

Report to / Rapport au:

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

25 January 2021 / 25 janvier 2021

Submitted by / Soumis par:

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

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SUBJECT: RESPONSE TO INQUIRY I-20-21

OBJET: VERSION FRANÇAISE

REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

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

RECOMMANDATIONS DU RAPPORT

Version française

INQUIRY

Could you please outline the service changes or improvements that have been made since the death of Mr. Abdi. Furthermore, in light of the recent trial decision involving Cst. Daniel Montsion, what are the areas you will be focusing on next and who do you think needs to be involved in the process?

RESPONSE

The tragic death of Mr. Abdirahman Abdi has weighed heavily, not only within the community, but also internally within the Ottawa Police Service (OPS). Police officers report to work with the best of intention and with no intent to cause harm. They are often dispatched to a scene only to find themselves in the midst of very complex situations that have unpredictable results. The goal of every officer is to serve and protect, and to do so by deploying a graduated de-escalation response.

The OPS has been engaged with the community from the first day of the tragic incident, with members meeting with community leaders and learning what steps needed to be done. Significant work has been undertaken and reported to Board in various reports since 2017. This inquiry response is a brief summary of that important work with our police and community members that focused on striving for equitable and professional policing and making meaningful progress on equity, diversity and inclusion.

As already reported in response to inquiry I-20-23, the temporary Outreach Liaison Team (OLT) was created within days of the tragic death of Mr. Abdi in 2016. The goal was to listen to the community and see where we could further help to repair trust. In the years that followed, this team and other sections of the OPS as well as Executive and other senior officers, would participate in vigils, anti-racism town halls, the development of new programs and partnerships, as well as ongoing one-on-one conversations with community leaders.

Community engagement and consultation was key, over the next few years, in developing new programs and policies that would address gaps in systems and provide a more fulsome and accountable response to policing.

Data culled from various reports and stakeholder sessions including: Outreach Liaison Team Final Report (2017), the OPS internal Workforce Census (2017) and public survey (2017), Traffic Stop Race Data Collection (TSRDC) reports (2016 and 2019), and our Diversity Audit (2019), helped to pave the way for new initiatives that would tackle some of the challenging and important questions raised by police and community members.

Based on information gained from ongoing community consultations and these important reports, a new Outreach and Recruiting Team was developed in 2017 to address barriers for racialized residents interested in helping the OPS diversity its workforce. In February, 2020, we presented the results of years of work and changes completed to improve our Outreach and Recruitment process; which is already yielding results with a significant uptick in racialized and female new recruits.

In 2018, we introduced a new Community Equity Council (CEC), that would better-represent racialized, faith-based and Indigenous communities in the city and help police gain a stronger understanding of how to better-serve these communities. The CEC remains a valuable partner and voice in helping the OPS to develop new initiatives and policies.

The Gender Audit also produced important changes. In 2018, managers were sent on gender-based analysis training in order to effectively identify systemic barriers in the areas of promotions and transfers.

In 2019, the OPS launched three Neighbourhood Resource Teams (NRT), in Vanier/Overbrook, Heron Gate/South Ottawa and Carlington/Caldwell, to work in an integrated and coordinated way with local community residents and partners, not-for-profit organizations, business associations and city staff to assess and address crime, social disorder and underlying socio-economic issues. In 2020, three additional NRT were introduced in the ByWard Market/Lowertown, Bayshore and Centretown neighbourhoods. The neighbourhoods were selected due to increased reporting of crime, the presence of complex social issues that underpin most crime (housing, employment, education, health, marginalization, discrimination, etc.), and a high number of calls for police service. OPS members selected for the NRTs are experienced officers who have been assigned on longer fixed service terms to ensure they work in the same areas over several years. This will allow them to build long-term relationships and get to know the people and communities they serve. Selected officers have proven foundational policing skills for crime prevention, order management, emergency response and law enforcement – and have received (or are planned to receive) specialized training and development including: problem solving, conflict mediation, effective communication, and intercultural competency.

In December 2019, the OPS presented its Equitable Work Environment Policy Report, which reaffirmed the OPS' commitment to providing an environment that is inclusive and free of barriers based on age, race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, citizenship, creed, sex (including pregnancy), gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, record of offences, marital status, family status, and disability as stipulated in the Ontario Human Rights Code (the "Code").

From the collection of reports, and recommendations from community and CEC input, the OPS developed its first three-year EDI Action Plan which it presented to the Board in January 2020. This plan focuses on making meaningful progress on equity, diversity and inclusion – professional and equitable policing in the work environment and in service delivery to the diverse community we serve. An updated report outlined collective action and progress on that plan in September and is summarized below.

A new Respect, Values and Inclusion (RVI) Directorate was launched to advance OPS strategic priorities and foster a more progressive and inclusive police service. The Directorate is comprised of two sections – a Respect, Ethics and Values (REV) section focused on supporting professional, ethical, values-based behaviour within the OPS, and an Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) section focused on supporting the Service with proactive and responsive strategies to better-serve our communities. The RVI Directorate will incorporate a whole-of-service approach to harassment, discrimination,

and human rights issues while promoting ethics and EDI principles, ensuring an EDI lens is applied to both internal processes and service delivery.

In January 2020, the OPS reintroduced the Hate and Bias Crime Unit after significant feedback from the community, and will be working closely with United for All.

In March 2020, the OPS started working with the Board to create a special project on Sexual Violence and Harassment in the Workplace (SVHW). The work being done on the SVHW project is ongoing, with the recent hiring of an external third-party for reporting incidents.

In November, we announced that a three-year Mental Health Response Strategy would be developed with an intersectional lens and significant community input that will look to add professional services both on the road and in our Comms Centre, increase training, and develop better follow-up methods to better-serve this vulnerable sector of our community.

Internally, members would attend significant training on human rights, racial profiling, and bias awareness including: Traffic Stop Race Data Collection de-escalation training incorporated into annual Use of Force training (2014), Fair and Impartial Policing (2016), Human Rights and Regulated Interactions (2016-2018), R2MR wellness (2017), Gender Based Analysis Plus (GBA+), Bias Awareness training for transfer processes (2018), and Towards Authentic Inclusion training (2019). It also included ongoing Respectful Workplace training for all new OPS members.

Additionally, each year we present to the Board our Human Rights and Racial Profiling, as well as Equitable Work Environment reports. These reports outline the significant work completed with community stakeholders to develop and implement internal programs and policies, service-delivery changes, and community-police engagement and outreach efforts. The latter report outlined internal initiatives, culled from the data of our internal census and other reports to create new initiatives like Employee Resource Groups, that would provide peer support for members to network and share ideas in groups, that have specific and identifying characteristics, with a formal support structure within the OPS.

Throughout the process of improving internal systems and policies, community stakeholders, academics, and invested residents were consulted in order to provide a more holistic approach to resolving service-delivery gaps.

It is critically important that as we move forward in policing we do so with the help of those most invested in enhancing the safety of all residents of this city. Together we will

develop a police service that better-reflects and better-responds to the needs of the many diverse communities, and all residents, that call Ottawa home.