



October 14, 2021

CAITLYN CLEVELAND

MLA, KAM LAKE

**Additional follow-up for Oral Question 497-19(2): Corrections Workplace Assessment**

This letter is in follow-up to my correspondence of March 29, 2021 in which I committed to provide another written update regarding changes resulting from the 2020 Corrections workplace assessment. I am pleased to provide the update below.

In addition to the measures outlined in my previous correspondence that are already underway, the Department of Justice has undertaken the following initiatives to facilitate positive change within the Corrections Service work environment:

- On September 29, 2021, a meeting of the Interagency Working Group (bringing together the Department of Justice, the Department of Finance, and the Union of Northern Workers) was held to further address the items from the workplace assessment and to inform an overall Accountability Framework for the Corrections Service. As outlined in the Department's Annual Business Plan Update, the Accountability Framework will be completed by the end of the fiscal year.
- Engagement meetings between Corrections frontline staff and management occurred during the week of September 27, 2021. To further support staff and enhance communication, Corrections headquarters senior staff will visit correctional facilities and probation offices on a routine basis. Schedules were not previously used to facilitate visits; however, they are currently being developed.
- The Corrections Service has developed a training plan to address training concerns raised in the workplace assessment and to ensure staff are fully supported. The training plan targets five key areas, including:
  - Knowledge and skills to implement the new *Corrections Act*. Staff have received two days of training in regard to the new *Act*, focusing on key changes in relation to areas such as adjudication, the Investigations and Standards Office, and Community Advisory Boards;
  - Knowledge and skills on Therapeutic Community approaches to support the transition of the South Mackenzie Correctional Centre to such a model;

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- Leadership training for all supervisors and managers to be delivered by an external contractor in the winter of 2022. Staff will be engaged in meetings after this training has occurred to obtain feedback as to whether they feel the training has been beneficial for their supervisors;
  - Recertification in personal safety, self-defence, arrest, and control; and
  - Mental health and wellness for staff.
- In the area of health and safety, staffing level reviews to assist with inmate escorts and revisions to security related equipment issued to Corrections Officers have been completed (with staff input). New uniforms have been issued to staff in the correctional facilities, and care has been taken to ensure dedicated uniforms are available for both genders and in all sizes (for both frontline staff and institutional cooks). As per changes in the new Collective Agreement, after a review and sizing of sample products has been completed, protective vests will be issued to corrections officers at the North Slave Correctional Complex for the duration of their shift, and to staff at the Fort Smith Correctional Complex and the South Mackenzie Correctional Centre for when they are conducting security related escorts. An annual boot allowance of \$250.00 will also be provided to corrections officers.
  - Directive Committees were established by the Corrections Service to review draft policies and provide feedback prior to the policies being finalized. Feedback was reviewed at Corrections headquarters and integrated into policies where appropriate, and in line with the new *Corrections Act*. This work was completed during the week of September 27, 2021 in advance of the implementation of the new *Corrections Act* later in October 2021. Ongoing Standing Order Committees, composed of managers and interested Corrections Officers and program staff, are in place to guide any policy development or adjustments that may need to be made to site-specific operations in order to align with directives. Standing Order Committees take into consideration feedback from frontline corrections staff.

Thank you for your interest in the Corrections workplace assessment. If you require further information, please contact my office.



R.J. Simpson  
Minister, Justice

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