



**OTTAWA POLICE SERVICE  
SERVICE DE POLICE D'OTTAWA**

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# **BUSINESS CASE: Investigative Change Strategy**

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## **Investigations Directorate**

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## BUSINESS CASE

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**BUSINESS CASE TITLE:** Investigative Change Strategy

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## 1 Executive Summary

The OPS has implemented a variety of enhancements in investigations in various units with great success over the past few years. However, there is still room for improvement. The Investigative Change Strategy proposes a \$0.5 million investment to support enhanced risk assessment, which will in turn lead to improvements in investigative quality, identification of opportunities for pre- and post-charge diversion, as well as increased community referrals for both victims and offenders in partnership with community stakeholders and subject matter experts.

This Strategy will build upon recent enhancements in investigations, including the implementation of an external Advocate Case Review process, modeled after the best practice Philadelphia Case Review Model, for both cases involving Domestic Violence and Sexual Violence. These external Advocate Case Reviews have yielded very important and actionable insights to help the OPS to continually enhance practices, leading to improved outcomes. Existing collaborations with external subject matter experts, and lessons learned from other jurisdictions will also be leveraged. Changes to Criminal Investigations Units will be implemented one at a time, eventually changing the overall service approach.

The proposed Investigative Changes align well with OPS Priorities of Duty of care, Community Safety and Well-Being, and Public Trust. Ensuring appropriate referrals are made will help reduce recidivism, and lower risk and trauma for affected persons, ensuring that both victims and offenders receive help to meet unmet needs and address root causes. Enhanced screening and risk assessment of cases will help to: 1) identify and address any investigative gaps; 2) identify opportunities for referrals to appropriate social services programs and supports; and 3) identify opportunities pre- and post-charge diversion. In turn, pre- and post-charge diversion, in which those who commit minor offences and who meet the criteria are diverted out of the criminal justice system to make reparations to the community via alternate means, frequently benefits both victims and offenders while aligning well with the Ministry of Attorney General's objective to alleviate backlogs in the Courts by focusing on prosecuting more serious criminal offences.

This initiative will help to address the needs of our community's vulnerable members in acknowledgement of the shared desire of the community, social service providers, criminal justice partners and the OPS to see increases in proactive policing and community partnerships, while better addressing root causes amongst the community. In addition, the proposed changes are consistent with the need to maximize the effectiveness and efficiency of service delivery to assist with finding efficiencies in the 2022 Budget Year and will help to reduce investigative and court time for OPS.

## 2 Business Need

### Building on Recent Enhancements

The OPS has taken a variety of approaches in the past few years to strengthen investigative quality, to improve effectiveness and efficiency, as well as to demonstrate duty of care and better support victims. To date, this has included:

- staffing of PAU and SACA Units to full strength, including an increase in bilingual investigators, and increase in investigators assigned to Human Trafficking Unit;
- implementation of new policies which require review of all unfounded files, and supervisor review of all files before they closing;

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- implementation of the Domestic Violence Advocate Case Review (DV-VACR) and Sexual Violence Advocate Case Review, adapted from the Philadelphia Case Review Model that has transformed police responses to sexual offences in Philadelphia and in cities across North America, in which external Advocates conduct a review of OPS cases to identify strengths, weaknesses and improvement opportunities in these investigations; and
- creation of an Adult Pre-Charge Diversion Program in 1998 to identify cases in which lower-level offences are committed and there is opportunity to divert to an external partner agency (e.g. Salvation Army, Elizabeth Fry Society, etc.) to allow the offender to make reparations to the community versus enter the criminal justice system.

### Opportunities for Improvement

In spite of significant recent progress, there remain gaps and opportunities for improvement in various Investigative Units.

For instance, a recent report from the most recent Domestic Violence Advocate Case Reviews conducted from 2017-2019 highlighted various remaining gaps and areas for improvement that require further attention, that include enhanced quality control and consistency in investigations, and increased use of trauma-informed techniques.

Feedback gathered via the Budget Consultation Process for the 2022 OPS Budget also reinforces the need for change. Input from OPS's 2021 Public and Stakeholder Survey and collected via other consultation methods suggested that many would like to see the OPS work more closely with partners and in fact shift some responsibility for response to social issues to subject matter experts in community and social services. Many consultation participants also wanted an increased focus on crime prevention, proactive policing and approaches that better address the root causes of crime.

Finally, a 2021 internal review of the Adult Diversion Program also identified opportunities for improvement after determining that pre- and post-charge diversion is underutilized. This review found that there are many untapped opportunities for diversion, which could reduce trauma and risk to victims and to help prevent further escalation of high-risk situations and avert further risk/criminal offences. As well, pre-charge diversion would also alleviate some of the workload and court time challenges posed by the investigation and prosecution of minor criminal matters.

Taking all of this input together, areas for improvement include:

- increased quality control efforts to review cases in order to identify and address any investigative gaps;
- improved consistency of risk assessment through use of tools, subject matter expertise and/or additional risk assessment training;
- increased focus on diversion opportunities in appropriate cases and streamlined processes for making and tracking diversions;
- increased focus on providing referrals to appropriate community/social service supports and programs and streamlined processes for making and tracking referrals;
- increased collaboration, partnership and involvement of community subject matter experts; and
- improved system integration, efficiency and effectiveness by reducing the number of high-frequency contacts between police and vulnerable individuals with complex unmet

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needs, and by reducing the strain on the capacity of OPS investigators and the Courts to investigate and prosecute minor criminal offences.

### Proposed Investigative Changes

The OPS would like to implement changes to capitalize on currently under-utilized opportunities for Referral and Diversion, which will in turn better address the needs of victims and offenders, reduce the workload for CID and Patrol, and reduce the backlog in Courts and allow them to focus on more serious criminal offences.

The Investigative Change Strategy involves a \$0.5 million investment. Specific details of this plan are being developed, such as whether it will involve a centralized or decentralized model, and impacts on organizational structure and positions.

The OPS has been reviewing best practices and gathering input from police services in other jurisdictions about how to improve investigative effectiveness, leverage the expertise of subject matter experts and achieve better outcomes for victims. The OPS is also undertaking an internal audit of investigative assets to look for opportunities to merge and/or enhance delivery of services with the goal of ensuring the highest level of victim-centric service.

It is anticipated that the Investigative Change Strategy would include the implementation of Risk Assessor and/or Diversion and Referral Specialist positions which will take a victim-centric approach. These Specialists would use a risk assessment guide and consider a range of risk factors on each file to determine whether to:

- a. **lay criminal charges**
- b. **refer victims of crime and those at risk of criminal behaviour** to OPS Victim Support Unit (VSU) and/or to Case Managers at partner social agencies who can assist in making connections to community/social services (such as counselling, housing, shelters, legal services, food banks, etc) for both victims and offenders; and
- c. **divert offenders** to external agencies to identify alternative means of making reparation to the community and be culturally responsive to the needs of both victims and offenders.

The new investigative changes would be initiated with investigative case files relating to General Assignment (GAS) where appropriate, and be expanded to other investigative units such as Homicides, Guns and Gangs, Drugs, Collision Investigations, etc.

In order to support the referral process, OPS would need to work closely with a variety of community/social services agencies who would have the expertise in referrals required to support victims. As these community/social service agencies may have limited capacity to receive a large volume of referrals, it is anticipated that OPS would enter into MOUs to support staffing models at these agencies. Legal assistance in navigating potential privacy issues involved with sharing information with partner agencies and in developing MOUs will be required.

As well, it is anticipated that this would require changes in policies, procedures and practices, the implementation of specialized training and potentially investment in risk assessment/case management tools/software.

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### 3 Strategic Alignment

These proposed changes to adapt our investigative model to be more victim-centric and trauma-informed, enhancing investigative quality, identifying opportunities for diversion and referral to community/social service supports all align very closely with OPS's commitment to demonstrating Duty of Care, contributing to Community Safety and Well-Being, and Building Public Trust.

In addition, providing services in the most effective and efficient manner possible will also help OPS to achieve efficiencies required in the 2022 Budget year. Both referral and diversion of cases reduces investigative and court time requirements, which will in turn assist in achieving efficiencies.

The development of an Investigative Change Strategy that is co-produced with partners has very strong alignment with various OPS priorities:

OPS Priorities	Alignment
Community Safety and Well-Being	The Investigative Change Strategy would include effective mechanisms for service demand referrals to services in order to ensure community members receive appropriate and timely services by the best-suited agency, which is aligned with the OPS's commitment to improving Community Safety and Well-Being.
Public Trust	The increased focus on referral and diversion, is consistent with the feedback from community consultations in which many indicated they would like more emphasis on prevention and proactive policing as well as referral to social service subject matter experts, and avoidance of criminal justice system for minor crimes. Thus, by implementing these changes, there may be a positive impact on public trust.
Duty of Care	Providing appropriate referrals and diversion will produce better outcomes for all involved, which is consistent with OPS's commitment to demonstrating Duty of Care to the community we serve
Co-Production	The Investigative Change Strategy would be co-developed with key partners, consistent with the OPS's commitment to co-production.

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Efficiencies and Improved System Integration	Reducing workload for CID and Patrol officers will help the OPS to reduce costs and find efficiencies, while the increased partnership with external community agencies in referrals and diversion will enhance overall system integration, effectiveness and efficiency.
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### 4 Options or Solutions Analysis

The options for investigations are maintaining the status quo or implementing the proposed Investigative Change Strategy as outlined.

#### Option 1: Status Quo

Pros	Cons
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>More straightforward to continue using existing (but less effective) mechanisms for referrals to community/social services</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Shortcomings in investigations may not be identified and addressed, leading to increased risk to OPS and to victims</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No additional funding requirements</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Opportunities for diversion and referrals are not fully leveraged, which leads to less optimal outcomes for victims as well as offenders, including higher risk, increased trauma and recidivism</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Frustration due to insufficient investigative resources and backlogs for victims, offenders, Courts, and OPS members</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Less opportunity to intervene to prevent escalation, criminal behaviour, reduce recidivism and repeated contacts with individuals which are resource-intensive and costly to policing services</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Less collaboration, partnership and involvement of community subject matter experts, more siloed approach, leading to less overall system efficiency and effectiveness</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Does not contribute to building trust and confidence with community/social service partners or the public</li> </ul>

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### Option 2: Investigative Changes

Pros	Cons
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Quality review of investigative case files allow shortcomings in investigations to be identified and addressed, reducing risk to OPS and to victims</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• More complex to co-develop and create MOUs with community/social service agencies, which will require investment of time and effort</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Greater use of pre- and post-charge diversion and referrals, which leads to better outcomes for victims including lower risk, reduced trauma and recidivism</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Funding beyond 2022 for continuation of Investigative Changes established is uncertain</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Less frustration for victims, Offenders, Courts, and OPS members due to a reduction in backlogs</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• More opportunity to intervene to prevent escalation, criminal behaviour, reduce recidivism, repeated contacts with the same individuals which may reduce policing costs</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• More collaboration, partnership and involvement of community subject matter experts, less siloed approach, leading to better overall system efficiency and effectiveness</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Potential to build trust and confidence with community/social service partners and with the public</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•</li></ul>

### 5 Financial and/or Non Financial Benefits

Anticipated benefits for the Investigative Change Strategy are primarily non-financial. Once fully implemented, it is expected that there would be a variety of improved outcomes to OPS and to victims, including: reduced risk, reduced trauma and recidivism, increased skill and competence of OPS members, closer collaboration with partners in community/social services, and potentially improvements in trust and confidence in OPS. While these improved outcomes would be significant, they would be primarily qualitative/non-financial as they would be challenging to translate into financial benefits.

However, a more effective and streamlined method of triaging and conducting risk assessment on files will reduce workload and court time for Patrol and CID. As well, a reduction in recidivism and repeated contacts with the same individuals may ultimately lead to a reduction in policing costs for OPS. These savings may be partially offset by any additional OPS positions.



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### 6 Risk Analysis

Option 1:

No.	Risk Description	Probability (H/M/L)	Impact (H/M/L)	Planned Mitigation	Responsibility
1	Investigative issues not detected and addressed – increased risk to OPS	M	H	Continued participation in case reviews and internal risk reviews/audits to continuously improve and reduce risk	Investigations Directorate
2	Poorer outcomes for victims – leading to further erosion in trust in OPS and increased crime, trauma	H	H	Continued participation in case reviews and internal risk reviews/audits to continuously improve and reduce risk	Investigations Directorate
3	Opportunities for early intervention and/or diversion are not leveraged, thus leading to increased risk, trauma, recidivism	H	H	Implementation of continuous improvement activities to increase the usage of referral and diversion options	Investigations Directorate

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Option 2:

No.	Risk Description	Probability (H/M/L)	Impact (H/M/L)	Planned Mitigation	Responsibility
1	Potential for challenges in working with community/social service partners, co-developing and implementing model	M	H	Effective communication and relationship building with partners, development of MOUs, privacy agreements, documentation of processes, standards and agreement re. key evaluation and performance indicators/tracking mechanism to assess progress, identify areas for improvement	Investigations Directorate
2	Potential for lack of “buy-in” from officers to identify opportunities for referrals and/or diversion	M	H	Implementation of change management and training as well as improved/streamlined processes to facilitate referrals and diversion	Investigations Directorate

## 7 Recommendation

### 7.1 Recommendation

The recommendation is to proceed with the Investigative Change Strategy outlined and implement Risk Assessor and/or Diversion and Referral Specialist positions in order to reduce trauma and risk to victims and to help prevent further escalation of high-risk situations and avert further risk/criminal offences.

### 7.2 Deciding Factors

There are a combination of deciding factors that support this recommendation. It is anticipated that there will be benefits to OPS, the Criminal Justice System, victims and offenders, including: reduced risk, reduced trauma and recidivism, reduced workload and court time for Patrol and CID, closer collaboration with partners in community/social services, and potentially improvements in trust and confidence in OPS.

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### **8 Implementation Plan**

Given that the Investigative Change Strategy will require significant co-development and co-production work with external partners, specifics of the implementation plan cannot be outlined at this stage. However, broadly, it is anticipated that the work would be divided into the following phases and activities:

#### Phase 1: Consultation & Current State Review (by end of Q1 2022)

- Scan – best practices/other police services, existing internal organizational capacity and resources, existing policies, processes, practices, and tools
- Internal Consultation – Patrol, CID, members currently performing risk assessment/case management, Legal, IT
- External Consultation – key community and social service partners (referrals) and Crowns (diversion)

#### Phase 2: Development and Implementation of Investigative Change Strategy (Q2-Q3 2022)

- Implementation of Pilot Diversion Program (pending approval of Executive)
- Identification of appropriate structure, roles, resources
- Implementation of structure/staffing changes, policy, process and practice changes, training, tools and change management
- Development and implementation of MOUs with partners
- Co-development of implementation plan with partners,
- Co-development of evaluation plan with partners

#### Phase 3: Evaluation (Q4 2022 & beyond)

- Review of tracking and monitoring of metrics/performance indicators
- Interviews/surveys/focus groups with OPS members (Patrol, CID, risk assessment/case management), Crowns, external partners

### **9 Performance Measurement**

An evaluation plan should be co-created with community/social service partners to measure collective impact, recognizing that many outcomes will take more than one year to be realized. A variety of potential performance measures may be considered, such as:

- Number of referrals to partner agencies
- Number of cases diverted – pre-charge/Crown post-charge
- Number of hours of Court time
- Recidivism of high contact individuals
- Feedback from victims re. experience with OPS (satisfaction, trust, outcomes)
- Feedback from partner agencies re. partnership with OPS (satisfaction, trust, efficacy)
- Feedback from OPS members (investigators, Patrol, Risk Assessors, Case Managers)

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### 10 Documentation

- Adult Diversion Review
- Domestic Violence Advocate Case Reviews conducted from 2017-2019
- Budget Consultation Report

### 11 Acceptance Sign-off

[Instruction: The business case should be signed and dated by the approving person(s), indicating whether or not the business case is approved. If applicable, approval conditions should be identified. If the business case is not approved, reasons for the decision should be documented.]

#### Business Case Author:

**Prepared By:** Jennifer Ghadiali, Evaluation and Research Specialist **Date:** January 17, 2022

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Approved By:** Jamie Dunlop, Superintendent **Date:** January 17, 2022

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Approved By:** Steven Bell, Deputy Chief **Date:** January 17, 2022

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_