



**Minister's Office**  
**PO Box 2703, Whitehorse, Yukon Y1A 2C6**

March 25, 2022

Chief Superintendent Scott Sheppard  
Commanding Officer  
RCMP "M" Division  
4100 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
Whitehorse, Yukon Y1A 1H5

Dear Chief Superintendent Sheppard,

**Re: Yukon's Policing Priorities for 2022-23**

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I am writing to communicate Yukon's policing priorities for 2022-23. As in previous years, communication and collaboration between the Department of Justice, the Yukon Police Council and community partners provided the foundation for the policing priorities. The RCMP's efforts and contributions in working towards realizing the policing priorities over the last year are noted.

The Yukon Police Council spent the past year engaging with diverse community groups, stakeholders and the public through in-person discussions, presentations and community travel to both Faro and Ross River. Elements from those engagements, particularly the recurring themes from previous years, as well as feedback received by the Department of Justice, are incorporated into the 2022-23 policing priorities.

The policing priorities that follow build on those of previous years to allow the RCMP to effect substantial and long-term change in supporting First Nations, visible minorities, vulnerable populations and the LGBTQ2S+ populations. Of note, the priority to enhance restorative justice practices in the Yukon has been removed, but I will request that the statistics continue to be included within the quarterly and annual reports.

The year to come will include additional challenges as we work collaboratively to implement recommendations from Changing the Story to Upholding Dignity and Justice: Yukon's Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls and Two-spirit+ People Strategy, as well as contributing to the Sharing Common Ground implementation review.

## **1. Enhanced policing targeted at the opioid and hard drug crisis.**

To continue successes achieved in 2021, the RCMP must maintain efforts to collaborate with healthcare partners in the interest of increasing the safety of Yukon residents. In addition to supporting new and existing prevention and harm reduction programs, the RCMP is encouraged to continue the Community Policing pilot and to focus specifically on reaching children and youth. Primary objectives include:

- Recognizing that drugs and gang-related crimes contribute to a number of other criminal activities that concern Yukon citizens. Improving police response to these areas of concern demonstrates to the public that public safety issues are being addressed.
- Working to increase communication to the public through available channels, including social media, regarding policing efforts to address the opioid and hard drug crisis.
- Actively participating in the partner-led Yukon opioid strategy and the effective implementation of the outcomes of that strategy.
- Ensuring effective engagement with Yukon First Nations and other community leaders to identify and address their specific and unique needs relating to the consumption and sale of drugs and alcohol.

## **2. Increase public trust.**

Yukon RCMP must make additional efforts to provide consistent levels of service to victims of crime, no matter the severity of the crime, to ensure victims feel their concerns are heard.

Primary objectives include:

- Adopting system-wide and measurable strategies to improve relations with youth; Black, Indigenous, and People of Colour (BIPOC); vulnerable populations; and LGBTQ2S+ demographics.
- Building trust through meaningful and respectful interactions between the RCMP and the public. These interactions must include responding effectively to all crimes in all communities, regardless of their perceived severity, and conducting proactive outreach patrols in a manner that is seen and scheduled to meet the unique needs of Yukon communities.
- Receiving training in trauma-informed practices and utilizing these skills to approach policing with kindness and empathy.
- Working to identify personal biases and acknowledging the power and privilege inherent to their position. Ensuring each interaction with the public is compassionate, respectful and culturally sensitive.
- Building diversity within the RCMP to ensure that the territorial police service is more representative of the populations served. This includes recruitment not only of women, members of the LGBTQ2S+ community, and people who self-identify as BIPOC, but also a commitment to maintaining a workplace that is healthy and supportive to all members.

- Accessing mental wellness services as an essential component of self-care, including for those members who identify as BIPOC and/or LGBTQ2S+.
- Increasing public awareness of the Civilian Review and Complaints Commission process including how to file a complaint.
- Including in each quarterly report, a progress update on any specific activities “M” Division has undertaken or policies implemented pursuant to the RCMP’s Vision 150 initiatives, particularly relating to the themes of: addressing systemic racism; advancing reconciliation; and improving accountability, transparency and conduct.

### **3. Enhance prevention, investigation and enforcement activities related to violence against women, girls and the LGBTQ2S+ population.**

It is imperative that the RCMP continue to focus efforts to decrease violence against women, girls and members of the LGBTQ2S+ population. RCMP reporting has indicated ongoing support for victims and effective investigations. Primary objectives include:

- Implementing Yukon’s MMIWG2S+ People Strategy in a meaningful way, particularly as it relates to Section 2 - Community Safety & Justice subsections 2.1, 2.2, 2.5 and 2.6; and Section 4 - Community Action & Accountability, subsections 4.1, 4.2, 4.6 and 4.7.
- Committing to ongoing liaison and constructive collaboration with prosecutors and other partners to ensure the RCMP’s investigative approach aligns with the justice system requirements so that prosecutions are successful, transparent, timely, effective and conclusive.
- Developing internal policies so that experienced investigators with the Specialized Response Unit (SRU) have the responsibility to guide all sexualized assault files, not just those considered internally to be complex in nature. Members assigned to the SRU and designated investigators should work collaboratively with partner agencies to enhance the levels of support provided and to ensure victims are respected and supported.
- Developing and implementing specialized training for members assigned to the SRU and any members expected to investigate domestic violence and sexualized assaults that will also ensure evidence meets the standards of the Public Prosecution Service of Canada (PPSC), and ensuring compliance with this training schedule. The schedule and number of members trained by community will be reported in the quarterly reports as well as the number of cases that PPSC is unable to pursue due to lack of and/or improper gathering of evidence.
- Collaborating with First Nations and community agencies to support victims of sexualized assault and domestic violence by securing safe spaces within each community to interview victims.
- Improving capacity to investigate and improving the approach to investigating sexualized assaults including participation in the Sexualized Assault Response Team (SART).

- Coordinating services for child and youth victims during investigations of child abuse and where children/youth are victims of crime.
- Quarterly reports will include an updated list of all participating organizations on the Sexual Assault Investigation Review Committee, the number of files reviewed, subsequent recommendations and a description of any actions taken following file reviews.
- Participating fully, as a co-chair of the Sharing Common Ground Implementation Review Steering Committee, in the review of the 33 recommendations made in Sharing Common Ground: Review of Yukon's Police Force (2010).

#### **4. Engage with and support children and youth.**

There is a need to engage with young people in a positive, formative manner before they become justice involved. Children and youth in the Yukon must be exposed to consistent, positive policing experiences in order to develop meaningful and respectful relationships with law enforcement. Feedback on the Community Policing pilot project has been overwhelmingly positive. The continuation of this pilot and extending services to communities will allow for enhanced visibility of the RCMP throughout the Yukon and would provide real opportunity for youth to build positive relationships with law enforcement. Primary objectives include:

- Enhancing community policing initiatives, local engagement activities and youth-focused programming that aligns with each community's cultural needs. Particular focus should be made to engage with First Nations governments, First Nation youth councils, First Nation children and youth, and youth serving organizations.
- Building trust and relationships with children and youth by increasing positive interactions with this population, which could prevent or divert youth from involvement with drugs and crime.
- Partnering with interagency youth stakeholders to prevent, respond to and advance investigative capacity for instances of youth exploitation, youth sexualized assault and cyberbullying.

#### **5. Strengthen relationships with First Nations and First Nation governments and continue to implement First Nation policing activities.**

There is an ongoing need for training that contributes to the professional capacity and personal development of those assigned to work within the territory. These development opportunities must be offered consistently, and in a transparent manner, in order to demonstrate respect for cultural traditions and the historical values of each First Nation. Efforts towards recruitment made throughout the year have been noted and this must continue throughout the upcoming year. The primary objectives include:

- Actively engaging in and supporting First Nations-led safety initiatives including Community Safety/Security Officers and community safety planning.

- Proactively engaging with and supporting First Nations Community Justice workers and restorative justice initiatives.
- Participating in the development and implementation of local Letters of Expectation through the First Nations and Inuit Policing Program that align with the accountability provisions of the Community Tripartite Agreements.
- Ensuring Detachment Commanders and all members funded via the First Nations and Inuit Policing Program review the Community Tripartite Agreements (CTAs), and build collaborative relationships with First Nations partners in the development of Letters of Expectation for community policing services.
- Providing cultural orientations that tell the story of the local First Nations, as well as providing broad training related to both the historical and current experiences of Yukon's First Nations. The development of this training should be realized through proactive engagement and consultation with Yukon First Nations.
- Expanding on the progress achieved in 2021-22 by the Historical Case Unit towards solving historical homicides within the Yukon, in support of commitments made in the MMIWG2S+ strategy.
- Ensuring that members integrate within communities through positive personal interactions and respectful communication with children, youth, Elders and First Nations leaders.
- Collaborating with First Nations on any existing community safety initiatives or in the development of future initiatives to build effective relationships and trust within First Nations.
- Actively recruiting Yukon First Nations citizens to apply to the RCMP.

**6. Strengthen relationships with communities and partners and continue to implement community policing initiatives.**

Engagements throughout the year have pointed to a common theme: the need for the RCMP to work closely with all communities and partners. The groundwork for these relationships exists, but there is a need for more effective and consistent communication and collaboration to deliver services that are coordinated and relevant for the population. Primary objectives include:

- Actively engaging in and supporting community-led policing and safety initiatives, and establishing a positive presence within communities through ongoing participation in gatherings and events.
- Initiating and participating in interagency meetings in Whitehorse and elsewhere that include Emergency Management Services, Bylaw and Protective Services.
- Exploring options to reduce turnover of members in communities to support the development of trusting relationships and consistency of service. Rotations should be staggered to reduce negative impacts on communities and allow for more effective transition.

- Supporting the development of restorative justice programming by making pre-charge diversion referrals and by supporting post-charge referrals by the Crown, and providing the necessary support and follow-up.

The RCMP “M” Division has demonstrated its capacity to adapt to emerging challenges and a willingness to improve policing services to residents. The next year promises to be full of opportunities for the RCMP to continue to serve Yukoners as we move forward in building on the successes seen in 2021-22 and in addressing the challenges to come.

I thank you for your ongoing dedication to ensuring the safety and security of Yukoners.

Yours truly,



Tracy-Anne McPhee  
Minister of Justice and Attorney General