



Standing Committee on Justice and Community Safety

Inquiry into Annual and Financial Reports 2020-2021
ANSWER TO QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE
23 February 2022

Asked by DR MARISA PATERSON MLA on 23 FEBRUARY 2022: Commissioner Johnson took on notice the following question:

[Ref: Hansard Proof Transcript 23 February 2022 [PAGE 66-67]]

In relation to: Walking with Women on the Pathway to Change Framework

DR PATERSON: Thank you, Chair. I was just wondering in relation to the Walking with Women on the Pathway to Change Framework, can you outline some of the key strategies of the framework and how they are being used to inform future service models?

Mr Gentleman: I will ask our directorate officials to fill you in on that.

DR PATERSON: Thank you.

Mr Johnson: Thank you for that question. Perhaps the best way to answer it is the Walking with Women Framework was the culmination of a lot of considerable consultation with interested parties up to about I think March or April of last year. What it did was sit quite well with the then Progressive Integrated Offenders Management Framework and hence why the Integrated Offenders Management Framework's first priority was women and it culminated or it coordinated itself nicely with the return of the women from the facility they were in as a result of overcrowding for a period of time back into the purpose-built womens facility. The framework sets a number of principles, more so than particular strategies, and that is being used to inform the Integrated Offender Management Model for women.

But I think we talked a little bit about some of the work that we are doing now with Return to Community and perhaps I can provide certainly more detail in written form if that is helpful and if it is suitable, I can take the question on notice, but I can fill you in on the fact that part of the work that we are doing now in terms of getting the transitional release programs and the throughcare programs working well for women, making sure there is a more intensive case management process, for example, is one of the strategies where they are assessed as needed, so when you return to the community you have got, for want of a better word, a critical friend that helps you get through the challenges of going back into community, some of the strategies, to make sure that the programs that you can access within the community are programs that are suitable for you and that you can attend and get the best out of the programs: return to meaningful work, support for children, relationship counselling and so forth is to make sure that those all are coordinated.

So a lot of these programs work and exist—I think, in part, they have not been particularly well coordinated in the past—to make sure that the people who need them get the programs that they need and not programs that they do not. So that is the primary focus of the work that we are doing now and perhaps I think it might be better that I take it on notice more fully and then we can draft up a bit more detail, which I do not think I will do justice here.

Minister Gentleman: The answer to the Member's question is as follows:—

The Walking with Women on the Pathway to Change Framework outlines four key principles with underpinning strategies that have informed the development of the Integrated Offender Management (IOM) reform. The IOM is a whole of organisation reform aimed at operationalising an efficient, effective and integrated model for the delivery of programs and services for clients. Major work underway includes policy review and development, procedural changes and staff training and recruitment.

Implementation of IOM to women in the first instance will incorporate gender-responsive and trauma aware sentence management practices that will seek to better recognise and respond to complex needs and differing pathways for each detainee. In addition to consulting with women detainees for the framework, the IOM will provide a more collaborative approach to case planning with detainees as well as across the organisation and community supports for those with more complex needs in the form of case conferencing. Work has commenced in reviewing and developing end-to-end sentence management processes and supports.

Another key aspect of the IOM is building staff capability. In the Programs and Interventions space the focus is on evidence-based programs that address criminogenic and reintegrative needs and support rehabilitation. Following COVID related delays, staff training is underway or scheduled to deliver additional programs. In order to maintain contemporary best practice models, a new Alcohol and Other Drug (Dialectic Behavioural Therapy informed) program was rolled out to women in February 2022. Further, an audit of all non-criminogenic services provided in the AMC is underway to ensure that services are fit for purpose and to highlight any gaps. Custodial staff will also undertake training in relation to transformational interactions with detainees to contribute to a more rehabilitative culture.

The Offender Reintegration Unit has been working to build stronger exit pathways for detainees released from custody into community. The Sentence Management Unit (AMC Case Management Unit) now have staff dedicated to working with Remandees to ensure an individualised service and more efficient processes to support effective interventions for shorter sentences. In the Throughcare (Reintegration) and Transitional programs, work is being carried out in enhancing processes for better engagement and optimum outcomes for women by developing an assertive and intensive case management model.

A new Women's Safety and Pre-Release Coordinator has been recruited that will enable a specialised and targeted intervention service to align women's exit pathways with their individual needs. This position will ensure safe and supportive exit pathways for women acknowledging the specific needs that women have upon release from custody.

To complement this service, recruitment is also under way for a Family Worker position which is about enhancing responsivity, strengthening exit pathways, and preparing families for the return of their loved ones from custody. These new positions will ensure exiting detainees are safe, have access to appropriate family, kinship and social and community supports and assist them in putting strategies in place for restoration of relationships with family and children.

Approved for circulation to the Standing Committee on Justice and Community Safety

Signature: 

Date: 21/3/2022

By the Minister for Corrections, Mr Mick Gentleman MLA