

# Oversight and Management of Individuals Serving Community-Based Sentences

## Department of Justice

### Key Messages

- Public safety is at increased risk when:
  - Probation officers do not hold individuals to the conditions of their community-based sentences; and
  - Department fails to hold electronic supervision service provider to terms of contract.
- Public confidence in the Department of Justice's ability to properly manage individuals serving community-based sentences may be compromised when essential monitoring fails.

### Why We Did This Audit

- Proper monitoring of individuals serving community-based sentences is essential to hold them accountable for their offences while protecting public safety.
- As of March 1, 2020, management told us:
  - There were 4,700 individuals serving community-based sentences compared to 456 in Nova Scotia correctional facilities; and
  - The average daily cost to supervise an individual serving a community-based sentence is \$7/day compared to \$300/day if incarcerated.

### Policies for Monitoring Individuals Serving Community-Based Sentences Not Followed

- Audit testing found probation officers often fail to perform required monitoring of individuals serving community-based sentences:
  - In 26 of 49 cases the probation officer did not meet with individuals on community-based sentences at the required frequency
  - In 25 of 49 cases risk assessments of individuals serving community-based sentences were not completed properly or on time; and
  - In five of 30 cases probation officers did not impose consequences when conditions of the court order were violated. In another eight of 30 cases, consequences were not imposed in a timely manner.
- The requirement to report to a probation officer for some individuals on probation was removed without proper approval in 10 of 10 cases reviewed.

### Electronic Supervision Not Properly Monitored or Used

- Department is not monitoring performance of the electronic supervision service provider.
- Service provider responsible for electronic supervision is not fulfilling its responsibilities.
- In 20 of 30 cases tested, service provider did not follow response protocol despite indicating they had done so.
- No explanation why electronic supervision was not used or removed for some conditional sentences.

### **Significant Weaknesses in Management Oversight of Community Corrections Offices**

- Significant improvements needed in supervisor file review process to assess whether probation officers are monitoring individuals serving community-based sentences in compliance with policies.
- Department of Justice has not established goals or performance indicators for community corrections.
- Management not collecting sufficient information to monitor performance.

### **Community Corrections Staff Have Not Completed Required Training**

- Staff training not always completed or completed late. Issues consistent with our 2018 Correctional Facilities audit.
- No orientation process for new hires.
- Courses significant to the role of probation officers not mandatory.