and open security levels. (Refer to Table 1: Characteristics of Individuals in Custody located further in the report for a snapshot of this information.) Individuals in custody include those who are awaiting trial or those serving a provincial custodial sentence of less than two years. Notably, Table 1 shows 75% of individuals in

custody are on remand status, and therefore not eligible for select programming or resource referrals. However, each correctional centre offers various opportunities for programming, including educational and vocational training, life skills, core programming aimed at addressing criminogenic factors related to substance misuse or violence, and other compensated work programs. Several centres cater to specific demographics, such as Alouette Correctional Centre for Women, which is specifically designed to accommodate females. Some centres are equipped to address the unique challenges faced by specific groups, such as parenting support, and addressing issues like sexual abuse or intimate partner violence.

From September 2023 to June 2025, our team attended all ten correctional centres in B.C.:

- Okanagan Correctional Centre (OCC)
- Vancouver Island Regional Correctional Centre (VIRCC)
- Xàws Schó:lha Correctional Centre (formerly Ford Mountain Correctional Centre) (XSCC)
- Alouette Correctional Centre for Women (ACCW)
- Surrey Pretrial Services Centre (SPSC)
- Prince George Regional Correctional Centre (PGRCC)
- Nanaimo Correctional Centre (NCC)
- Fraser Regional Correctional Centre (FRCC)
- Kamloops Regional Correctional Centre (KRCC)

Cycle 1 Data Summary

-  **414** Individuals Interviewed
-  **301** Staff Interviewed
-  **678** Survey Responses
-  **4157** Centre Documents
-  **55** Recommendations Issued

- North Fraser Pretrial Centre (NFPC)

Inspections are grounded in data collection and findings are evidence-based. Observations, hearsay information, or self-reported conditions must be supported by substantial documentation from multiple sources to justify a finding. During the inspections of the centres, the inspection team undertakes a comprehensive evaluation of potential systemic issues, with particular scrutiny given to use of force incidents, the management of safety and security codes, the criteria and duration for placement in segregation, and access to meaningful human contact. The inspection team further insights into the operations, programming, and challenges faced by each centre. This engagement across different regions allowed us to understand the specific needs of each centre while identifying common themes and trends across the broader correctional system in B.C.

The inspection team conducted site visits at each centre, spending three to five days onsite depending on the size and complexity of the facility. While extensive data collection was conducted offsite, in-person interviews served as the cornerstone of the onsite reviews and were an important method for gathering supportive evidence. These interviews were complemented by general observations and targeted inquiries; all aligned with the action plan developed prior to the inspection. This approach enabled a comprehensive assessment focused on priority issues critical to understanding the current state of each correctional centre.

During this cycle, the inspection teams encouraged as many individuals in custody as possible to participate in anonymous confidential surveys. Additionally, the inspection teams conducted interviews with 414 individuals in custody from diverse backgrounds, including women, men, and transgender individuals. These interviews encompassed a broad range of placements, including segregation, supported integration placements, mental health units, specialized units, protective custody, and general population. A standardized interview guide was used to ensure a consistent approach across centres.

In addition, we interviewed 301 staff members from across all operational areas of the centres, including wardens, deputy wardens, contractors, and frontline staff working in living units. Furthermore, we visited areas across the centres to assess conditions and observe centre operations. This included, but was not limited to, the records departments (admissions and discharge), program spaces, spiritual/cultural practice spaces, various living units, segregation, health care, outdoor yard spaces, food service areas, workshop areas, and the centre's transport vehicles.

Table 1**Characteristics of Individuals in Custody**

Category	#	%
Gender¹		
Female	102	5.7%
Male	1558	86.6%
Not Stated	139	7.7%
Ethnicity		
White	874	48.6%
Indigenous	665	37.0%
East Indian	87	4.8%
Black	58	3.2%
Asian	41	2.3%
Hispanic	17	0.9%
Other/Unknown	57	3.2%
Mental Health Needs (MHN)		
MHN population designation	293	16.3%
Legal Hold Status²		
Remand	1350	75.0%
Sentenced	416	23.1%
Dual	21	1.2%
Federal (CSC)	12	0.7%
Security Classification		
Open	36	2.0%
Medium	298	16.6%
Secure	1376	76.5%
Not Stated	89	4.9%
Population Designation		
General population (GP)	848	47.1%
Protective custody (PC)	858	47.7%
Not Stated	93	5.2%

¹ The *gender* field in CORNET does not have the option to identify individuals as transgender.

² *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.

Survey

To capture the experience of all individuals, including those who may not have had the opportunity to speak with the inspection team personally, we distributed brief voluntary confidential surveys, with a completed response rate of 38% overall.

Table 2: Cycle 1 Survey Results

Question	Yes
1. Do you feel your basic needs are being met?	67%
2. Could you access health care if you wanted?	77%
3. Are there any staff you could turn to if you had a problem?	71%
4. Are you treated well by staff?	80%
5. Could you get mental health support if you wanted?	78%
6. Do you feel safe here?	82%
7. Do you feel your time here has been beneficial?	52%

While this response rate offers some insight, it is important to consider the relatively low response rate may not fully represent the perspectives of all individuals within the centres. However, the feedback the ISO did receive still provides valuable data on key areas of strength or concern and has led to exploration into other areas.

The survey included seven yes-or-no questions focusing on safety and the supports individuals receive during their stay in custody. Additionally, a short answer section asked respondents to identify two aspects they believe the centre is doing well and two areas they feel could be improved. Table 3 includes the most common responses received in Cycle 1 from individuals in custody.

Table 3: Overview of Open-Ended Question Results

Question:
What the correctional centres are doing well
Staff helpful, professional, and supportive
Generally positive about living conditions, including physical spaces and cleanliness
What the correctional centres could improve
Additional program opportunities, such as vocational training, work, education, and rehabilitative programming
Concerns about food services, including portion sizes, nutrition, and quality
Additional opportunities for exercise, time out of cell, and recreational programming

Notably, during Cycle 1, a shift in survey distribution practices was implemented. Feedback from individuals in custody is essential to understanding the impact of operations and services from their perspective. To enhance the reach and representativeness of the survey, the inspection team took deliberate steps to improve distribution methods. This included more targeted engagement with participants and broader coverage across units and demographics. Specifically, the inspections team visited each cell, introduced themselves, and explained the purpose of the survey to encourage participation. These efforts, combined with continued assurances that responses were anonymous, confidential, and voluntary, likely contributed to improved quality and reliability of the feedback received.

Key Areas of Strength

Overall, we were pleased to find that all centres were in compliance with the majority of the Inspection Standards, each achieving a rating of 75% or higher. Areas of strength included:

1. **Indigenous Programming:** Many centres demonstrated a strong commitment to offering culturally relevant programming for Indigenous individuals in custody, typically delivered by Indigenous Cultural Liaison contractors. The Indigenous Cultural Liaisons offer Indigenous-specific resources, such as Elder support, traditional ceremonies, and cultural teachings. These contractors stood out in their efforts to support Indigenous and non-Indigenous individuals in a holistic manner, often in the face of resource challenges, such as limited program supplies or increased service demands. Several centres also bring in traditional Indigenous foods, when possible.
2. **Staff-Client Relationships:** Positive, respectful relationships between staff and individuals in custody were evident across most centres. Staff demonstrated professionalism, empathy, and patience, which contributes to a safer, more supportive environment. These relationships were particularly important in maintaining order, promoting rehabilitation, and ensuring that individuals in custody felt heard and supported during their time in the centres.
3. **Innovative Ways of Addressing Staffing or Resource Challenges:** Some centres developed creative and effective solutions to address staffing shortages or limited resources. This included adjusting allocation of resources and utilizing cross-trained staff. However, we recognize when staff are re-assigned from their original post, it can impact operations and resource availability in the other areas of the centre.
4. **Collaboration with health care:** While both have the well-being of individuals as a priority, the ISO recognizes that corrections and health care staff operate with distinct approaches, which understandably adds complexity to their collaborative efforts. However, the team observed strong collaboration with health care providers in most

Table 4: Compliance with Inspection Standards

Centre	% Standards
OCC	79%
VIRCC	87%
XSCC	99%
ACCW	91%
SPSC	92%
PGRCC	75%
NCC	88%
FRCC	98%
KRCC	93%
NFPC	90%

centres. Effective communication and coordination between health care professionals and correctional staff helped improve the delivery of medical and mental health services, supporting individuals to receive timely and appropriate care, particularly those with complex health care needs.

5. **Staff Culture:** At most centres, staff culture was particularly strong, with a focus on mutual respect, teamwork, and support. There was an emphasis on creating a positive and inclusive environment for both staff and individuals in custody that helped foster a positive staff culture. This can play a key role in the success of rehabilitation programs and in maintaining a supportive, respectful atmosphere.
6. **Drug Interdiction Protocols:** Drug Interdiction Protocols are essential for maintaining the safety and security of correctional centres by preventing the illegal entry and distribution of drugs. These protocols are designed to identify, intercept, and eliminate illicit substances entering the centres, which could be used by individuals in custody to cause harm to themselves, staff, or others. Recently, Adult Custody Division (ACD) implemented new strategies including a combination of physical, technological, and procedural methods which greatly reduced in-custody deaths.
7. **Specialized Centre Programs:** Our reviews highlighted the benefits of the Right Living Communities at XSCC and KRCC, the Therapeutic Community at NCC, and the Alouette River fish hatchery work program at FRCC. While these specialized placement options may only be appropriate for some individuals with specific security classifications, they have proven to be a positive model for supporting rehabilitation and reintegration, providing a supportive environment that fosters personal growth and positive change. The strength-based approach focuses on empowering individuals through programming and meaningful activities (such as fish hatchery management or on-site farmwork) by recognizing and building upon pro-social relationships and recognizing their strengths rather than deficits or past behaviours. This method helps to foster a sense of self-efficacy in individuals, which is essential for lasting personal change and successful reintegration into society.

These strengths suggest a commitment from BC Corrections to continuously improve the conditions and services within its centres. While challenges remain, the focus on innovation, collaboration, and culturally responsive programming highlights the progress made toward achieving better outcomes for individuals in custody.

Key Areas of Concern

When analyzing the ten correctional centres from Cycle 1 collectively, several key areas for improvement emerged, including staffing, programming, and consistent documentation practices. Common themes include:

Staffing

Although we found varying degrees of impact, the most consistent overarching challenge affecting centres in B.C. is staff recruitment and retention.

Cycle 1: Recommendation Example

We recommend BC Corrections Adult Custody Division prioritize strategies to address staffing and retention issues in the province.

Arguably, many of the issues identified during our reviews could be traced back to staff shortages. Challenges, such as inconsistent completion of case management documents, limited access to rehabilitative programs, and delays in addressing individual needs, are often, but not always, symptoms of broader staffing constraints. Inadequate staffing levels can significantly impact the daily operations of centres and reduce the ability of staff to provide comprehensive support, deliver programs, and provide consistent access to centre regime to individuals in custody.

Adult Custody Division advised the ISO that many external factors impacting hiring and staff retention, such as wages, higher cost of living, and labour market changes, impact all centres in the province. Adult Custody Division considers current staffing challenges a critical issue and have been taking steps to attract new recruits. Adult Custody Division has further been conducting environmental retention scans to review challenges, engagement scores, and staff turnover with recommendations provided to wardens at each centre. The impact of these efforts will take time to fully measure, but these steps demonstrate a commitment to resolving staffing challenges across the province. As ACD continues its recruitment efforts, it will be important to monitor the effectiveness of these initiatives.

At the time of this writing, the ISO is satisfied with the commitments being made by ACD to attract and retain qualified staff. The ISO believes a continued focus on recruitment and retention will be essential to achieving better outcomes in subsequent cycles. However, if ACD does not maintain its efforts and explore ongoing hiring and retention strategies, there is a risk of deteriorating conditions for both individuals in custody and staff, potentially leading to compromises in safety and security.

8 out of 10 correctional centres received recommendations related to staffing.

Inconsistent Documentation and Case Management

Throughout the ISO inspections, we found multiple instances of inconsistent completion of case management documents, including the Indigenous and Mental Health Considerations forms, case plans/assessments, and separate confinement notifications. Adult Custody Policy requires completion of many of these forms as they are essential for gathering background information and making informed decisions regarding separate confinement and disciplinary actions. This ensures individuals are referred to appropriate support services, such as Mental Health Liaison Officers or Indigenous Cultural Liaisons, and relevant programs are tailored to their needs. Adding to this issue, staff reported many individuals are either unwilling or unable to participate in the completion of the Indigenous and Mental Health Considerations forms upon intake. The inspection teams found there is a lack of consistency across correctional centres in following up with individuals to ensure these forms are completed.

A lack of comprehensive documentation can result in individuals' specific needs being overlooked or inadequately addressed. This is especially critical for Indigenous individuals and those with mental health concerns, who may miss out on culturally relevant programming or appropriate treatment. Incomplete or inconsistent case management documentation also hinders staff from identifying and responding to individuals' needs, causing delays or gaps in rehabilitative services and mental health care. Additionally, poor documentation affects the ability to assign appropriate programs, ultimately reducing the effectiveness of rehabilitation efforts.

Cycle 1: Recommendation Examples

We recommend centre management review their quality assurance practices for monitoring completion and thoroughness of ICMPs, Case Management Plans, and other documentation in CORNET

We recommend centre management review their practices for monitoring completion and thoroughness of case management documents – particularly Indigenous and Mental Health Considerations forms, INAs, and case management plans.

We recommend centre management review their practices for monitoring completion and thoroughness of ICMPs, SIP notifications, and client log entries in CORNET.

5 out of 10 correctional centres received recommendations related to documentation.

Lack of Consistent Programming Availability

During our file reviews, we noted on several occasions sentenced individuals in some centres in B.C. received few or no opportunities to complete programs during their incarceration. Centre programs aim to reduce re-offending by addressing issues like substance use, life skills, violence, and sexual motivation, with most using a cognitive-behavioral approach. It is important to note some programming is typically only offered to sentenced individuals and not available to those on remand status.

Based on program offerings data collected by the ISO, we observed that individuals in custody often faced wait times for program enrollment, and in some cases, no programs were offered at all. During on-site interviews, individuals in custody also reported difficulties accessing programming during their incarceration. Several centres confirmed these concerns, noting that trained program staff are often reassigned to other duties during staffing shortages, limiting their ability to deliver consistent programming. This indicates the current frequency of program offerings is insufficient to meet the demand of the population. Notably, this data does not capture individuals housed in separate confinement or mental health units, where logistical and operational challenges can understandably prevent access to rehabilitative programming at times.

Cycle 1: Recommendation Examples

We recommend the centre explore options to increase core program offerings.

We recommend the centre build upon the creative approach taken to offering core program elements to individuals in custody through use of the Interventions Toolkit and by exploring options to expand ESS offerings.

We recommend the centre and BC Corrections Adult Custody Division explore opportunities for additional funding to support consistency and continuity in Indigenous program offerings.

6 out of 10 correctional centres received recommendations related to program offerings.

Moving Forward

The completion of Cycle 1 has established a detailed and valuable baseline to inform our upcoming review in Cycle 2, beginning in September of 2025. The insights gathered throughout Cycle 1 are instrumental in shaping the direction of future evaluations, allowing for more refined and targeted assessments that can help support continuous improvement for individuals in the custody of BC Corrections.

Preparing for Cycle 2

1. Reflecting on Lessons Learned from Cycle 1:

- The completion of Cycle 1 offers an opportunity to reflect on the successes and challenges faced during the inspection process. This reflection will allow the ISO to adjust expectations, refine goals, and prioritize areas that need more focused attention in the next cycle.

2. Identifying Strengths and Areas for Improvement:

- The findings from Cycle 1 highlighted areas of strength (such as Right Living Communities, innovative practices, and positive staff-client relationships) as well as challenges (staff shortages, inconsistent case management documentation, and access to programs). These insights will help focus the inspection process in Cycle 2, ensuring the same areas of strength are supported and areas for improvement are more effectively addressed.

3. Refining Methodologies and Practices:

- Based on lessons learned in Cycle 1, the ISO can continue to refine its methodologies. This could involve updating assessment and rating tools or introducing even more effective data collection strategies to ensure that Cycle 2 inspections are comprehensive and actionable.
- Updates and changes to the Inspection Standards or review process (as was done in Cycle 1) may also be made to ensure that the evaluations continue to evolve in response to emerging trends, best practices, and feedback from interested parties.
- Based on the findings and experiences of Cycle 1, the inspection team may revise the inspection process for Cycle 2, to better align with the evolving needs of the correctional system and the individuals it serves. This may involve a more focused examination of specific areas such as mental health,

Indigenous programming, or alternative rehabilitation models that showed promise during the first cycle.

4. Setting Measurable Goals:

- Cycle 2 inspections will benefit from the measurable goals established in Cycle 1. The information gathered in the first cycle provides a clear starting point, enabling correctional centres to have specific targets for improvement, such as reducing program wait times, increasing access to mental health services, or enhancing staff recruitment and retention.
- By tracking progress on these goals, the ISO can also assess the effectiveness of its inspections and make more data-driven recommendations.

5. Monitoring and Supporting Long-Term Change:

- With Cycle 1 serving as a starting point, Cycle 2 will help monitor the long-term effects of the changes or initiatives that have been implemented in response to the first inspections. This could include tracking improvements in areas like staff retention, program delivery, and outcomes for individuals in custody.
- The ability to compare data across cycles will help determine the sustainability and effectiveness of changes made after Cycle 1, assisting BC Corrections to make informed decisions about long-term strategy and resource allocation.

6. Collaboration and Communication:

- The ISO is committed to maintaining clear communication with all involved parties, including correctional staff, individuals in custody, and incorporating community partners in our inspections, to ensure a collaborative approach to the inspections process.
- As required in the Ombudsperson's report recommendations, the ISO will be including external agencies in our inspections. While we were able to include a contractor from the Indigenous health care field in some Cycle 1 inspections, we will aim to increase contractor or external agency involvement in all Cycle 2 inspections.
- The ISO has secured funding to engage external agencies and has reached out to a number of appropriate partners. While some agencies were unable to commit due to ongoing market and resource constraints across the province, we will continue to maintain connections with appropriate and approved external agencies for inclusion in Cycle 2 inspections.

7. Enhanced Data Analysis and Reporting:

- Data analysis will play a key role in Cycle 2, particularly in evaluating the impact of recommendations made during Cycle 1. A more refined approach to data collection, analysis, and reporting will help provide a clearer understanding of emerging trends, persistent gaps, and areas requiring further attention.

Public Reporting

In the interest of transparency, moving forward the ISO intends to report publicly on the findings from each of our inspections of correctional centres. Publicly available inspection findings foster an environment where continuous improvement is not only expected but actively pursued. This approach reflects our commitment to openness and accountability, ensuring the public, community partners, individuals in custody, and correctional staff have access to the outcomes and insights generated through the inspection process.

That said, while transparency is important, it must be balanced with the need to protect sensitive information. Personal details about individuals in custody and centre-specific safety or security details will remain confidential. Reports will be issued in a manner that safeguards the privacy and safety of all involved.

Conclusion

The completion of Cycle 1 has established a strong foundation for the future of inspections at the ISO, providing a clear baseline to measure progress and refine inspection practices. The insights gained during this initial cycle will directly inform Cycle 2, enabling a more effective, focused, and responsive review process.

We extend our sincere gratitude to BC Corrections leadership, Adult Custody Division, correctional centre staff, contractors, individuals in custody, and all those who contributed to our inspections in Cycle 1. Your time, perspectives, and cooperation were invaluable in shaping this important work.