



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

March 5, 2021

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 2021-22**

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I am writing to communicate Yukon's policing priorities for 2021-22. 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 Yukon Police Council spent the past year engaging with diverse community groups, stakeholders and the public through the Community Perceptions of the RCMP in Yukon Survey. The key messages garnered from the survey are reflected in the following policing priorities as well as key recurring themes that the Yukon Police Council and the Department of Justice heard through interactions with stakeholders throughout the year and echoes those communicated in 2020-21.

How Yukon's RCMP represent a national symbol of law enforcement must be reflected in each and every interaction with Yukoners despite the challenges members face in carrying out their duties. The efforts and achievements of the RCMP in realising many components of 2020's policing priorities are noted.

In the upcoming year, the priorities build on those of previous years and challenges members to be mindful, respectful and compassionate in their interactions with Yukoners particularly with youth, visible minorities, Elders, the LGBTQ2S+ community and other vulnerable populations.

## **1. 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.

In addition, primary objectives to increase trust include the following.

- Adopting system-wide and measurable strategies to improve relations with youth; Black, Indigenous, Persons 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 to all crimes, regardless of their perceived severity, and conducting proactive outreach patrols in a manner that is meaningful and effective within Yukon communities.
- Members receiving training in trauma informed practices and utilize these skills to approach policing with kindness and empathy.
- Members working to identify their personal biases and to acknowledge the power and privilege inherent to their position to ensure each interaction with the public is compassionate, respectful and culturally sensitive/competent.
- Building diversity within the RCMP to ensure that the territorial police service is more representative of the populations served. This includes not only recruitment of Indigenous, women, members of the LGBTQ2S+ community, and members that self-identify as BIPOC, but also a commitment to maintaining a workplace that is healthy and supportive to all members. Members must be assisted to access mental wellness services as an essential component of self-care.

## **2. Build on previous successes through increased policing efforts targeted at the opioid and hard drug crisis, as well as responses to serious and organized crime.**

To continue successes achieved in 2020, the RCMP must maintain their efforts to collaborate with health care partners to increase the safety of Yukoners. Ongoing efforts must include prevention programs that focus on reaching children and youth. Targeted prevention programs funded by the Government of Yukon helped to decrease Yukon's youth crime rate by 30 per cent in 2019, as reported in Statistics Canada's 2019 report on crime rates.

The primary objectives to support this recommendation include the following.

- Continuing investigations, through the Historical Case Unit, that demonstrate progress towards solving historical homicides and missing person's cases within Yukon.
- Ensuring ongoing training is available to members to support effective and timely criminal investigations.
- Recognizing that drugs and gang related crimes contribute to a number of other criminal activities that concern Yukon citizens.

- Working to increase communications to the public through available channels such as social media.

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

There is a need to engage young people in a positive, formative manner, before they become justice involved. Children and youth in Yukon require exposure to consistent, positive policing experiences to develop meaningful and respectful relationships with law enforcement. Stakeholders have reported that the termination of the youth liaison role has had a negative impact on the youth population. Until this liaison is re-established and normalized, there will be missed opportunities within the youth demographic that have far-reaching effects, potentially increasing costs to Yukon in both the justice and health care systems.

Primary objectives to engage young people include the following.

- Building trusting relationships with children and youth, through consistent, proactive engagement in collaboration with community partners, to prevent, deter or divert youth involvement with drugs and organized crime.
- Partnering with inter-agency stakeholders to prevent, investigate, and respond to instances of youth exploitation, youth-sexualized assault and cyberbullying.
- Enhancing community-policing initiatives, local engagement activities and youth-focused programming that aligns with each community's cultural needs. This must include identifying a dedicated liaison program.

### **4. Strengthen relationships with First Nations, including Elders and youth.**

While the efforts towards engagement and reconciliation with First Nations have been ongoing, there remains a need for continued attention in order to foster relationships for the future.

Primary objectives to build on relationships with First Nations include the following.

- Participating in the development and implementation of local Letters of Expectation through the First Nations Policing Program that align with the accountability provisions of the Community Tripartite Agreements.
- Providing community-specific orientations as well as broad training related to the historical experiences of Yukon's First Nations through proactive engagement with local First Nations.
- Ensuring that members integrate with host communities through positive personal interactions and respectful communication with children, youth, Elders and community leaders.
- Collaborating with First Nations Community Safety Officers to build effective relationships and trust within host communities.

- Exploring options to keep members in communities for longer periods of time so there are improved opportunities to invest in trusting relationships that offer additional consistency to communities, upon agreement by both the member and community.

## **5. Collaborate with community and justice partners to maximize the use of Restorative Justice.**

As the Government of Yukon coordinates the territory's approach to offering restorative justice services, it is imperative that these services are available to those who are eligible.

Recommendations regarding the need for restorative justice practices are not new and the RCMP remain essential partners in the advancement of restorative justice initiatives within Yukon.

The primary objectives include the following.

- Actively engaging in and supporting community-led safety initiatives.
- Ensuring the implementation of pre and post-charge diversion processes in all communities and that appropriate matters are diverted with the necessary support and follow-up.
- Proactively engaging with First Nations Community Justice workers, Government of Yukon's restorative justice program and community programs to collaborate in community-led restorative justice initiatives.
- Working towards the Government of Yukon's commitment to increasing the use of restorative justice by five per cent.
- Providing of statistical data on restorative justice practices by community as well as a report on RCMP involvement in each process.

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

This final priority is arguably the most vital in the year to come and will require significant investments from the RCMP. Rates of sexualized assaults in Yukon are unacceptably high. It is imperative that the RCMP continue to focus efforts towards decreasing all violence against women, girls and members of the LGBTQ2S+ population as well as sexualized violence that affects all populations. Investigations must be timely, sensitive and effective to manage reporting requirements, to ensure all cases are pursued and victims are supported. In light of the termination of the Yukon Advocate Case Review, enhanced efforts to collaborate with women's advocacy groups regarding sexualized violence in Yukon must be made.

The primary objectives identified to realize this priority include the following.

- 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.

- Collaborating and liaising with prosecutors and other support agencies to ensure that the RCMP's investigative approach aligns with the justice system requirements so that prosecutions are successful, transparent, timely, effective and conclusive.
- Developing internal policies that includes a focused training schedule for the Specialized Response Unit (SRU).
- The SRU has the responsibility to guide all sexualized assault files, not simply those considered internally to be complex in nature. Designated investigators and the SRU must work collaboratively with all partner and stakeholder agencies to address sexualized violence and with First Nations and communities by securing safe spaces within each community to interview victims.
- As recommended in section 2.2 of the MMIWG2S+ Strategy, participating in a third party evaluation of the status of implementation of recommendations of the Sharing Common Ground – Yukon's Police Force Review (2010). The results must be made available to the public.

The exceptional work accomplished during the past year speaks to how capable and effective Yukon's RCMP are in delivering services in complex situations and throughout the pandemic. I am confident that the upcoming year will offer similar opportunities for Yukon's RCMP to excel in addressing the policing priorities for 2021-22.

I look forward to receiving updates throughout the year on the implementation of the policing priorities designed to protect the safety and well-being of Yukon's residents. Once again, I thank you for your commitment to law enforcement and your work with multiple stakeholders to realize the diverse priorities.

Yours truly,



Tracy-Anne McPhee  
Minister of Justice and Attorney General