Report to / Rapport au:

OTTAWA POLICE SERVICES BOARD
LA COMMISSION DE SERVICES POLICIERS D'OTTAWA

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Submitted by / Soumis par:
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SUBJECT: SAFE WORKPLACE PROGRAM – ANNUAL REPORT

OBJET: PROGRAMME SÉCURITÉ AU TRAVAIL - RAPPORT ANNUEL

REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Ottawa Police Services Board Receive this report for information.

RECOMMANDATIONS DU RAPPORT

Que la Commission de services policiers d'Ottawa prenne connaissance du présent rapport à titre d'information.

BACKGROUND

The Ottawa Police Service (OPS) has taken deliberate steps towards creating a safe, healthy, and respectful workplace for all members. In March 2020, the OPS partnered with the Board to launch the Joint Strategy on Workplace Sexual Violence & Harassment (JS-WSVH). This initiative represents a long-term commitment from OPS leadership and the Board to prevent and address workplace sexual violence and harassment (SV&H), and to provide meaningful support to complainants, respondents, and bystanders. The goal was to create a safe and equitable workplace for all members, reflecting our ongoing commitment to member wellness and eliminating SV&H. Additionally, the initiative aimed to address intersectional systemic issues such as gender-based discrimination, racism, and homophobia.

This multi-year engagement adopted a structured program management approach that included significant collaboration and co-production with OPS members and leading experts from community agencies in both private and public sectors. OPS leadership

understood that addressing sexual violence, discrimination in all forms, and workplace harassment required a multi-faceted, strategic approach that 1) had clear leadership and a commitment to sustained engagement over the span of multiple years; 2) rebuilt a respectful workplace through meaningful responses to complaints and a respectful, confidential reporting process; 3) was cohesively and fully supported by leadership, including Associations, the Board, and members of OPS executive; and 4) was integrated within broader efforts to advance culture by fostering equitable, diverse, and inclusive systems, processes, and programs.

In support of the SV&H project, the OPS and the Board hired Rubin Thomlinson LLP ("RT") to conduct a pilot project. This project had two components; the first was for RT to act as a third party to receive and investigate complaints under the Equitable Work Environment Policy, Respectful Workplace Policy, and Violence & Harassment in the Workplace Policy, and the second was for RT to assess OPS's workplace culture, policies, and procedures relating to workplace harassment and discrimination. This work was done to identify any systemic issues or gaps and provide recommendations for best practices to address them. After the assessment, RT provided OPS with seven core action items and 18 recommendations for implementation.

In January 2022, the OPS provided an update to the Board on the proposed future state of the SV&H. Utilizing the recommendations from RT, the OPS began developing and implementing a Safe Workplace Program (SWP). This SWP saw the transition of this work from a project to a sustainable program. This report will update the Board on the work done in 2022 and 2023 towards the development and sustainability of this program.

DISCUSSION

Overview: Safe Workplace Program

The goal of the OPS is to improve the workplace culture by creating a safer, more equitable, and inclusive environment for all members. Through various reports, the Service has identified organizational factors that have contributed to incidents of sexual violence, harassment, and discrimination at the OPS, resulting in harm to members. Factors such as trust, fear, accountability, power, and workplace culture have all played a role in preventing members from coming forward with issues and being their most authentic selves at work. To address these issues, the OPS has developed the SWP program, which is based on a comprehensive framework as recommended by RT and takes into account the findings of previous reports and workplace initiatives. The program's foundational work plan focuses on seven themes.

1) Increase accountability

2) Strengthen leadership

3) Restore the workplace

4) Set clear expectations for workplace behaviour

5) Encourage reporting and improve the investigation of complaints

6) Provide better support to employees

7) Augment programs and resources

The 18 recommendations received from RT span across these seven key areas and have guided the development of a harm reduction strategy. To ensure subject matter expertise was included, the OPS has created a multidisciplinary committee and involved multiple directorates such as Respect, Values and Inclusion, Human Resources, Legal Services, and the Office of the Chief. The OPS has worked hard to address each of these recommendations through diligent planning. As the Service continues to grow and identify new needs, some of these recommendations will require ongoing evaluation, further refinements and prioritization. Improving workplace culture remains an ongoing and deliberate area of significant effort for the OPS and continues to see unwavering support from senior leadership.

Program Foundation – Key Activities 2022-2023

The program is comprised of five areas of focus, Understand, Prevention, Support, Respond, and Restore. These components were developed to align with the findings identified in the SV&H Project as well as the recommendations brought forward through the RT Report. The activities within each component serve to advance the foundational work of the SV&H project by focusing on leadership commitment, evolving the respectful workplace program, partnership alignment, and advancing culture.

Understand Pillar

The understand pillar focuses on facilitating organizational understanding and managing program effectiveness to identify early opportunities for improvement and integration within all pillars. As a service, the OPS has reinforced the importance of this work by successfully transitioning the SV&H project to a program. The following provides a summary of the progress made on the foundational activities in this area:

1) **Logic Model and Evaluation Plan**

   Monitoring the effectiveness of a program is crucial for identifying workplace issues and for ensuring continuous improvement. OPS data collection processes have

been guided by a draft logic model. To ensure unbiased evaluation, the OPS plans to finalize an independent review approach for the program and establish a scope of work and assessment schedule for independent evaluation processes to occur.

2) Program Governance & Structure

In 2023, there was a significant emphasis on effective program governance and establishing structures to ensure that all program deliverables were integrated and aligned. An important milestone was reached in Q2 of 2023 with the creation of the Safe Workplace Program Steering Committee. This committee includes representatives from various directorates and chains of command, such as Respect, Values and Inclusion, Human Resources, Legal Services, and the Office of the Chief. The committee's role is to provide guidance on the program's vision, strategy, and policies, as well as oversee the decision-making processes for the SWP.

3) Monitoring and Reporting

As per the Ottawa Police Services Board (Board) policy CR-1 Positive Workplace, it is the responsibility of the Chief of Police to implement procedures and practices that promote a positive and respectful workplace. Going forward, this SWP report will replace the Positive Workplace Report currently tabled by the Workplace Conflict Resolution (WCR) unit and will provide a fulsome annual review of all SWP deliverables, including a summary of internal program usage and outcomes including files investigated by the Workplace Investigations Office (WIO). This will ensure a coordinated and systematic approach to continuing this work and reporting to the Board on the program initiatives.

Prevention Pillar

The program's prevention strategy targets proactive initiatives and awareness building to prevent discrimination, violence, reprisals, and harassment from happening in the workplace. It also takes steps to improve and enhance the culture of the organization and create a better work environment. The WCR Unit leads this effort, but it requires participation from everyone in the organization to achieve desired outcomes. The following provides a summary of the progress made on the foundational activities in this area:

1) Curriculum Designer Onboarding:

In October 2022, a curriculum designer was hired to ensure that the current course offerings related to respect at work, equity, diversity and inclusion, harassment, and workplace violence are aligned and reviewed. This role will continue to provide insights on the best practices to fill any gaps in academic programming and

recommendations on best practices for course delivery. This work will continue to play a critical role in designing the curriculum for the deliverables included in the Service and Board's Strategic Plan.

2) Policy Revisions and Development of a Code of Professional Ethics:

The OPS is committed to upholding high professional standards that align with the Service's core values. During the initial phase of the program, there was a focus on updating policies and procedures, which underwent multiple reviews and consultations. As a result, the program will introduce the updated Equitable Work Environment policy, the Human Rights Core Policy, and the Workplace Harassment, Violence, and Discrimination Policy. These policies outline the expected behavior and responsibilities of all members to ensure a respectful and inclusive workplace. These core program policies will be finalized in Q4 of 2023.

The Service has created a Code of Professional Ethics, which provides all members with clear expectations for their behavior. The Code has a positive approach and aims to guide the conduct of all members, influence workplace culture, and outline an ethical framework that helps each member in delivering services to the community and interacting with colleagues in a professional, ethical, equitable, and inclusive manner. The Code is aspirational and instills a sense of unified commitment among all members of the OPS. This Code will be finalized in Q4 of 2023.

3) Review of Promotional and Performance Management Processes:

The OPS team has shown dedication to improving the organization's promotional processes. In the fourth quarter of 2022, a team was formed to research and implement better promotional procedures. This team has worked hard to introduce an improved, effective, and equitable promotion process for Superintendents, Inspectors, Staff Sergeants, and Sergeants. The Superintendent process was completed in Q2 2023, the Inspector process will conclude and the NCO processes will launch later in Q4.

The Talent Development and Performance Management section has placed a renewed focus on Performance Management. Recommendations from RT were incorporated, reinforcing clear, transparent, and defendable documentation supported by updated policies and procedures. The section continues to implement new and progressive approaches through continued improvements to programming.

The performance management process has been refined to reinforce continuous check-ins throughout the year, providing feedback and guidance. This method offers

multiple opportunities to identify any barriers or concerns that may impede member success and allow for timely supports to be identified. This cycle of continuous feedback further facilitates the celebration of the amazing work done by OPS members every day.

Supervisory training has been rolled out across the Organization to support a better understanding of roles and responsibilities within the Performance Management process.

In 2023, performance reviews will be comprised of a blend of the existing OPS Behavioral Competencies in conjunction with the new OPS Universal Competencies.

Supervisors align their performance expectations and employees identify personal goals with the ultimate aspiration of being a Selfless Leader, strengthening Emotional Intelligence, and practices of being Integrity Driven.

Reporting mechanisms will be leveraged to help identify trends in employee assessment ratings and support areas of growth towards encouraging a coaching culture at OPS.

4) Champions of Professional Practice (COPP):

In 2021, the WCR unit implemented the "Spark Strategy" to create a group of change leaders within the organization. Additional sessions were held in Q2 and Q4 of 2023 to design and develop a communication plan to raise awareness about the SWP at OPS. This plan will be completed in Q4 of 2023 and launched within the organization in Q1 of 2024.

In Q3 of 2023, a campaign was launched to recruit more members to COPP to ensure that the group is composed of representatives from across the entirety of the OPS and to ensure that diverse perspectives are represented. Training for new members will occur in Q4 of 2023.

Support Pillar

The "Support" strategy seeks to support members at every stage of the SWP process. The OPS is focusing support during prevention and intervention, and / or while members are engaged in one of the conflict resolution or complaint processes. This mirrors the broader Wellness Strategy which strives to identify opportunities to provide support services and heighten the available support systems in place for all members. For the SWP, this includes providing support services to complainants, respondents, bystanders, and managers as well as creating more accessible and service-oriented supports for members based on their differing needs. This pillar is led by the Health,

Safety, and Wellness (HSW) Unit and is supported by the broader Human Resources Directorate. The foundational activities within this pillar are aligned with increasing the mental health support available for OPS members but also expanding the envelope of options to be tailored to other areas of need such as caregiving responsibilities, work/life integration, and return to work from leave.

The following provides a summary of the progress made on the foundational activities in this area:

1) **Wellness Portal & Increased Presence:** Expanding the accessibility of connecting with Wellness resources has been a foundational focus of the Wellness Program. The Wellness Portal was launched organizationally in 2022 and allows members and their families to gain access to wellness resources and support services in one centralized location. The Wellness Resource Liaison has also actively worked towards developing and implementing new strategies to engage members such as hosting information sessions, assisting with wellness presentations, attending parade and participating in patrol ride-a-longs, connecting with recruits and their families, and building relationships with outside services and police agencies.

2) **Blue Buddy:** Supporting members is built on a foundation of trust. and Blue Buddy is an online tool attached to a member's staff profile account that allows members to identify a trusted support person within the organization that the Wellness Team can leverage when providing support services.

3) **Peer Support Program:** A recruitment campaign was launched in Q2 of 2023 to expand the composition of the Peer Support Program. Currently, the peer support is comprised of approximately 55 members including both civilian and sworn members as well as retirees, and family members. Peer Supporter team members complete a three-day training in conflict resolution, active listening, boundaries as well as an introduction to suicide intervention.

4) **Reintegration Program:** The Health, Safety, and Wellness Unit at OPS has successfully launched the Support and Reintegration Program. This program was originally developed by the Edmonton Police Service in 2009, as they recognized a need for coordinated support for members returning to the work environment following a critical incident. This program is designed to provide comprehensive and interactive support to employees who are experiencing emotional, cognitive, or physical reactions due to critical incidents or exposure to stressful events. Additionally, the program assists members who are returning to work after a long-term absence. The program aims to boost members' physical and

psychological confidence when returning to work and reduce the risk of future harm. OPS is committed to continuing to strengthen our reintegration program and actively participates in a National Working group led by the Edmonton Police Service to identify best practices and resources.

Following RT's recommendation to review Maternity and Parental leave return-to-work support, the OPS conducted a review in Q3 to identify gaps and opportunities for improving support for members going off on maternity and parental leave and returning to work. The Human Resources Directorate, with support from members from the WINS+ Employee Resource Group, developed a guide for members and management. The guide provides access to important information during their leave. In 2024, we will continue our efforts to develop and implement formalized coaching and mentoring support for returning members to reduce additional stressors upon returning to work.

5) **Wellness Program Evaluation:**

This report highlights the various wellness resources that are available to OPS members and their families. Policing continues to modernize and change, and so does the needs of our membership. To enhance the existing program, the OPS is in the process of requesting proposals to complete a Wellness Program evaluation. The evaluation will use contemporary research methods to determine the effectiveness of current and planned wellness initiatives, provide an overview of best practices, and identify any gaps in services. The results of this assessment will provide recommendations for any changes required, areas for expansion, and implementation strategies to promote organizational and member wellness.

Respond Pillar

To ensure a prompt and effective response to incoming complaints, the organization established an independent reporting mechanism as part of SWP. This included creating and implementing the Workplace Investigation Office (WIO), previously known as the Safe Workplace Office.

The WIO operates separately from our organization to ensure fairness during investigations. The WIO was launched in October 2022 and started receiving new files as of then.   RT continued with ongoing investigations that had begun before the WIO's launch. The partnership with RT has been invaluable in building trust in the reporting process and improving the safety and well-being of OPS members. We are grateful for their professional collaboration over the past few years.

When the WIO opened its doors in 2022, the SWP collaborated with various units and stakeholders to define processes and understand the WIO's scope of work. Initially, all case files were sent to the WIO as a centralized office. However, as part of a further development of the program in Mid-2023, we adopted a standardized approach process called the "no wrong door" model. This approach helps us efficiently screen and assist agencies in handling complaints. During this development, the WIO continued to receive within scope complaints and also made use of external investigators to meet the growing demand of the Office. As we work on improving different aspects of the Safe Workplace Program to make it efficient and fully functional for 2024, we recognize the progress we've made in 2023. We are nonetheless committed to making it more effective for our OPS members, stakeholders, the OPS Board, internal units and the WIO in the upcoming year.

Restore Pillar

The restoration pillar focuses on promoting a healthy, respectful, and productive workplace. The WCR unit, utilizing clinical staff and certified conflict coaches, leads this effort. Restoration is crucial to the SWP program, helping members and the organization heal after a workplace conflict or investigation. The restore pillar empowers members to manage conflict early, often diffusing issues before they escalate, and also creates a safe place for members to debrief and unpack the outcomes of more formal processes.

The program is designed to effectively manage and resolve workplace issues, building conflict resiliency skills to prevent conflicts from escalating. By restoring confidence and trust in the Service, colleagues, and the SWP Program, the pillar seeks to promote individual and organizational restoration.

1) **Restoring the Individual**

   The needs of members are all assessed on an individual basis to ensure that the tools implemented are appropriate for the member and their current circumstances. The OPS leverages a needs assessment process that allows the member to communicate how they have been impacted by the workplace conflict and identify what is needed to support them to move forward. This process is built on trust and relationship building with the identification of a restoration plan to address deliberate outcomes.

2) **Restoring the Organization**

   Restoring the organization will be a continuous process that requires a dedicated focus on identifying and removing any barriers that impede OPS' abilities to maintain

an equitable, inclusive, and safe workplace. This work is focused on the social contract between the organization and the members and requires active engagement, support and consultation with multiple directorates and a united commitment to implementing change.

CONSULTATION

As mentioned earlier in this report, the Service conducted thorough consultations and worked closely with internal and external advisory groups including community members, OPS members, and Board members to create this program. Even after its implementation, the OPS continues to engage with program leads who participate in working groups throughout the province, focusing on respectful workplace initiatives in policing and other communities of practice. The OPS' goal for 2024 is to develop the next iteration of our internal and external consultation and advisory groups in order to leverage expertise on the next set of program initiatives such as the Wellness Program review and the SWP program evaluation.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

N/A

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

N/A

CONCLUSION

The creation of the SWP is a reflection of the OPS' commitment to preventing and addressing sexual violence and harassment in the workplace over the long term. This commitment has grown beyond sexual violence and harassment and has now been expanded to include all elements of what makes members feel safe at work.

Improving workplace culture in policing is a priority for police services throughout the province, and the OPS is devoted to actively pursuing initiatives that promote positive change and provide members with the tools and resources needed to ensure a safe, supportive, and inclusive work environment.

The SWP is working with other change initiatives, like the DRIVE 2 Strategy, to eliminate barriers and address incidents of violence, discrimination, and harassment in a coordinated approach and in a way that puts members first. There has been a noticeable cultural shift over the last three years and the Service is proud of its members who have spoken out for change. The OPS holds all members to high professional standards that reflect the Service's values and it wishes to recognize the

dedication members have shown towards building a more inclusive and supportive work environment.

The Service cannot develop the program in isolation; collaboration and co-creation is valued, and OPS members will continue to be engaged and listened to ensure that program deliverables align with their needs.

As a service, we have made significant progress in building out the foundations of the SWP over 2022 and 2023. This momentum will continue as we refine and strengthen processes to support a fully functioning program in 2024.