

Young female offenders to move

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by The Canadian Press

The B.C. government says young female offenders at facilities in Prince George and Victoria will be moved to a centre in Burnaby in an effort to centralize services.

The Children's Ministry says the cost savings of having all the 12 to 18-year-old girls at one facility instead of three will help expand rehabilitation services for mental health and addictions.

The ministry says sometimes there are only one or two girls at the Prince George and Victoria centres, which will remain open for young male offenders.

The government also says it will provide money to allow the girls' families from Vancouver Island and the north to visit the girls at the Burnaby centre.

Dean Purdy, a spokesman for the B.C. Government and Services Employees Union, says the girls' rehabilitation efforts will be hampered because they won't be near their families while the government is trying to cut costs.

He says the closure of the girls' units will put 23 sheriffs out of work and the government provided no notice of the change while the union is trying to negotiate a new contract with the province.