

**Solicitor General**

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**By email**

October 2, 2020

Dear Head of Council:

The Ministry of the Solicitor General is committed to keeping communities across Ontario safe, supported and protected. I would like to take this opportunity to share some information with your municipality regarding the anti-racism initiatives of my ministry and the Anti-Racism Directorate (ARD), the regulatory work being done to bring the *Community Safety and Policing Act, 2019*, into force, new police oversight measures, police training as it relates to de-escalation, mental health and diverse communities, mental health and addictions initiatives and investments, Community Safety and Well-Being (CSWB) Planning and police-hospital transition protocol.

Anti-Racism

Our government has zero tolerance for hate, racism or discrimination in all its forms. We share a responsibility to speak out and act against racism and hate and build a stronger society. Our government is committed to addressing racism and building a stronger, more inclusive province for us all.

I am proud to be the minister responsible for Ontario's Anti-Racism Directorate (ARD), which leads strategic initiatives to advance anti-racism work across government with a plan that is grounded in evidence and research. Through the ARD, the government continues to invest in community-led research, public education and awareness initiatives. This includes investments to the Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA) Ontario to undertake research that seeks to identify key mental health issues impacting survivors of victims of homicide violence in Ontario.

*Community Safety and Policing Act, 2019*

Our government is also committed to addressing racism at a systemic level through the regulatory framework under the *Anti-Racism Act, 2017*, and through the work we are doing to bring the *Community Safety and Policing Act, 2019*, into force. As we work to develop regulations under the *Community Safety and Policing Act, 2019*, we will continue to engage racialized groups, including Black, South Asian, First Nation, Inuit and Métis organizations. We are committed to ensuring that Ontario's communities are well supported and protected by law enforcement and that all interactions between members of the public and police personnel are conducted without bias or discrimination, and in a manner that promotes public confidence and keeps our communities safe.

The *Community Safety and Policing Act, 2019*, which is part of the *Comprehensive Ontario Police Services Act, 2019*, provides policing and police oversight legislation. Once in force, the *Community Safety and Policing Act, 2019*, will address a number of recommendations made by Justice Michael H. Tulloch, including:

- Mandatory training for all police service board members, the Inspector General, inspectors, police officers and special constables on human rights, systemic racism as well as training that promotes the diverse, multiracial and multicultural character of Ontario society and the rights and cultures of First Nation, Inuit and Métis Peoples;
- The requirement for each municipality that maintains a municipal board to prepare and publish a diversity plan to ensure members of the board are representative of the diversity of the population of the municipality;
- Not releasing the names of officials and witnesses in SIU investigations;
- Ensuring information made available to the public about an SIU investigation helps them understand the decision made by the SIU director; and
- Ensuring the SIU continues to publish investigative reports on its website.

### New Measures for Police Oversight

#### *Inspector General of Policing*

The *Community Safety and Policing Act, 2019*, will establish an Inspector General (IG) of Policing who will be required to monitor and conduct inspections related to compliance with the Act and regulations. The IG will work with policing entities to ensure consistent application of policing across the province by measuring compliance with prescribed standards.

Key functions of the IG include:

- Consulting with, advising, monitoring and conducting inspections of police service boards, Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) detachment boards, First Nation OPP boards, OPP Advisory Council, chiefs of police, special constable employers, police services and other policing providers regarding compliance with the Act and regulations.
- Receiving and investigating, if warranted, public complaints about members of police service boards, OPP detachment boards, First Nation OPP boards and the OPP Advisory Council regarding misconduct and policing complaints regarding the provision of adequate and effective policing, failure to comply with the Act and regulations, and policies and procedures.
- Reporting inspection findings, issuing directions to remedy or prevent non-compliance with the Act and imposing measures if the direction is not complied with, or, reprimanding, suspending or removing a board member if board member misconduct is identified.
- Conducting analysis regarding compliance with the Act and regulations.
- Reporting on the activities of the IG annually, including inspections conducted, complaints dealt with, directions issued and measures imposed; and compliance with the Act and regulations.

The Act also gives the IG and its inspectors the right to access closed police service board meetings.

### *Law Enforcement Complaints Agency*

The *Community Safety and Policing Act, 2019* will continue the office of the Independent Police Review Director as the Law Enforcement Complaints Agency (LECA), headed by the Complaints Director.

The LECA will receive and screen complaints from the public about the conduct of police officers. In addition, the LECA will have the authority to initiate an investigation in the absence of a public complaint if, in the Complaints Director's opinion, it is in the public interest to do so.

The Complaints Director may also undertake reviews of issues of a systemic nature that have been the subject of public complaints or investigations, or that may contribute or otherwise be related to misconduct.

### *The Special Investigations Unit*

The *Special Investigations Unit Act, 2019*, (SIU Act), once in force, will set out a new legal framework for the SIU. The SIU Act will focus and clarify the mandate of the SIU to better ensure more timely, efficient, reasonable and transparent investigations. Key changes contained in the Act will focus the SIU's investigative resources where they are needed most – on criminal activity.

The Ministry of the Attorney General will continue to consult with law enforcement, community organizations and advocates to ensure their input is incorporated into the development of regulations under the SIU Act.

### Police Training

Training is developed and delivered in a manner that reinforces principles of fairness, equity and compliance with the Ontario *Human Rights Code* and *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*.

All Basic Constable Training (BCT) recruits undergo diversity-focused training designed to improve their ability to engage with the public and respond to victims of crime. This training focuses on improving recruits' understanding of the experiences of, and systemic barriers faced by, diverse communities, including racialized, Indigenous, First Nations and Metis, and Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and/or Questioning and Two-Spirited (LGBTQ2S) people.

Diversity and anti-racism training includes:

- Human rights framework for policing;
- Equity and inclusion;
- Harassment and discrimination;

- Defining police professional;
- Collection of Identifying Information in Certain Circumstances regulation;
- History of profiling in policing and the impact of racial profiling on the community;
- Profiling practices and the mindset behind it;
- Stereotyping;
- Bias free policing – racial profiling vs. criminal profiling;
- Hate crimes and bias incidents of a non-criminal nature; and
- Practical skills scenario that reinforces academic learning on hate crimes.

Training on Indigenous issues includes:

- Indigenous culture;
- Residential schools;
- Land claims and treaties;
- First Nations Policing;
- Cultural appropriation;
- Cultural practices; and
- Practical skills scenario that reinforces academic learning on Indigenous issues.

The Serving with Pride organization attends each intake to deliver a presentation to all recruits entitled “LGBTQ2S 101” which covers a number of issues related to the LGBTQ2S communities including historical events, current and appropriate terminology, gender expression, gender identity and other topics.

In addition to the standalone sessions, the above noted issues are interwoven and reinforced throughout the BCT program. For example, recruits are taught to respond to victims in a trauma-informed manner for all victims of crime acknowledging potentially vulnerable groups.

#### *De-escalation and Mental Health Crisis Response Training*

The Ontario Police College’s current de-escalation training emphasizes communication techniques such as establishing rapport, threat management and conflict resolution and mediation.

The training specifically addresses scenarios in which police interact with people in crisis with a goal of resolving conflicts in a manner that protects the safety of the public, the person in crisis and police officers. Officers must also undertake follow-up training every 12 months. Police services are also encouraged to have policies and procedures in place as set out in the “Use of Force” Guideline. This includes procedures for impact weapons, aerosol weapons, conducted energy weapons, firearms and use of force reporting.

Training on the BCT program is reviewed and updated to reflect the most current information after every BCT intake.

Once in force, the *Community Safety and Policing Act, 2019*, will require all police officers, special constables and board members to successfully complete training related to human rights, systemic racism and the rights and cultures of Indigenous Peoples. This training will also be required for the new Inspector General of Policing, its inspectors, the Complaints Director at LECA and LECA investigators. This is part of the government's commitment to ensure that all interactions are conducted without bias or discrimination, and in a manner that promotes public confidence and keeps communities safe.

### Mental Health and Addictions Initiatives and Investments

#### *Dedicated Funding for Mental Health and Addictions Programs*

Ontario's community mental health services include:

- assertive community treatment teams, case management, crisis intervention, early psychosis intervention, eating disorders programs, vocational programs, supportive housing and consumer/survivor initiatives, peer supports and other programs; and
- initiatives to keep people with serious mental health issues out of the criminal justice system which include, but are not limited to, court support and diversion, crisis intervention and safe beds.

In July 2018, Ontario announced its commitment to invest \$3.8 billion over 10 years, with the support of the Government of Canada, to develop and implement a comprehensive and connected mental health and addictions strategy. This includes \$174 million for mental health and addictions programs in 2019-20. As part of the \$174 million commitment of funds to support mental health and addictions in 2019-20, my ministry partnered with the Ministry of Health to announce \$18.3 million in new funding to support those affected by mental health and addictions challenges in the justice sector.

Specifically, in 2019-20, the Ministry of Health provided funding for an integrated set of mobile crisis services that assist in the de-escalation and stabilization of persons in crisis and their connection to community programming and supports to address their physical and mental well-being over the longer term, in order to prevent further crises. Five teams were implemented in 2019-20 with \$6.95 million of the \$174 million in new, annualized funding to develop and enhance mobile crisis services. Mobile crisis services partner police with community mental health organizations to respond to persons in mental health and addictions (MHA) crises and determine if the crisis:

- can be de-escalated and resolved at the scene;
- warrants further psychiatric attention at hospital emergency rooms; or
- requires short-term community stabilization and reintegration.

Part of the \$18.3 million in new funding also includes \$2.5 million for various programs run by the ministry, one of which includes de-escalation training.

### *Ministry of the Solicitor General Grant Programs*

Apart from the dedicated funding for mental health and addictions programs highlighted above, the ministry also offers a number of grant programs that are primarily available to police services, working in collaboration with municipal and community partners, to support local Community Safety and Well-Being (CSWB) initiatives, including mental health-related programs. For example, under the 2019-20 to 2021-22 Community Safety and Policing Grant local and provincial priorities funding streams, the ministry is providing funding to 27 police services/boards for projects involving an integrated response between police and a mental health worker to respond to situations of crisis (e.g., Mobile Crisis Response Teams).

### Community Safety and Well-Being Planning

The ministry developed the *Community Safety and Well-Being Planning Framework: A Shared Commitment in Ontario* booklet, which includes the CSWB Planning Framework and a toolkit of practical guidance documents to assist municipalities, First Nations and their community partners as they engage in the CSWB planning process. The Framework encourages communities to work with various partners across sectors to proactively identify and address local priority risks in the community before they escalate and result in situations of crisis (e.g., crime, victimization or suicide). This involves reducing the number of incidents that require enforcement by shifting to more proactive, preventative programs and strategies that improve the social determinants of health (e.g., education, housing, mental health).

In support of this work, effective January 1, 2019, the government mandated municipalities lead the development of CSWB plans which identify and address local priority risks to safety and well-being, working in partnership with police services/boards and various other sectors, including health/mental health, education, community/social services and children/youth services.

Complementary to the Framework, a Situation Table is one type of multi-sectoral risk intervention model that is being implemented across our province.

The ministry also offers the Risk-driven Tracking Database (RTD), which allows for the collection of risk-based data and helps to inform the CSWB planning process, free of charge to communities across Ontario that are engaged in multi-sectoral risk intervention models, such as Situation Tables. As of June 2020, 60 sites have been on-boarded to the RTD and any communities who are interested in being on-boarded to the RTD is encouraged to contact the ministry.

Police-Hospital Transition Protocol

Additionally, to improve front-line response to persons experiencing a mental health or addictions-related crisis, my ministry partnered with the Ministry of Health to support the Provincial Human Services and Justice Coordinating Committee and CMHA of Ontario to develop a framework for local police emergency room transition protocols for persons apprehended under the *Mental Health Act*.

On June 3, 2019, the Ministry of the Solicitor General and the Ministry of Health jointly endorsed the release of [Improving Police-Hospital Transitions: A Framework for Ontario](#), as well as the supporting toolkit, *Tools for Developing Police-Hospital Transition Protocols in Ontario*. The purpose of the framework and toolkit is to assist police services and hospitals with developing joint emergency department transition protocols, which are responsive to unique local needs, in order to ensure the seamless transfer of care for persons in a mental health or addictions crisis brought to a hospital by police officers.

I hope you find this information useful and I appreciate your municipality's support during this time of uncertainty.

Sincerely,



Sylvia Jones  
Solicitor General  
Minister Responsible for Anti-Racism

c: Chief Administrative Officers

Municipal Clerks