

VICTORIA

Victorian
Auditor-General

Audit summary
of
Managing Offenders
on Community
Corrections Orders

Tabled in Parliament
25 November 2009

Audit summary

Introduction

Managing offenders in the community provides a range of financial and social benefits. It is a cost-effective alternative to imprisonment. It also enables offenders to maintain connection with their community, by retaining employment, social networks and accommodation. Offenders can also undertake programs designed to address their behaviour and reduce the likelihood of them re-offending.

Community Correctional Services (CCS), within Corrections Victoria, is responsible for managing offenders on community orders. Its primary purpose is to enhance community safety primarily through a range of offender management processes and services, including risk and need assessments, program referrals and supervision to ensure offenders are complying with the conditions of their orders.

Overall conclusion

CCS has established a robust, evidence-based framework for offender management and for implementing a strong quality assurance process to monitor the application of the framework.

However, what is missing is a meaningful way to measure the effectiveness of the program. The current outcome measures are not directly relevant.

Findings

CCS's offender management practices, operationalised in comprehensive guidance for community corrections staff, are underpinned by evidence-based principles that align with international better practice, legislation and correctional standards.

To gain assurance about the effectiveness of their offender management practices, and to continually improve practices, CCS has also developed a comprehensive quality assurance framework. This framework includes an annual statewide audit of offender and file management, monthly reporting to senior management and regular review of offender case files.

However, CCS's performance reporting does not adequately reflect the effectiveness of their offender management practices. Their reliance on order completion rates to assure the community about their performance is problematic. It tends to reflect the application of policy, rather than the effectiveness of offender management to address offending behaviour and reduce recidivism.

Similarly, the current performance monitoring arrangements mean that CCS cannot be assured that offenders are getting timely access to assessment and treatment services, as some third parties do not have target time frames for providing services and they do not currently report this information to CCS. There is a pressing need for CCS to develop more meaningful performance measures to assess the timeliness and effectiveness of offender management practices.

Recommendations

Number	Recommendation	Page
	Corrections Victoria should:	
1.	Develop new output performance measures for external reporting that reflect the impact of Community Correctional Services on offender compliance and rehabilitation and provide a meaningful assessment of the effectiveness of offender management practices.	17
2.	Develop performance measures to assess the timeliness of offender access to programs and services.	17
3.	Clarify the accountabilities and responsibilities of Community Correctional Services and assessment and treatment providers, in particular regarding timeliness for reporting on offender management processes, to provide assurance over offender management after referral to treatment services.	17
4.	Enforce the requirement that Community Correctional Services locations prepare action plans in their monthly regional reports to address areas where the location does not meet targets and service delivery outcomes.	17