



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

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# **BUSINESS CASE**

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## **Member Wellness—Turnout Rate**

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## BUSINESS CASE

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**BUSINESS CASE TITLE:** Turnout Rate (TR)

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## 1 Executive Summary

As part of the 2022 Budget, the Ottawa Police Services Board (OPSB) approved a \$0.5 million investment in a proposed Turnout Rate initiative. At that time, it was requested that additional details be provided to the Board by way of a business case. This business case provides additional context and detail requested by the Board at that time.

Since 2016, police services in Ontario have been faced with rising rates of member absenteeism and accommodation. Members are increasingly reporting work-related injury and illness and are requiring time away from work or requesting modified work as a result. OPS has faced a similar situation during this time and has seen the rates of injury and illness and the severity of this injury and illness increase over time. The financial and operational impacts of this are immense and grow each year despite best efforts of the organization. In light of this, and based upon recommendations emanating from the Rubin Tomlinson Report, the Sexual Violence and Harassment Report (OPS), and the Office of the Chief Corners report titled “Staying Visible, Staying Connected for Life,” the OPS is proposing the Turnout Rate initiative.

The Turnout Rate initiative involves a \$0.4 million investment to hire a team of experts with the explicit purpose of supporting OPS members dealing with health and wellness issues while assisting with early and safe return to work planning. This initiative demonstrates the Service’s commitment to its strategic priorities of duty of care and the well-being of its members and will help to mitigate financial and operational impact.

More specifically, the Turnout Rate initiative includes creation and hiring of three net new positions. These positions are a psychologist (\$150,000), a return-to-work specialist (\$125,000), and a wellness analyst (\$125,000).

A number of significant efforts have been made to address member health and wellness challenges in recent years, however, this is the most significant one in terms of assisting members with return to work. Addition of these three positions will allow the organization to enhance the return-to-work process while providing additional supports to members who remain at work but who require health and wellness support. An early and safe return to work plan will realize cost savings (administrative, WSIB), increase available resourcing and turnout rate, and improve resiliency and morale of members.

## 2 Business Need

There are a number of reasons for which this investment and initiative are required. These are as follows:

### Working Conditions

There are three factors unique to policing that increase likelihood and severity of mental health challenges for members relative to those working in other professions. These are: adherence to shift schedules (impacting sleep, diet, activity), environment (fast

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paced, stressful, unpredictable, visibility, personal risk, and physical strain), and regular exposure to traumatic events; police officers are repeatedly exposed to a number of occupational stressors and traumatic events in their role of maintaining public safety that are known to negatively impact mental health and well-being. In fact, Ontario's Solicitor General, Sylvia Jones, has acknowledged that police personnel are among the professionals who are most likely to be exposed to occupational stress situations while protecting our communities.<sup>1</sup>

The most recent OPS Member Engagement Survey (2020) indicated that many OPS members are impacted by these factors, with many noting that they feel disengaged, burnt out, and frustrated. Members who report poor engagement are often close to being impacted by, if not directly impacted by, workplace-driven injury and illness.

Unfortunately, the aforementioned conditions can result in complex forms of injury and illness, requiring and resulting in extended absences from work. While efforts to date have been effective in assisting OPS members with health and well-being, further focused efforts are required to return members to work as soon as possible in a meaningful way.

### Legislative Limitations

The member mental health and wellness challenge is not unique to the OPS, has been noted as a significant challenge by other Ontario police services, and has only worsened since 2016 when presumptive legislation regarding post-traumatic stress disorder in first responders was enacted. It is since this time that psychological injury and illness claims began increasing. These claims present unique challenges as they often result in long-term absences and, when medically cleared for return to work, will often include prescribed accommodations requirements such as no use of force and no active policing duties. These restrictions make accommodation within a police environment extremely difficult, affect productivity, and contribute to self-stigma for the member. In the absence of additional capacity and a return-to-work program, these legislative limitations will continue to prohibit efforts of the organization to return OPS members on medical leave to meaningful work.

### Growing Severity and Operational Impact

Though injury and illness frequency has declined year over year from 2018 to 2019, and again, from 2019 to 2020, injury and illness severity has increased resulting in total time loss equivalent to 82.9 full time members in 2020. This represents a year over year increase from 2018 and 2019 and is a significant drain on the organization.

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<sup>1</sup> Ontario Solicitor General. 2021. "Ontario Expanding Mental Health Supports for the OPP," News Release, April 6, 2021, <https://news.ontario.ca/en/release/61004/ontario-expanding-mental-health-supports-for-the-opp>.

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Operational impacts of this increase in injury and illness severity include lost FTE equivalents, as noted, which create staffing challenges. While some positions remain unfilled when members are on leave, others are filled temporarily. This creates flux throughout the organization as individuals are often moving from position to position to fill short to medium term leaves. The organization is also put in the unfortunate position of leaving some important, yet less operationally critical positions, vacant until those on leave return to work. This can negatively impact the organizations ability to meet its legislative requirements to uphold public safety and security.

Statistic	2018	2019	2020	Interpretation
Frequency (%)	10.76	10.33	6.72	In 2020, approximately 7% of OPS members reported an injury or illness that resulted in the need for medical care and/or time away from work. Frequency decreased by approximately 35% in 2020 compared to 2019.
Severity (Hours)	804	1,261	1,707	If an OPS member missed work due to an injury or illness in 2020, the average amount of time away from work was 1,707 hours per injury or illness. Severity was 35% higher in 2020 compared to 2019.
FTEs Lost	41.3	69.1	82.9	When all 2020 lost time for all members is added together, the equivalent of 82.9 full-time employees was off work for the entire year due to injury or illness. Full Time Equivalents (FTEs) lost was 20% higher in 2020 compared to 2019, and double that noted in 2018.

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Direct Financial Costs	\$6.9M	\$9.1M	\$11.0M	Direct financial costs have increased year over year, increasing approximately 32% between 2018 and 2019, and approximately 20% in 2020 relative to 2019.
Indirect Cost Range	\$6.9M to \$34.5M	\$9.1M to \$45.5M	\$11.0M to \$55.0M	Indirect cost ranges have increased year over year, increasing approximately 32% between 2018 and 2019, and approximately 20% in 2020 relative to 2019 on the low end.

### Direct Financial Costs

Direct costs are incurred as the result of workplace injuries and illnesses. Direct costs include things such as: wages, healthcare costs, pensions, survivor benefits, noneconomic loss costs; and administrative fees. While the direct costs vary year-to-year due to variance and healthcare costs, these are largely comprised of factors that the OPS does not have direct control over, including legislative and contractual obligations.

Direct costs for 2020 were \$10,967,465, representing a 20% increase from 2019. A significant portion of increased direct costs were attributable to the OPS' injury/illness severity rate being 35% higher in 2020 compared to 2019. Increased severity resulted in higher costs associated with wages and increased medical costs and WSIB imposed administrative fees.

While the OPS budget does consider these direct costs, management of injury and illness severity in order to reduce such costs would allow for reinvestment of these dollars elsewhere (internal or external).

### Indirect Costs

Workplace injuries and illnesses can, and continue to, cause many indirect costs, including: decreased worker productivity; loss of operational efficiency; decreased worker morale; diminished service performance; increased administrative effort spent on early and safe return to work efforts. It is difficult to quantitatively evaluate these indirect costs, however, conventional estimates suggest that the ratio of indirect costs to direct costs may range from 1:1 up to 5:1. That means that for every \$1 spent on payment of direct costs, it would be reasonable to estimate that between \$1 and \$5 is

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lost due to the types of indirect costs. This ratio suggests that indirect costs from 2020 were between \$10,967,465 and \$54,837,325.

### Member Health and Well-Being

At an individual member level, those suffering with work-acquired mental health and wellness injuries and illnesses must also manage a number of personal issues. Individuals often struggle with social interactions and relationships and end up feeling isolated. Depending on the circumstance, members may also face unanticipated financial hardships, limited opportunity for career growth, stress and sleep management issues, and challenges in remaining productive and capable of contributing to the workplace when they do return.

### Review Recommendations

In 2020 and 2021, the OPS engaged in both an internally-led Sexual Violence and Harassment review (SV&H) and an externally-led review (Rubin Thomlinson, recommendation #6). In both instances, recommendations were made for the OPS to onboard and provide access to an in-house psychologist to members. In doing so, the organization will ensure that members have ready access to a psychologist when they require it, and that the psychologist will have in-depth knowledge and awareness of the law enforcement environment and the unique challenges that it presents.

For those reasons noted, the challenge of supporting members while ensuring adequate staffing levels to provide the service our community needs and deserves is an important but difficult one to address. Our commitment to building our capacity to support our members so they can remain at work, or mitigate time away from work, is demonstrated through the submittal of this business case.

## 3 Strategic Alignment

This initiative has a number of strategic linkages. These include but are not limited to:

- a. Alignment with two of the organization's strategic objectives of duty of care and public trust. In proceeding with the investments outlined in this business case, the service is demonstrating to the community and one another that we truly care for each other, while ensuring that our thinking, actions and systems will improve member trust and public trust.
- b. Contributing to the delivery upon the strategic direction of *"Delivering neighborhood policing through trust-based community partnerships that co-produces improved community safety and wellbeing. Building a police service that allows every community member and every Service member to feel and be properly supported and respected."*

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- c. Advancement of the “Supporting Our Members” pillar of the strategic direction provided by the Board.

### 4 Options or Solutions Analysis

There are two options being compared in this business case: status quo and proceeding with the Turnout Rate initiative. Positive and negative outcomes (i.e. pro’s and con’s) for each option are laid out below, though it is important to note that, for those reasons noted in this business case, that status quo is not an option being explored by the OPS.

#### Option 1: Continuation of status quo

Pros	Cons
Short term personnel cost savings	Poor understanding and limited use of existing injury and illness data as part of a return-to-work strategy
	Member absences and accommodations continuing longer than may be necessary (cost, resourcing, productivity, morale, and safety implications)
	Continued growth in the number and severity of instances of member psychological injury and illness, resulting in significant direct and indirect costs to the organization
	Misalignment with OPS Strategy and OPSB strategic direction
	Negative recruitment and retention implications

#### Option 2: Proceeding with the Turnout Rate initiative (psychologist, analyst, return-to-work specialist and program)

Pros	Cons
Improved understanding and use of existing injury and illness data	Initial and ongoing cost implications when not factoring in cost savings and cost avoidance



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Reduction in the number and duration of member absences and periods of accommodation resulting in staffing and productivity alleviation	Process and policy development / change requirements
Reduction in the number and duration of member absences and periods of accommodation resulting cost avoidance and cost savings (direct and indirect, including WSIB)	
Immediate, timely, convenient accessibility to assistance for members	
Increasingly resilient workforce; improved member morale	
Alignment with OPS Strategy and OPSB strategic direction	
Alignment with recommendations emanating from the SVH report and the Rubin Thomlinson report	
Positive recruitment and retention implications	

### 5 Financial and/or Non-Financial Benefits

The financial, operational, social and psychological costs of having members off work can be mitigated through access to adequate supports and return-to-work programs, which include the provision of and timely return to suitable, safe, accommodated work. It is anticipated that such an enhanced return-to-work program driven by the net new personnel would include: expanded use of reintegration tools, training, identification of suitable work, and increased use and communication with support providers. The benefits of accommodating an employee far exceed the cost of them remaining off work.

It is anticipated that, alongside existing health and wellness initiatives, that the OPS return-to-work program, and associated creation of three net new positions, will: 1) increase the number of employees returning to safe, suitable and sustainable work through active return-to-work initiatives; 2) reduce the length of time employees are off work; 3) reduce direct and indirect costs for the OPS, allowing for reinvestment elsewhere; 4) address some current resourcing shortfalls; and 5) create a more resilient

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workforce. An effective, enhanced and supportive return-to-work program will also provide improved employee engagement and associations-employer relationships.

Additionally, enhancing the resilience and well-being of OPS members is likely to improve their physical and mental health and their job performance, which in turn increases public safety and community support, and reduces the likelihood of them requiring leave for injury and illness reasons in the future.<sup>2</sup>

### 6 Risk Analysis

#### Option 1: Status Quo

No.	Risk Description	Probability (H/M/L)	Impact (H/M/L)	Planned Mitigation	Responsibility
1	Reputational risk, lost community and member trust	M	M	Continuation of existing health and wellness measures	Health, Safety and Wellness
2	Diminishment of member morale	M	M	Continuation of existing health and wellness measures	Health, Safety and Wellness
3	Declining member health and well-being (injury, illness, permanent disability)	H	H	Continuation of existing health and wellness measures	Health, Safety and Wellness
4	Resourcing implications and challenges (and community and member safety implications)	M	H	Transfers; accommodations; position vacancies by significance to core services	Labour Relations; Staffing and Career Management
5	Reduced productivity	M	M	Transfers; accommodations; position vacancies by significance to core services	Labour Relations; Staffing and Career Management

<sup>2</sup> Baker et al. 2020.

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No.	Risk Description	Probability (H/M/L)	Impact (H/M/L)	Planned Mitigation	Responsibility
6	Continued high and / or growing instances of sick leave, accommodations, and associated financial costs	H	H	Transfers; accommodations; position vacancies by significance to core services; increase budget for WSIB and related costs	Labour Relations; Staffing and Career Management; Finance

**Option 2:** Turnout Rate initiative (psychologist, analyst, return-to-work specialist and program)

No.	Risk Description	Probability (H/M/L)	Impact (H/M/L)	Planned Mitigation	Responsibility
1	Availability of appropriate individuals to fill positions	M	H	Outreach and recruitment	Human Resources
2	Change management / acceptance of initiative by members	M	H	Project and change management activities; awareness and communication	EPMO; Health, Safety and Wellness
3	Legislative / human rights concerns	L	L	Initiative review by Legal Services; case review by Labour Relations	Legal Services; Labour Relations
4	Absence of supporting governance / framework	L	M	Project scoping and change management activities	EPMO; Health, Safety and Wellness
5	Willingness of leaders to absorb accommodated members	H	M	Training and outreach; consultation	Health, Safety and Wellness

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### 7 Benchmarks

#### Reintegration Program

Canadian Institute for Public Safety Research and Treatment (CIPSRT) references the benefits of a Reintegration Program modeled after the Edmonton Police Service (EPS) program. Ottawa Police hosted EPS to provide this training to 19 of our members along with police personnel from across Canada. The Reintegration program not only emphasizes the 'Duty of Care' and the importance of staying connected with our members, but also has demonstrated quantitative results.

CIPSRT has identified the following benefits from the EPS Reintegration program:

- To date, based on known diagnosis; less than five percent of the 170 EPS members who have accessed the short-term stream of the EPS Reintegration Program has received a diagnosis of PTSD. This is significantly below the national average of 20- 25% for police officers with a PTSD diagnosis (depending on the study).
- EPS's Evidence-Based Policing Unit conducted an internal analysis of WCB data on lost workdays in the EPS. It found a **70 percent reduction in lost days after the implementation of the Reintegration Program in its current iteration**. Based on WCB statistics in 2018, AHS Northern Alberta cohort showed a 50 percent reduction.

The addition of the three (3) positions to the HSW unit will not only aid in supporting the Reintegration program but will also support the need for enhancing early and safe return to work for our members.

#### Psychologist

Inquiry amongst Ontario police services resulted in responses from York, Niagara and London all confirming they currently have embedded psychologists with their Service. OPP recently posted they are hiring an additional 9 psychologists. We also know that many other services, who didn't respond to the inquiry have on-site psychologists including Toronto Police, Waterloo Regional Police and the RCMP.

### 8 Recommendation

#### 8.1 Recommendation

It is strongly recommended that the organization proceed with the Turnout Rate initiative. Based on internal and external research, standard practices, desires of the Board and OPS membership, it is believed that this is the next logical initiative to undertake as part of the organizations larger member health and wellness initiative and will address a number of the concerns noted earlier in this business case.

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### 8.2 Deciding Factors

Despite significant investment and effort dedicated to developing and building the member health and wellness program over a period of years, a number of key indicators continue to track in the wrong direction. Absenteeism and accommodations continue to rise, direct and indirect costs associated with workplace injury and illness continue to increase beyond budget, resourcing challenges persist, and member morale is declining. Though efforts to date have been beneficial to members and the organization, they are less successful in the absence of the three positions requested in this business case, and the turnout rate program as a whole. The decision to recommend proceeding with the Turnout Rate initiative was made as a result of:

- Alignment to several of the organizations strategic objectives;
- Alignment to the Boards strategic direction;
- Alignment to recommendations emanating from standard practice, the Rubin Tomlinson Report, the Sexual Violence and Harassment Report (OPS), and the Office of the Chief Corners report, and internal evaluations;
- The financial and operational struggles of the organization.

## 9 Implementation Plan

### Project governance structure / sponsorship:

This project will be sponsored by the Chief Administrative Officer, Blair Dunker, and owned by Superintendent Isobel Granger (Human Resources).

Known key project stakeholders directly involved in the initiative will include:

- A. Corporate Communications (communications and change management)
- B. Labour Relations
- C. The OPA and the SOA
- D. Human Resources (recruiting, hiring, onboarding)

### Project timelines and key milestones:

Project timelines and milestones are as follows:

Phase 1: Planning and Current State Review (Q1 and Q2 2022):

- Planning and enablement activities will commence including drafting job descriptions and hiring for the three net new positions
- Review of current state of turnout rate / return-to-work processes relative to standard practices, needs of members, needs of the organization, and so on
- Determination of performance measurement process and template

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### Phase 2: Preparation and Development (Q2 and Q3 2022)

- Design of the turnout rate / return-to-work process and program

### Phase 3: Implementation (Q3 2022):

- Implementation of the turnout rate / return-to-work process and program, including change management activities

### Phase 4: Evaluation (Q4 2022):

- Performance monitoring and reporting (internal and external)
- Interviews/surveys/focus groups with OPS members and external partners

### Estimated level of effort and budget:

Initial budget for this initiative is \$0.4M which provides for the salaries and benefits of a psychologist (\$150,000), a return-to-work specialist (\$125,000), and a wellness analyst (\$125,000). The initiative will require the hiring of the three aforementioned positions, which will remain in perpetuity (i.e. permanent, not temporary positions). Costs to employ these three individuals should be the only costs associated with this initiative in the immediate and longer term (i.e. sustainability costs).

In addition to those stakeholders noted earlier as key stakeholders, indirect effort and assistance will be required from the following areas of the OPS: Finance, IT (arrangement of member assets, updating of staff profile), and Strategy and Planning (ePMO governance and process assistance, change management, update of organization chart, project risk management).

### Change Management:

There will be no technology dependency associated with this project; existing systems and tools will be leveraged.

At a people level, there will be training required for new and existing Health and Safety members, and awareness for members of the organization who may have involvement with / benefit from the Turnout Rate initiative. This work should be targeted towards those who are currently considered to be absent from the workplace and those currently on accommodation (i.e. those involved in existing processes).

At a process level, work will need to be done to determine how this program interlinks with existing OPS member health and wellness programs (Ex: Early Intervention, Accommodation Strategy, Reintegration Program, Sworn and Civilian Staffing). Touchpoints should be identified and assessed, and objectives should be evaluated to ensure consistency.

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### 10 Performance Measurement

Success of the project and impact of change over time will be measured through some, or all of the qualitative and quantitative metrics noted below. It should be noted that improvement in these metrics may not occur immediately following completion of this initiative; challenges raised in this business case take time to develop and, similarly, time to resolve and targets should be managed in the first few years.

1. Decline in overtime hours and expenditures;
2. Decline in WSIB expenditures;
3. Reduction in absenteeism, increase in presenteeism (turn out rate);
4. Decline in number of members absent and / or on accommodation;
5. Reduction in injury severity rate;
6. Decline in average duration of leave.

### 11 Documentation

N/A

### 12 Acceptance Sign-off

#### Business Case Author:

**Prepared By:** Michael Anderson, Senior Risk Management Analyst

**Date:** January 10, 2022

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

**Approved By:** Superintendent Isobel Granger, Human Resources

**Date:** January 10, 2022

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

**Approved By:** Blair Dunker, Chief Administrative Officer

**Date:** January 10, 2022

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