
Appendix one – Response from agencies

Response from Department of Health



Health

Ms Margaret Crawford
NSW Auditor-General
NSW Audit Office
GPO Box 12
SYDNEY NSW 2001

Your ref D2117828/PA6680
Our ref H21/167440

Performance Audit – Access to Health Services in Custody

Dear Ms Crawford

I refer to your letter of 31 August 2021 inviting NSW Health to provide a formal response to the final audit report on *Access to Health Services in Custody*, to be tabled on 23 September 2021.

The delivery of health care services to patients in custody is complex due to both the environment in which they are delivered and the complexity of the health conditions of the patients themselves. NSW Health appreciates the efforts of the Audit Office in understanding this complexity and is supportive of the recommendations made to enhance service delivery.

Please find attached to this letter NSW Health's response to the individual audit recommendations. NSW Health will work closely with our colleagues at Corrective Services NSW to review the audit findings and to jointly implement actions where required.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "EKoff".

Elizabeth Koff
Secretary, NSW Health

Encl.

14/9/21

NSW Ministry of Health
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Recommendation		NSW Health Response	
By December 2022, Justice Health should:			
1.	enhance reporting on patient access to health services to ensure that system managers can identify risks, challenges, and system improvements across key areas of its service profile	Accept	Justice Health will investigate ways to further enhance reporting of patient access to health services and address any issues of system improvements.
2.	in collaboration with the NSW Ministry of Health, identify and implement the required improvements to its health information management systems that will enable effective transfers of patient clinical records and appointment information across the custodial network and with external health providers.	Accept	Justice Health will work with eHealth NSW to improve the health information management systems that will enable effective transfer of patient clinical records and appointment information across the custodial network.
By December 2022, Justice Health and Corrective Services should:			
3.	develop a joint framework to assess costs, and govern their common and connected responsibilities for patient health movements across the prison network and to external health services	Accept	Justice Health will engage with Corrective Services to develop a joint framework to assess costs, and govern their common and connected responsibilities for patient health movements across the prison network and to external health services
4.	develop a joint framework to govern their common and connected responsibilities for mental health services.	Accept	Justice Health will engage with Corrective Services to develop a joint framework to govern their common and connected responsibilities for mental health services.
By December 2022, Justice Health and Corrective Services, in collaboration with the NSW Ministry of Health, should:			
5.	progress and implement infrastructure plans and projects that address the lack of specialist accommodation for mental health patients and aged and frail patients	Accept	Justice Health will engage with Corrective Services in collaboration with the Ministry of Health to address any lack of specialist accommodation for mental health patients and aged and frail patients.
6.	standardise and align the key performance indicators that monitor the performance of health operators in public and private prisons so that system-wide benchmarking is possible.	Accept	Justice Health will engage with Corrective Services in collaboration with the Ministry of Health to standardise KPIs in monitoring the performance of health operators in public and private prisons to enable system wide benchmarking.

Recommendation		NSW Health Response	
By December 2022, the NSW Ministry of Health should:			
7.	take action to remediate the conflicting monitoring arrangements of public and private prison health operators.	Accept	The Ministry will review the current monitoring arrangements to determine whether the current governance and probity arrangements can be enhanced and will work with Justice Health to implement any required actions.

Response from Department of Communities and Justice



Communities
& Justice

Ms Margaret Crawford
Auditor-General for New South Wales
Audit Office of New South Wales
GPO Box 12
SYDNEY NSW 2001

15 September 2021

Ref: EAP21/12789
Your ref: D2117827/PA6680

Dear Ms Crawford

Performance Audit — Access to health services in custody

I refer to your letter of 31 August 2021, inviting my response to the final performance audit report entitled “*Access to health services in custody*”.

I understand that the objective of this performance audit was to assess whether adults in custody in NSW have effective access to health services, with your assessment considering whether the Justice Health and Forensic Mental Health Network (**Justice Health**) and Corrective Services NSW (**CSNSW**) effectively cooperate and coordinate so that:

- patients have timely access to health services;
- systems and practices support the continuity of health care; and
- access to health services is monitored, reviewed, and reported across the network.

CSNSW has provided comments on the draft report to the Audit Office. I am advised that, at 8 September 2021, the report was under review by your agency, and that, consistent with earlier discussions between the agencies, feedback provided by CSNSW was to be incorporated into the final report for tabling.

The Department of Communities and Justice through CSNSW, accepts the recommendations in the current report which are relevant to CSNSW, as indicated in the enclosed advice.

We will give full and careful consideration to the report’s recommendations in consultation with our partner agencies, Justice Health and the NSW Ministry of Health, and will work to continue to improve current health service delivery and related processes where necessary.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. Coutts-Trotter'.

Michael Coutts-Trotter
Secretary

Encl.

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New South Wales Auditor-General's Report – Performance Audit
Access to health services in custody

Response to Recommendations

Rec. No.	Recommendation
By December 2022, Justice Health and Corrective Services should:	
3.	<p>develop a joint framework to govern and monitor the costs of their common and connected responsibilities for patient health movements across the prison network and to external health services.</p> <p>Accepted.</p> <p>Corrective Services NSW will give further consideration on how this recommendation can be best achieved, in conjunction with Justice Health.</p>
4.	<p>develop a joint framework to govern their common and connected responsibilities for mental health services.</p> <p>Accepted.</p> <p>Corrective Services NSW will engage with Justice Health towards developing an agreed joint framework to govern common and connected responsibilities in the delivery of mental health services.</p>
By December 2022, Justice Health and Corrective Services, in collaboration with the NSW Ministry of Health, should:	
5.	<p>progress infrastructure plans and projects that address the lack of specialist accommodation for mental health patients and aged and frail patients.</p> <p>Accepted, but this is dependent upon funding availability and raises other resource implications.</p> <p>Corrective Services NSW will work together with Justice Health, in collaboration with the NSW Ministry of Health, towards progressing infrastructure plans and projects to address the health care needs within the correctional environment, where necessary.</p>
6.	<p>standardise and align the key performance indicators that monitor the performance of health operators in public and private prisons so that system-wide benchmarking is possible.</p> <p>Accepted.</p> <p>Corrective Services NSW will engage with Justice Health, in collaboration with the NSW Ministry of Health, to have common, standardised and aligned key performance indicators that monitor the performance of health operators in public and private prisons to facilitate state-wide benchmarking, where possible.</p>