

**Report to / Rapport au:**

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

**23 October 2023 / 23 octobre 2023**

**Submitted by / Soumis par:**

**Chief of Police, Ottawa Police Service / Chef de police, Service de police d'Ottawa**

**Contact Person / Personne ressource:**

**Aquilas Kapend, Executive Director of Safe Workplace / Directrice Général De  
Safe Workplace**

**KapendA@ottawapolice.ca**

**SUBJECT: 2023 WORKPLACE INVESTIGATIONS OFFICE – ANNUAL REPORT**

**OBJET: 2023 BUREAU DES ENQUÊTES SUR LE LIEU DE 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 implementation of the Workplace Investigations Office (formerly known as the Safe Workplace Office and hereinafter referred to as "WIO") was a direct result of an extensive assessment and inquiry into the workplace culture and complaint investigation procedures within the Ottawa Police Service (OPS). This comprehensive review was conducted by Rubin Thomlinson (RT). In their report submitted on November 11, 2021, to both the Chief of Police and the Chair of the Ottawa Police Services Board, RT recommended the establishment of the WIO, outlining specific principles as detailed in the report titled "Re: Assessment", prepared by Janice Rubin and Melody Jahanzadeh (pages 49 – 51, Recommendation 12):

**1. Independence:** The WIO was designed to operate independently from the OPS chain of command, ensuring separation in key areas such as physical office space, budget management, and access to files.

**2. Mandate:** The WIO was mandated to effectively investigate all complaints falling under the Occupational Health and Safety Act, the Ontario Human Right's Code and following current OPS Policies: the Equitable Work Environment Policy, Respectful Workplace Policy, and Violence & Harassment in the Workplace Policy.

**3. Resources:** To ensure efficiency and timeliness in conducting investigations, the WIO was to be allocated sufficient resources to support the addition of other investigators.

The primary aim of the Workplace Investigations Office (WIO) was to centralize the intake of complaints, the assessment and triage of these complaints, as well as the investigation of matters pertaining to workplace harassment, discrimination, violence, and reprisal. The WIO functions independently from the organization to maintain a neutral and trusted position throughout the investigative process.

This initiative represents OPS's commitment to ensuring a fair, safe, and respectful workplace for all its members, aligning with the principles and recommendations set forth in the report by Rubin Thomlinson.

## **DISCUSSION**

The WIO gathered valuable feedback from OPS members throughout the course of its first year of operations, and the feedback has been instrumental in shaping the approach of the office and the content of this report. Here are some key insights that have shaped the WIO as it is now and guided the development of this report:

**1. Building Trust through WIO's Intake:** The intake process that the WIO has in place requires patience and time to establish trust with OPS members. Initially, all members are first served by the WIO's Administrator. The WIO has received positive feedback indicating that this initial intake meeting has significantly contributed to members feeling more comfortable coming forward and placing trust in the WIO's investigative phases.

**2. Transformation of the Complaint from a centralized process to a standardize no wrong door process:** From October 2022 to May 2023, the centralized complaint intake process was found to be ineffective and overly restrictive. In response, the WIO introduced and implemented the "No Wrong Door" approach, which was integrated into the Safe Workplace Program (SWP). This standardized complaint intake process enables members to submit their complaints through any unit, supervisor or directly to the WIO using a uniform intake standardized form. These complaints are then properly

processed and further internally triaged to ensure a more accessible and efficient process.

**3. Improving Resource Allocation:** Prior to June 20, 2023, a significant portion of WIO's resources were dedicated to the intake and triage of complaints that ultimately did not fall within the scope for formal investigation, which took a lot of resources and was not time efficient. In fact, only 28.5% of all complaints received during this period led to an investigation. However, since moving away from receiving all complaints including out of scope complaint, the ratio of complaints that result in an investigation has increased to 44% because the WIO is focused only on within scope matters while still being innovative however in only investigating that which is necessary and in complying with the applicable legislation(s) by attempting to resolve other complaints that are not deemed investigation necessary under the circumstances but fall within the scope of its mandate.

The WIO anticipates further growth in this figure with more awareness campaign of the office, as its process becomes more refined and widely recognized throughout the Service.

**4. Enhancing Member Experience:** The WIO's operation in an independent and remote office space, distinct from OPS operations, has proven to be beneficial in mitigating potential hesitations among members. Some have shared their experiences of PTSD symptoms upon encountering an OPS-related facility. The remote, arms-length location of the office has therefore encouraged a more open and comfortable environment for members to come forward and participate in the investigative process.

**5. Transparent Communication Throughout the Investigation Process:** In response to feedback from OPS members, the WIO has implemented a comprehensive communication strategy to ensure that members and stakeholders are informed about various stages of the investigation process. The WIO has developed an internal step-by-step guide that outlines its process and serves to keep members and stakeholders engaged and informed as their cases progress through the investigative phases. This approach not only promotes transparency but also empowers OPS members with the information they need to participate effectively in the process, fostering a sense of ownership and trust.

**6. Prioritizing Psychological Well-being through Robust Triage and Innovative Solutions:** Recognizing the profound psychological toll that an investigation can have on all parties involved, including complainants and respondents, the WIO has developed a robust triaging process. This process includes a thorough legal assessment to ensure that investigations are only conducted when they are necessary

under the circumstances, as recommended by the Occupational Health and Safety Act. The WIO's process also aims to ensure that **all** are treated fairly, with respect and dignity as they navigate through the investigative process.

When an investigation is not deemed necessary, the WIO implements an innovative approach to empower chain of command as leaders, the appropriate OPS Unit(s), and the involved parties to engage in effective communication and resolution of their issues through alternative dispute resolution methods. This approach seeks to not only reduce the emotional strain associated with investigations but also encourages a constructive and collaborative approach to conflict resolution, aligning with the WIO's commitment to a safer, more supportive workplace environment.

These aforementioned insights highlight WIO's dedication to balancing the need for accountability with a genuine concern for the psychological well-being of all parties involved in its processes, ultimately fostering a more compassionate and equitable workplace culture. They further underscore the WIO's commitment to continuous improvement and member-centric service. The WIO remains dedicated to enhancing its processes and ensuring that members are supported, heard, and provided with a trusted avenue to address their complaints that fall within the scope of the WIO's mandate.

## TRENDS

Since October 1, 2022, the WIO has received a total of 37 complaints, and of those complaints, engaged in a total of 12 investigations. The following table summarizes the status of the complaints and investigations as of September 30, 2023.

<b>Investigation Status</b>	<b>Total number</b>	<b>Percentage of all Investigations</b>
Completed investigations (report done)	1	2.7%
Inquiry only	5	13.5%
Complaint withdrawn	7	19%
Complaint addressed through mediation	0	0%
Complaint out of scope	12	32.4%
Triage	1	2.7%

Ongoing Investigations	11	29.7%
Total	37	100%

Complaint No.	Submitted	Status/Outcome	Nature of allegations	Complexity	Investigation length
Complaint 1: 2022-001	October 2022	<b>Out of scope</b> – not OPS member (Ontario Public Service employee)	n/a	n/a	n/a
Complaint 2: 2022-002	October 2022	<b>Withdrawn</b> /member stopped communication December 19, 2022	n/a	n/a	n/a
Complaint 3: 2022-003	November 2022	<b>Withdrawn</b> May 2023	n/a	n/a	n/a
Complaint 4: 2022-004	November 2022	<b>Withdrawn</b> April 2023	n/a	n/a	n/a
Complaint 5: 2022-005	December 2022	<b>Out of scope</b> – referred to EDI	n/a	n/a	n/a
Complaint 6: 2022-006	December 2022	<b>Out of scope</b> – referred to OPSB	n/a	n/a	n/a
Complaint 7: 2023-001	January 2023	<b>Out of scope</b> – referred to PSU	n/a	n/a	n/a
Complaint 8: 2023-002	January 2023	Investigation	Workplace harassment / Respectful Workplace Policy Violation(s)	Lack of response from complainant	257 days

<b>Complaint No.</b>	<b>Submitted</b>	<b>Status/Outcome</b>	<b>Nature of allegations</b>	<b>Complexity</b>	<b>Investigation length</b>
Complaint 9: 2023-003	January 2023	<b>Out of scope</b> – referred to CoC	n/a	n/a	n/a
Complaint 10: 2023-004	February 2023	<b>Out of scope</b> – PSU file	n/a	n/a	n/a
Complaint 11: 2023-005	February 2023	<b>Inquiry only</b> – no submission	n/a	n/a	n/a
Complaint 12: 2023-006	February 2023	Report done	Respectful Workplace Policy Violation(s)	Respondent mental wellness considerations; safety plan for team	214 days
Complaint 13: 2023-007	March 2023	<b>Out of scope</b> – SIU file	n/a	n/a	n/a
Complaint 14: 2023-008	March 2023	<b>Inquiry only</b> – no submission	n/a	n/a	n/a
Complaint 15: 2023-009	March 2023	<b>Out of scope</b> – Referred to WCRU	n/a	n/a	n/a
Complaint 16: 2023-010	March 2023	Investigation		Attempting mediation to resolve	204 days
Complaint 17: 2023-011	April 2023	Investigation	Respectful Workplace Policy Violation		182 days

Complaint No.	Submitted	Status/Outcome	Nature of allegations	Complexity	Investigation length
Complaint 18: 2023-012	April 2023	Investigation	Respectful Workplace Policy Violation	File allegations severed with PSU	165 days
Complaint 19: 2023-013	April 2023	Investigation – group complaint	Workplace Harassment, Discrimination		160 days
Complaint 20: 2023-014	April 2023	Investigation – Management Initiated	Respectful Workplace Policy Violation		157 days
Complaint 21: 2023-015	May 2023	<b>Out of scope</b> – managed by CoC	n/a	n/a	n/a
Complaint 22: 2023-016	May 2023	Incorporated into 2023-013 Group Complaint – considered <b>Withdrawn</b>	n/a	n/a	n/a
Complaint 23: 2023-017	May 2023	<b>Withdrawn</b> July 2023	n/a	n/a	n/a
Complaint 24: 2023-018	May 2023	<b>Inquiry only</b> – no submission	n/a	n/a	n/a
Complaint 25: 2023--019	May 2023	Incorporated into 2023-013 Group Complaint – considered <b>Withdrawn</b>	n/a	n/a	n/a

Complaint No.	Submitted	Status/Outcome	Nature of allegations	Complexity	Investigation length
Complaint 26: 2023-020	May 2023	<b>Inquiry only</b> – no submission	n/a	n/a	n/a
Complaint 27: 2023-021	June 2023	Investigation – Management Initiated	Respectful Workplace Policy Violation		104 days
Complaint 28: 2023-022	June 2023	Incorporated into 2023-013 Group Complaint – considered <b>Withdrawn</b>	n/a	n/a	n/a
Complaint 29: 2023-023	June 2023	Investigation – management initiated	Workplace harassment / Respectful Workplace Policy Violation(s)		103 days
Complaint 30: 2023-024	June 2023	Investigation	Workplace harassment / Respectful Workplace Policy Violation(s)		109 days
Complaint 31: 2023-025	June 2023	<b>Out of scope</b> – referred to WCRU	n/a	n/a	n/a
Complaint 32: 2023-026	July 2023	Investigation	Respectful Workplace		79 days



Complaint No.	Submitted	Status/Outcome	Nature of allegations	Complexity	Investigation length
			Policy Violation(s)		
Complaint 33: 2023-027	July 2023	<b>Out of scope</b> – no action required	n/a	n/a	n/a
Complaint 34: 2023-028	August 2023	<b>Inquiry only</b> – no submission	n/a	n/a	n/a
Complaint 35: 2023-029	September 2023	Investigation – group complaint	Respectful Workplace Policy Violation(s)		17 days
Complaint 36: 2023-030	September 2023	<b>Out of scope</b> – PSU file	n/a	n/a	n/a
Complaint 37: 2023-031	September 2023	Triage stage	n/a	n/a	n/a

## CONCLUSION

In closing, the Workplace Investigations Office (WIO) has made significant strides in solidifying processes that aim to create a safer, more inclusive, and compassionate workplace culture for all OPS members. The WIO has carefully considered the feedback received from OPS members and stakeholders, and this feedback has been instrumental in shaping its approach and internal processes.

WIO's commitment to building trust and ensuring healthy communication at each stage of investigations demonstrates its unwavering dedication to serving OPS members effectively.

Also, recognizing the psychological toll that investigations can take on all parties, the WIO has not only implemented an effective triaging process but also sought innovative solutions that prioritize the psychological well-being of those involved. This approach embraces an alternative dispute resolution model to minimize emotional strain and encourage constructive conflict resolution, when appropriate.

Moreover, the adoption of a trauma-informed process across all stages of the WIO's investigations ensures that its work is not only legally sound but also empathetic and considerate of the emotional impact on individuals.

As the WIO navigate this evolving landscape, it remains steadfast in its commitment to creating a workplace characterized by safety, respect, and fairness. The WIO is determined to balance the need for accountability with genuine care for the psychological and emotional well-being of all parties involved in its process and investigate phases.

The WIO continues to refine and enhance its services, empowered by the valuable insights and feedback provided by OPS members and stakeholders. Through these collective efforts, the WIO aims to cultivate a workplace culture that is supportive, respectful, and conducive to the collective mission of the Ottawa Police Service.