



# Transforming Policing and Community Safety in British Columbia

SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON  
REFORMING THE POLICE ACT

REPORT, APRIL 2022  
THIRD SESSION, 42<sup>ND</sup> PARLIAMENT



April 28, 2022

To the Honourable  
Legislative Assembly of the  
Province of British Columbia

Honourable Members:

I have the honour to present herewith the Report of the Special Committee on Reforming the Police Act.

Respectfully submitted on behalf of the Committee,

Doug Routley, MLA  
Chair

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# Composition of the Committee

## Members

Doug Routley, MLA, **Chair**  
*Nanaimo-North Cowichan*

Dan Davies, MLA, **Deputy Chair**  
*Peace River North*

Garry Begg, MLA  
*Surrey-Guildford*

Rick Glumac, MLA  
*Port Moody-Coquitlam*

Trevor Halford, MLA  
*Surrey-White Rock*

Karin Kirkpatrick, MLA  
*West Vancouver-Capilano*

Grace Lore, MLA  
*Victoria-Beacon Hill*

Adam Olsen, MLA  
*Saanich North and the Islands*

Harwinder Sandhu, MLA  
*Vernon-Monashee*

Rachna Singh, MLA  
*Surrey-Green Timbers*

## Committee Staff

Karan Riarh, Committee Clerk

Katey Stickle, Committee Research Analyst

Natalie Beaton, Jenny Byford, and Jesse Gordon,  
Committee Researchers

Mary Newell, Administrative Coordinator

Emma Curtis, Committees Assistant

# Terms of Reference

On February 10, 2022, the Legislative Assembly agreed that a Special Committee on Reforming the Police Act be appointed to examine, inquire into, and make recommendations to the Legislative Assembly on the following:

1. Reforms related to independent oversight, transparency, governance, structure, service delivery, standards, funding, training and education, and any other considerations which may apply respecting the modernization and sustainability of policing under the *Police Act* (R.S.B.C. 1996, c. 367) and all related agreements.
2. The role of police with respect to complex social issues including mental health and wellness, addictions, and harm reduction; and in consideration of any appropriate changes to relevant sections of the *Mental Health Act* (R.S.B.C. 1996, c. 288).
3. The scope of systemic racism within British Columbia's police agencies, including the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, independent municipal police and designated policing units, and its impact on public safety and public trust in policing.
4. Whether there are measures necessary to ensure a modernized *Police Act* is consistent with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (2007), as required by section 3 of the *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act* (S.B.C. 2019, c. 44).

That the Special Committee undertake the above examinations as it deems appropriate with regard to relevant reports, studies, and examinations.

That any information or evidence previously under consideration by the Special Committees appointed by order of the House on July 8, 2020, December 9, 2020 and April 13, 2021 be referred to the Special Committee.

That the Special Committee have the powers of a Select Standing Committee and in addition be empowered to:

- a. appoint of its number one or more subcommittees and to refer to such subcommittees any of the matters referred to the Special Committee and to delegate to the subcommittees all or any of its powers except the power to report directly to the House;
- b. sit during a period in which the House is adjourned, during the recess after prorogation until the next following Session and during any sitting of the House;
- c. conduct consultations by any means the Special Committee considers appropriate;
- d. adjourn from place to place as may be convenient; and
- e. retain personnel as required to assist the Special Committee.

That the Special Committee report to the House by April 28, 2022; and that during a period of adjournment, the Special Committee deposit its reports with the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly, and upon resumption of the sittings of the House, or in the next following Session, as the case may be, the Chair present all reports to the House.

# Foreword

The Special Committee on Reforming the Police Act was appointed amidst increasingly widespread awareness of systemic racism in policing, demand for improved police accountability, and questions about the appropriateness of police responses to mental health, addictions, and other complex social issues. Over the last 15 months, it has become clear that transformative change is required to achieve a new vision of policing and community safety rooted in decolonization, anti-racism, community, and accountability.

We received a large volume of thoughtful, powerful, and emotional input that prompted difficult and meaningful conversations. We recognize the challenging work performed by police officers and the need to provide them with the tools, structure, and support to achieve the vision set out in our report. We extend our sincere gratitude to those who took the time to meet with us and to share their knowledge, experiences, and ideas.

Systemic racism, which consists of organizational culture, policies, procedures, and practices that create and maintain the power of certain racial groups over others or reinforce the disadvantage of certain racial groups, exists in policing in British Columbia. This was evident in the experiences shared with us and reflected in the recommendations we received. Throughout our consultation, we heard about a lack of trust between many individuals, communities, and the police, particularly Indigenous and racialized communities. To rebuild this trust, a significant shift in police culture is needed. Our recommendations aim to address systemic

racism and the colonial structure of policing in a progressive, forward-looking manner.

Further, all policing in BC should be responsive and accountable to our diverse communities. Police have been tasked with responding to issues for which they are not the appropriate service provider. This is due, in part, to a lack of alternatives and insufficient health, mental health, and social supports. Our report emphasizes the need for coordination and collaboration across police officers, health and mental health professionals, and community organizations to ensure the most appropriate first response for the individual concerned, followed by appropriate support.

This report outlines a vision for policing and community safety that includes major changes to provincial and regional policing, response to mental health and complex social issues, oversight and accountability, and police training and education. Significant investments will be needed in the short term to achieve these goals; over the long term, there will be savings in many sectors as well as social benefits as a result of increasing prevention services and ensuring appropriate first response.

Implementing our recommendations and achieving this vision for community safety and policing will take many years and successive parliaments. We encourage and call on all Members of the Legislative Assembly and government to work collaboratively to achieve this vision.

# Executive Summary

The Special Committee on Reforming the Police Act (the “Committee”) was appointed to undertake a broad inquiry on policing and public safety in BC, including reforms related to: oversight, transparency, governance, structure, service delivery, standards, funding, training and education; examining the role of police with respect to complex social issues; examining the scope of systemic racism within BC’s police agencies; and ensuring consistency of a modernized *Police Act* with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP). In undertaking its inquiry, the Committee took an iterative approach, and met with ministries, police oversight agencies, statutory officers, and a wide range of organizations and experts, and collected input through a public consultation and a survey on personal and frontline experiences. In total, 411 individuals and organizations made submissions and presentations to the Committee and 1,432 individuals responded to the survey.

The Committee makes 11 key recommendations that call for transformational change in policing and community safety. This report begins with a list of the Committee’s recommendations; these recommendations are interconnected and organized to show how they build upon each other, without indicating priority. The next part of the report provides a comprehensive summary, organized by theme, of the ideas and experiences shared with the Committee during its consultation. The Calls for Justice from the National Inquiry on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, the Calls to Action from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and recommendations from the Downtown Eastside

Women’s Centre report, *Red Women Rising*, are woven throughout this section of the report where they reflect and overlap with input received during the consultation. This is followed by a discussion section which captures Members’ deliberations and reflections on the input they received and makes connections across several themes and topics. The Committee’s recommendations are presented again at the end of the report; each recommendation is followed by a brief rationale and implementation considerations.

Committee Members recognized the importance and magnitude of the task before them and carefully considered all the input they received. A new vision for community safety and policing in BC requires transformational change. This vision begins with outlining key values, including decolonization, anti-racism, community, and accountability, in a new Community Safety and Policing Act to govern the provision of policing and public safety in BC. These guiding values inform all of the Committee’s recommendations and are reflected throughout this report. The Committee emphasizes that a new Act must be drafted in consultation with Indigenous communities and municipal governments.

The Committee heard about of a lack of consistency with respect to delivery of services, governance models, oversight and accountability, the complaints process, and police training. To address inconsistencies and improve local accountability, responsiveness, and decision-making, the Committee recommends transitioning to a new provincial police service, rather than contracting the RCMP. Members emphasize the need to adopt a

collaborative and open process that ensures engagement with municipalities, Indigenous communities, police and other partners. Committee Members agree that all communities should have police boards or committees that provide opportunities for local input on policing and community safety priorities. These boards or committees should be representative of the community and include municipal council representation, while not allowing the mayor to serve as board chair. To address fragmentation and ensure equitable access to police and public safety services, including highly technical or specialized services, the Committee recommends amalgamating police services on a regional basis.

In reflecting on the ideas and recommendations received during the consultation, as well as the experiences shared, Members confirm a need for equitable access to high quality police and public safety services across BC and recommend implementing standards, policies, and expectations for service to achieve this vision. In particular, standards are needed regarding response to mental health crises, conducting wellness checks, responding to and investigating sexual assault, and conducting trauma-informed interviews. Further, the Committee highlights that all policing must be responsive to and informed by the community. Committee Members were interested in tiered policing models in other jurisdictions which enable peace officers or community safety officers to perform certain functions that do not require the full training and capabilities of a police officer. The Committee recommends that such an approach be adopted in BC with clearly defined roles and responsibilities of different categories of policing and public safety personnel responding to non-violent incidents and other situations that may not require uniformed police. Members also support expanding the use of restorative justice programs through funding and education for police officers to increase referrals to these programs.

In meeting with Indigenous leaders, communities, and organizations, Committee Members heard that many Indigenous communities are both over-policed and under-served, and there are challenges in building community

relationships with police officers. Many communities expressed a desire for more police presence and to have police officers remain in the community longer, rather than having short postings, to build positive relationships. Recognizing the need for Indigenous self-determination the Committee recommends Indigenous communities have direct input into the structure and governance of police services, and supports the creation of more self-administered police services such as the Stl'atl'imx Tribal Police Service. Currently, the perspective exists that Indigenous communities are policed by external services. The Committee notes that a truly decolonized lens would see Indigenous police services as an option for neighbouring municipalities or regions.

Another priority for the Committee is ensuring a continuum of response, including an appropriate first response, to calls related to mental health, addictions and other complex social issues. Members propose the continuum include: community or civilian-led responses involving peer support workers, health, and social service professionals; co-response programs that pair police with these professionals; as well as increased prevention and follow up support. The Committee recommends that coordination and integration across police, health, mental health, and social services be increased to achieve this goal. A large percentage of police calls relate to these areas and Members agree that police should not be the primary or only first responders in these situations due in part to a lack of training, fear or mistrust of police, and stigma associated with a police response. Further, they noted that there are many systems that need to be made more robust to prevent the stigmatization of mental health and poverty. The Committee also recommends that mental health options be integrated within 911 to ensure the appropriate service is dispatched. Further, they recognize that a broad review of the *Mental Health Act* is urgently required and should be undertaken by an all-party parliamentary committee.

With respect to jurisdictional responsibility for funding police services, Members reflected on input from municipalities about difficulties associated with current population-based cost sharing agreements. They



recommend a fair and equitable funding model for municipalities that incorporates considerations such as local need, health and social support, and the geography of a service delivery area.

Police culture is at the core of the Committee's recommendations. To build public trust in police and public safety, education and training must be enhanced and standardized to shift police culture. Since police training is currently delivered by multiple agencies, the Committee recommends standardizing and increasing the level of training for police recruits to address inconsistencies and reflect key competencies including anti-racism, cultural competency, and trauma-informed practices through mandatory ongoing training. Further, Members agree that, in addition to core training and education that is consistent for all police officers, training should include the unique historical, cultural, and socioeconomic context of the area in which an officer is working. The Committee acknowledges that while there are many existing courses for police officers in these areas, completion of this training has not resulted in the desired shift in culture and conduct; therefore, Members recommend developing benchmarks to measure the efficacy of training and education. Another aspect of shifting police culture is recruiting and retaining individuals with a variety of backgrounds and skillsets to ensure that police services are representative of the community. The Committee recommends implementing screening and performance evaluations for promotion and advancement that reflect key values and principles such as humility, honesty, empathy, and lack of bias and prejudice. Members support regular psychological assessments for police officers throughout their careers rather than just at the recruitment stage.

Throughout the consultation, Members heard clear evidence of systemic racism in policing as well as the colonial structure of police services. To address these issues, Members recommend including anti-racism and decolonization as values in a new Community Safety and Policing Act, implementing mandatory and ongoing anti-racism and cultural competency training that is delivered in a meaningful way, and collecting and reporting

disaggregated race-based and other demographic data in consultation with the communities most affected. This type of data is necessary to understand existing challenges, measure change, and address systemic racism across police services. The Committee further recommends comprehensive reviews of police service policies and procedures to be conducted in partnership with the local community.

Police oversight in BC is a fragmented system. Different agencies with different mandates, authorities, and processes responsible for police oversight in BC has resulted in inefficiencies, gaps, and duplication. Further, there is a lack of trust of police due in part to a lack of transparency and accountability as well as a complaints process that is difficult to navigate. To address these issues, Members recommend establishing a single, independent, civilian-led oversight agency responsible for overseeing conduct, complaints, investigations, and disciplinary matters for all police and public safety personnel in BC. The agency should be reflective of the province's diverse population and provide a streamlined approach for complaints and services to assist complainants. To address immediate issues with the fragmented system, the Committee recommends prioritizing the creation of stand-alone legislation for police and public safety oversight.

Committee Members recognize the need for ongoing review and oversight with respect to policing and public safety and recommend the establishment of an all-party select standing committee to take on this task. This committee would oversee the implementation of the recommendations in this report; conduct regular reviews of the new Community Safety and Policing Act; examine standards, policies, and programs related to policing and public safety; receive and review regular updates from the Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General; and work with First Nations governments and key partners to address colonial structures and systemic racism in policing.

# List of Recommendations

The following is a list of the Committee's recommendations. A more fulsome explanation of the recommendations begins on page 77.

*The Committee recommends to the Legislative Assembly that the provincial government:*

- 1) Implement a new Community Safety and Policing Act to govern the provision of policing and public safety services based on values of decolonization, anti-racism, community, and accountability. This includes:
  - a) Ensuring Indigenous peoples and nations, and municipal governments, are engaged in the drafting of the legislation.
- 2) Transition to a new BC provincial police service that is governed by the new Community Safety and Policing Act. This includes:
  - a) Establishing a governance model, such as municipal or regional police boards or committees, that is representative of the community and provides opportunities for local input on policing and public safety priorities.
  - b) Ensuring municipal council representation on municipal police boards or committees, while not allowing the mayor to serve as board chair.
  - c) Amalgamating police services on a regional basis where there are opportunities to address fragmentation, ensure equitable access to policing and public safety, and improve efficiency and effectiveness.
  - d) Enabling two police of jurisdiction to facilitate the process of transitioning from one service to another.
- 3) Ensure all Indigenous communities have direct input into their police service structure and governance, including self-administered services which could provide policing to neighbouring non-Indigenous communities.
- 4) Create and appropriately fund a continuum of response to mental health, addictions and other complex social issues with a focus on prevention and community-led responses and ensuring appropriate first response. This includes:
  - a) Increasing coordination and integration across police, health, mental health, and social services.
  - b) Integrating mental health within 911 call options.
- 5) Ensure equitable access to high quality police and public safety services across BC. This includes:
  - a) Ensuring all policing is responsive to and informed by the community.

- b) Implementing and enforcing provincial standards, policies, and expectations for service with respect to responding to individuals experiencing a mental health crisis, conducting wellness checks, responding to sexual assault, and conducting trauma-informed interviews.
  - c) Adopting a dynamic and flexible approach to policing that provides for different categories of policing and public safety personnel who have clearly defined roles, responsibilities, and functions such as responding to non-violent incidents and other situations that may not require uniformed police.
  - d) Expanding the use of culturally appropriate restorative justice programs throughout BC, including increased funding for these programs and education for police officers.
- 6) Create a fair and equitable shared funding model for municipalities. This includes:
- a) Consideration of local needs, health and social supports, and the geography of a service delivery area.
  - b) Exploring options to phase in or incrementally increase the municipal share of policing costs.
- 7) Enhance and standardize initial and ongoing police education and training to reflect key values and competencies in order to shift police culture. This includes:
- a) Ensuring police and public safety services are representative of the diversity of the communities served (including diversity of race, ethnicity, gender, and sexuality) via recruitment.
  - b) Implementing screening and performance evaluation for existing officers and new recruits that reflects desired values and principles, including humility, honesty, empathy, and lack of bias and prejudice, to ensure that these individuals are best suited for their current position or for advancement and are a good fit for the community.
  - c) Conducting regular mandatory psychological assessments for all police officers in BC.
  - d) Enhancing and standardizing training required for police recruits and implementing mandatory and meaningful ongoing education with respect to anti-racism, cultural competency, and trauma-informed practices.
  - e) Requiring police officers to complete training and education that is based on the historical, cultural, and socio-economic context of the communities in which they will be serving and is developed and delivered in consultation with the communities.
  - f) Developing benchmarks to measure the efficacy of police training and education with respect to a shift in police culture and conduct.
- 8) Require police services to collect and publicly report disaggregated race-based and other demographic data and conduct comprehensive reviews of and amend policies and procedures to address systemic racism in policing.
- 9) Establish a single, independent, civilian-led oversight agency responsible for overseeing conduct, complaints, investigations, and disciplinary matters for all police and public safety personnel with powers or authority under the new Community Safety and Policing Act. This includes:
- a) Prioritizing the creation of stand-alone legislation for police oversight.
  - b) Ensuring the oversight agency is reflective of the diverse population and cultures of BC.
  - c) Providing navigation and triaging services to assist complainants throughout the complaints process.

- d) Implementing a multi-stream approach to processing complaints, expediting minor performance and procedural matters, and offering multiple resolution pathways such as direct conversations, mediation, or restorative justice.
- e) Revising the definition of misconduct to include demeaning and discriminatory conduct, language, jokes, statements, gestures, and related behaviours.
- f) Establishing a duty to cooperate with investigations and a duty to report misconduct for all police and public safety personnel with protections for reporting.

*The Committee recommends that the Legislative Assembly:*

- 10) Immediately appoint an all-party parliamentary committee to undertake a broad review of the *Mental Health Act* with a view to modernizing the Act and ensuring it aligns with the recommendations in this report.
- 11) Establish an all-party select standing committee on policing and community safety to:
  - a) Oversee the implementation of changes recommended in this report.
  - b) Conduct regular reviews of the new Community Safety and Policing Act.
  - c) Examine standards, policies, and programs related to the provision of policing and public safety in BC and report annually on this work.
  - d) Work with key partners to address colonial structures and systemic racism in policing.
  - e) Receive and review annual updates from the Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General regarding emergent issues in policing and community safety and the effectiveness of police services in BC.

# The Work of the Committee

The Special Committee on Reforming the Police Act was first appointed on July 8, 2020, to undertake a broad inquiry on policing and public safety in BC (see Appendix C). Following the provincial general election in October 2020, a new Committee was appointed to continue this work and submit a report, including any recommendations respecting the results of its review, to the Legislative Assembly by April 28, 2022. The Committee's terms of reference are available on page 5 of this report.

## Briefings

To begin their work, Committee Members received briefings from ministries, oversight agencies, and statutory officers regarding the policing landscape in BC, including the intersection of policing with complex social and mental health issues, systemic racism, and the *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act*. These briefings included presentations from Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions, Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation, Office of the Human Rights Commissioner, Union of BC Municipalities, Office of the Police Complaint Commissioner, Independent Investigations Office of BC, BC Coroners Service, RCMP Civilian Review and Complaints Commission, and Ministry of Attorney General. Briefings took place between January 29, 2021 and March 22, 2021.

## Public Consultation

Following the briefings, the Committee invited Indigenous communities and organizations as well as stakeholders and subject matter experts, including community organizations and police service organizations to make presentations. These presentations took place between February 23, 2021 and April 23, 2021.

The Committee launched an open public consultation on March 1, 2021, inviting British Columbians to provide their input by April 30, 2021. The Committee used a number of approaches to encourage participation in the consultation, including: a media release; advertisements in local and multicultural newspapers; online advertisements; social media; and direct outreach to Members of the Legislative Assembly, constituency offices, and community-based organizations. Following a review of this input, the Committee invited participants to make presentations between June 29, 2021, and July 29, 2021. These presentations were held virtually using the Zoom videoconferencing platform.

In total, 411 organizations and individuals made presentations and/or written submissions. A list of organizations and individuals who made presentations and/or written submissions is available in Appendix A.

Additionally, between July 6, 2021 and September 3, 2021, the Committee accepted input from individuals about their experiences and perspectives regarding policing and related systemic issues via a survey. Survey questions are available in Appendix B. In total, the Committee received 1,432 survey responses.

From October 15, 2021 to January 26, 2022, the Committee held follow up meetings with several stakeholders who previously appeared before the Committee as well as additional organizations and subject matter experts and a number of survey respondents who expressed interest in meeting with the Committee.

The Committee also held confidential meetings with several individuals and families regarding their experiences with police and policing. In preparation for these meetings, the Committee received training and education on trauma-informed approaches and interacting with vulnerable individuals.

The Committee carefully considered all input received during their deliberations.

## Meetings Schedule

### First Session, 42nd Parliament

January 5, 2021	Organization
January 19, 2021	Planning
January 26, 2021	Presentations; Deliberations
January 29, 2021	Briefings
February 8, 2021	Briefings
February 10, 2021	Briefings
February 11, 2021	Briefings
February 17, 2021	Planning
February 22, 2021	Briefings
February 23, 2021	Presentations
February 24, 2021	Presentations
February 25, 2021	Presentations
February 26, 2021	Presentations
March 5, 2021	Presentations; Deliberations
March 12, 2021	Presentations
March 19, 2021	Presentations
March 22, 2021	Briefings; Presentations
March 26, 2021	Presentations

March 29, 2021	Presentations
April 6, 2021	Presentations; Deliberations
April 7, 2021	Presentations
April 9, 2021	Presentations; Deliberations

### Second Session, 42nd Parliament

April 16, 2021	Organization; Presentations; Deliberations
April 23, 2021	Presentations
May 12, 2021	Deliberations
May 27, 2021	Deliberations
May 28, 2021	Deliberations
June 29, 2021	Presentations; Deliberations
July 19, 2021	Confidential
July 20, 2021	Presentations; Deliberations
July 22, 2021	Presentations; Deliberations
July 26, 2021	Presentations; Deliberations
July 26, 2021	Presentations; Deliberations
July 27, 2021	Presentations
July 27, 2021	Presentations; Deliberations
July 28, 2021	Presentations; Deliberations
July 29, 2021	Presentations; Deliberations
October 12, 2021	Planning
October 14, 2021	Confidential
October 15, 2021	Presentations
October 27, 2021	Deliberations
November 3, 2021	Presentations; Deliberations
November 9, 2021	Presentations
November 10, 2021	Presentations
November 12, 2021	Presentations; Deliberations
November 29, 2021	Presentations
November 30, 2021	Presentations; Deliberations
December 14, 2021	Presentations; Deliberations
January 24, 2022	Confidential

January 25, 2022 Confidential  
February 1, 2022 Deliberations

### Third Session, 42nd Parliament

February 11, 2022 Deliberations  
February 18, 2022 Deliberations  
February 22, 2022 Deliberations  
February 24, 2022 Deliberations  
March 1, 2022 Deliberations  
March 3, 2022 Deliberations  
March 8, 2022 Deliberations  
March 9, 2022 Deliberations  
March 10, 2022 Deliberations  
March 14, 2022 Deliberations  
March 18, 2022 Deliberations  
March 28, 2022 Presentations; Deliberations  
March 30, 2022 Deliberations  
April 4, 2022 Deliberations  
April 6, 2022 Deliberations  
April 11, 2022 Deliberations  
April 21, 2022 Deliberations; Adoption of Report

# Governance

## Governance Structure

Police governance is administered through several agreements. The Provincial Police Service Agreement establishes the RCMP as the provincial police service responsible for rural and unincorporated areas as well as municipalities under 5,000 persons. Once a municipality exceeds 5,000 persons, they become responsible to provide police services under the *Police Act*; the Municipal Police Service Agreement allows municipalities to continue to be policed by the RCMP, and Municipal Police Unit Agreements outline the responsibilities for the municipality for delivery of its policing services and the expectations of the RCMP in delivery of those services. If a municipality chooses not to use the RCMP for its policing, the *Police Act* allows them to use another municipal police service or create their own.

The Committee heard about several challenges related to governance structures, including that communities across the province can have unequal levels of involvement in police governance. Municipalities with independent police departments have local governance and accountability through municipal police boards; however, the same boards do not exist for municipalities served by the RCMP. The Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General reported that while the *Police Act* provides for these communities to have a local police committee, it is not utilized or mandated. The Hon. Wally Oppal further detailed that local committees do not have the same authority as police boards and described that while senior officers and detachment commanders engage communities, governance decisions are made in Ottawa.

The Committee also heard that the governance model can be unclear. The Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General identified that governance structures within the *Police Act* could be more effective, noting that a lack of clarity in the legislation can lead to inconsistency and uncertainty in identifying what services are provided by the police, who the appropriate service provider is, and who should pay for the service. The Union of BC Municipalities noted examples of inconsistency such as radio communication services being provided by the province through a provincial dispatch centre in some jurisdictions while in other areas the same service is deemed the responsibility of local governments. They also described instances where specialized teams that work across the same local government boundaries, such as the Integrated Gang Task Force and Integrated Homicide Investigation Team in the Lower Mainland, have significantly different governance and accountabilities when the provincial government is responsible for one team and local governments are responsible for the other. With respect to integrated teams, they stated that a lack of a governance structure hinders their ability to make key decisions around resourcing and membership. The Union of BC Municipalities expressed that clarity is needed to determine which order of government is responsible for each service, and that the governance structure must provide the ability for that government to make key operational decisions and provide oversight.

A lack of government access to policing data was also identified as an issue. The Union of BC Municipalities shared police often cannot provide data-driven responses to public and local government requests pertaining to the



allocation of resources. They noted that police agencies are often only able to provide anecdotal responses which do not meet the needs of governance bodies in making service and resource allocation decisions. The Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General stated that though the technology exists, business intelligence systems across police services are not aligned and that the RCMP and police boards require greater support to interpret and predict policing needs, manage budgets, and articulate service demand. The Ministry described that the lack of government access to province-wide police data has limited the ability to monitor service and public safety trends, and as a result, hindered timely policy adjustments. They recommended implementing an advisory committee to advise the Director of Police Services on accountability, business acumen, and intelligence, and providing strong forecasting and accountability through governance modelling.

The Committee heard about governance challenges with the RCMP contracted as the provincial police service and that this impacts their ability to respond to local needs and community priorities. The Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General reported that there are complex challenges in simultaneously meeting federal, provincial, and municipal policing priorities, despite the RCMP making every effort to meet and exceed evolving expectations. Maple Ridge City Councillor Gordy Robson explained that from a municipal perspective, the current practice of contracting city policing to a federal entity is unworkable and was of the view that a provincial police service responsible for all major crime and coordination of city police departments would allow for local service management. The Office of the Provincial Health Officer described that in their experience, the RCMP does not align with BC community culture and norms as effectively as municipal police services. They emphasized the importance of ensuring the *Police Act* focuses on public safety and allows for local norms and expectations to be reflected in service delivery. To address existing challenges, establishing a new provincial police service was a common suggestion. An individual opposed to creating a new provincial police service expressed

concerns about the cost to taxpayers and potential training quality.

## Designated Policing Units

Designated Policing Units (DPUs) such as Metro Vancouver Transit Police and Stl'atl'imx tribal police service, act in place of, or supplemental to, provincial and municipal police. Metro Vancouver Transit Police raised several issues for the Committee's attention relating to DPU governance and limitations compared to municipal police. Metro Vancouver Police identified that the chief officer of a DPU has supervision and command over designated constables, but not for department civilians, yet a chief constable of a municipal police department has this supervision authority under s.34(1) of the *Police Act*. They described how sections of the Act are highly prescriptive, rigid, and limit the ability of DPUs to introduce innovative changes and that the current governance structure has numerous limitations that undermine independence and accountability.

Specific to the Metro Vancouver Transit Police's governance, they noted that the Transit Police Board, TransLink Security Management Ltd. and TransLink all have some statutory responsibilities for Metro Vancouver Transit Police through the *Police Act* and the *South Coast British Columbia Transportation Authority Act*. As a further complexity, statutory responsibilities granted to both TransLink and the Mayors' Council under this Act place some control of budget and operations within the TransLink structure, rather than in the hands of the police board and the provincial government as per the municipal policing model. Metro Vancouver Transit Police proposed several recommendations to the Committee to align the accountabilities and board structure of DPUs to municipal structures, to amend specific processes to increase the authority of DPUs, and to provide equal provincial funding support and recruit cost sharing among all police agencies, including DPUs.

## Municipal Police Board Roles and Responsibilities

Several presentations and submissions discussed police board roles and alignment with provincial policy. Criminologist Yvon Dandurand highlighted that the *Police Act* should be clear about the roles of police boards in making operational policies and proposed that the provincial government develop policy frameworks to assist boards in reflecting local priorities, preferences, and circumstances in policies while meeting provincial standards. Dandurand added that uniform provincial metrics would better enable boards to measure police performance, as boards are currently limited to measures of workload, such as crime statistics and quantity of service calls. To establish consistency across regions and to prioritize harm reduction and health diversion, the Canadian Mental Health Association BC Division was of the view that provincial policing priorities should apply to all police services regardless of whether they are contracted or governed by a municipal police board. The BC Association of Municipal Chiefs of Police advised that there needs to be a mechanism for police boards to provide feedback on provincial policy changes noting the impacts to local department deployments, training, overtime loads, and local priorities. They emphasized that clarity and understanding of operational roles as well as efficient mechanisms for conflict resolution are necessities for police boards and local government to fulfil their respective mandates in a mutually supportive way.

Another theme was transparency and accountability. The Office of the Human Rights Commissioner noted that police boards have been criticized for a lack of transparency and recommended developing public reporting requirements. The Ending Violence Association of BC specifically discussed opportunities to expand the accountabilities of police boards and police committees to report out to the community they serve. Similarly, the Oak Bay Police Board suggested that legislation should clearly define the expectations for public access to police board information and board meetings.

Community Advisors of the Provincial Committee on Diversity and Policing and the City of Vancouver discussed a need for community involvement in policing governance. Noting the power imbalance between those with authority under the *Police Act* and those most affected by those powers, the City of Vancouver proposed that regular community feedback opportunities would better enable shared responsibility for community health and safety, while the Community Advisors of the Provincial Committee on Diversity and Policing encouraged prescriptive and measured community outreach requirements for boards. The City of North Vancouver stated that within existing governance mechanisms, there are limited opportunities for local governments to advance improvements that address systemic issues and added that local governments should be comprehensively involved in policy formation and response. Similarly, Union of BC Municipalities noted that local governments and the public have limited options to provide input. They explained that this underscores the importance of maintaining equal or greater local elected representation on existing governance structures (police boards or policing committees) to allow for public input and accountability.

## Municipal Police Board Composition, Training and Resourcing

Some pointed to board composition as a way to improve police board engagement with, and accountability to, communities. The City of Delta stated that the current system limits the diversity of community representation and that the governance structure of police boards needs to change to ensure key factors such as race and age are appropriately represented on police boards. To determine eligibility, Community Advisors of the Provincial Committee on Diversity and Policing, the City of Richmond, and several individuals proposed developing a set of standards and core competencies. Some were of the view that standards could address existing issues involving the integrity of individual board members and conflicting personal interests, while others stated that qualification standards could improve the

diversity of boards and representation of community interests on the board. The City of New Westminster recommended prioritizing people with lived and living experience, as well as equity and diversity mandates, and providing compensation to enable underrepresented people to serve as board members. They described how their police reform working group uses a community collaboration approach which centers racialized and vulnerable populations and enables the city to make more informed decisions about public safety issues. Noting the value of peer leadership in policing and public safety programs, the Vancouver Area Network of Drug Users proposed establishing a seat on the board elected by community members. Specific to the process of selecting board members, the Committee heard varying proposals, including allowing municipal council to elect a council board representative, allowing council to appoint community members, allowing elected officials from the school system to be board members, or holding a public election for board member positions.

The Committee received several proposals seeking board composition reform to ensure local accountability, as well as Indigenous jurisdiction, authority, and conceptions of justice. The First Nations Justice Council described that space needs to be created for Indigenous peoples on police boards and that existing civilian Indigenous advisory committees need to be empowered with tools and authority. They proposed working with Indigenous peoples to enhance the powers of advisory committees and mandating civilian Indigenous advisory committees for each police service or division.

*9.8 We call upon all police services to establish and engage with a civilian Indigenous advisory committee for each police service or police division, and to establish and engage with a local civilian Indigenous advisory committee to advise the detachment operating within the Indigenous community. (Call for Justice from The Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls)*

With respect to rural communities, the Human Rights Commissioner quantified that three-quarters of the province have no police boards, as policing is provided by the RCMP, and emphasized the importance of having a mechanism for local input. To address the absence of police boards for rural communities, Gabriola Health and Wellness Collaborative proposed creating a single rural police board, not grounded in a specific location, to serve the interests of all rural communities in the province.

Unique to BC, the *Police Act* requires the mayor to act as the chair for the municipal police board which several local governments and police boards described as a source of tension and conflict. The City of Delta explained the board chair has no statutory authority over police operations, cannot table or amend board motions, and can only vote in the event of a tie, and suggested these limits be removed. The City, along with the Victoria and Esquimalt Police Board and the Vancouver Police Board, stated that this structure puts mayors in a difficult position, particularly concerning the police budget, as mayors have responsibilities to the police board and department and to their municipalities. The Committee received a range of recommendations in this regard, including removing mandatory requirements, delegating the spokesperson responsibilities to the vice-chair, providing clear guidance for the mayor to recuse themselves of discussions of budget or special conflict, enabling mayors to sit as voting members of the board or as chairs with voting ability, and enabling boards to elect their chair.

Regarding the term limits and capacity of board members, the BC Association of Police Boards, Oak Bay Police Board and Vancouver Police Board were of the view that longer membership terms or overlapping terms for board members may benefit board governance by providing continuity and balancing members' expertise and historical knowledge. The Committee also heard about the need for comprehensive training and guidance for board members on complex governance issues, financial skills, responsibilities of the board and the operational needs of modern policing. Though there are ongoing efforts to provide training, the Vancouver Police

Board stated neither the *Police Act* nor BC Police Board Handbook provide sufficient information on areas related to the core responsibilities of the police board. The BC Association of Police Boards supported comprehensive board training and clarity in the *Police Act* concerning the board's responsibilities for bargaining and performance reviews.

Resource constraints were cited as another limitation for police boards. The City of Vancouver explained that the Vancouver Police Board is composed of unsalaried volunteers and were of the view that the amount of work the board manages has grown to a size and complexity beyond what volunteers can reasonably be expected to undertake. The Vancouver Police Board described growing demands for community engagement, meaningful community consultation and systemic reviews for police boards across the province and country. Noting the importance of boards in providing a link between the police and community, they described how a lack of resources limits a board's ability to communicate with the public. They were of the view that some of the negative public perception of policing and police oversight stems from a lack of public awareness about both the role of boards in police oversight, and the distinctions from US police counterparts, and that there is a significant amount of work for boards to restore public confidence and community relationships.

## Municipal Police Board Budgets

The Committee heard about limitations on municipal authority and input on police department budgets as a source of conflict between police boards and city councils. The BC Association of Police Boards noted that as the taxation authority, the municipality needs to retain authorization on the budget and that mediation or arbitration processes for when conflicts occur would be valuable. They were of the view that police boards should maintain an arms-length relationship from the provincial government and municipal councils and proposed developing a liaison role to support the alignment of municipal council and police board goals by facilitating shared priorities, ensuring council understands

impacts of policy decisions on policing, and sharing financial constraints with the police board.

The City of New Westminster described the ability for police boards to approve the police department budget without discussion or input from municipal council as untenable and were of the view the police budget should be part of, and work within, the larger set of priorities for the city. This perspective was also expressed by a former city manager who described that there is little incentive for the police board to control department expenditures because the board is not held responsible for the financial implications of police budgets on the municipality. The Vancouver Area Network of Drug Users highlighted a potential accountability gap of the current budget authority framework in which the personal interests of board members, such as lawyers and real estate developers, could influence policing priorities through the budget; they noted these interests can go unchecked with the board having ultimate authority of the budget. The Network proposed creating a civilian board to review the police budget, stating that one community membership role on the board is not enough.

With respect to budget appeals, the First Nations Summit and First Nations Leadership Council noted that when local communities attempt to shift or cap resources of police services, the *Police Act* allows police boards to appeal to the provincial government, and if municipal council decisions are overturned, civilians are unable to make decisions on the police budget. The BC Civil Liberties Association, along with several individuals, described this ability to appeal as undemocratic. A joint submission to the Committee by 27 British Columbians recommended eliminating the budget appeal process, noting that elected city councils should be able to decide how much funding should go towards municipal services, including policing. Other recommendations presented to the Committee involved clarifying municipal authority, developing mechanisms for appeals, mediation, or arbitration processes, and increasing budget transparency.

# Service Delivery

## Police Resourcing

The Committee heard about several challenges related to determining and providing effective policing, including a lack of methodology in this area as well as the number of governments (at all levels) and police boards that are involved with the administration and deployment of police resources. Superintendent Kara Triance of the Kelowna RCMP and Staff Sergeant Chris Boucher of the West Shore RCMP stated that a lack of agreed-upon police resource methodology drives inequalities in how communities receive policing services and may leave some questioning the fairness of these arrangements. Nelson Police Department emphasized the need for legislation to set out defining features of adequate and effective policing, including minimum resource levels in all municipalities. They stated that there should be a formula that not only looks at the population of the community policed but also the crime severity index, calls for service and workload. They further explained that small resource fluctuations and shortages are significantly impactful on smaller departments, and that the time, effort and research required to make submissions for additional resources are substantial and it is not guaranteed that the police board or municipality will approve such requests.

The City of Vancouver stated that the *Police Act* employs a top-down approach to policing that leaves little room for municipalities and communities to tailor policing efforts to the unique needs of their populations. They emphasized that municipal governments and communities must be empowered to provide policing that

meets the specific needs of their populations. Similarly, the District of Vanderhoof advocated for consideration of the broad and unique needs of the communities served by the Vanderhoof RCMP detachment when determining staffing and services. Further, Victoria Police Department stated that all police agencies should be required to have the necessary resources to make evidence-based decisions and evaluate the effectiveness of local programs in the local context.

## Community Safety and Community Policing

Some organizations and individuals called for an approach that emphasizes community safety. S.U.C.C.E.S.S. stated that policing cannot be examined outside the context of community safety and well-being. They advocated for a holistic view that includes a vision of what community safety and wellness look like, particularly for those who are oppressed and marginalized. West Kootenay People for Racial Justice highlighted models for community safety such as Crisis Assistance Helping Out On The Streets (CAHOOTS) in Oregon, Bear Clan in Winnipeg, and SNUG in New York. They explained that the key to these programs is a strong relationship with the community. Several individuals shared views that the RCMP is not appropriate for community policing citing the history of colonization and discrimination towards Indigenous peoples, or questioning if the RCMP receive appropriate diversity, inclusion, and cultural training.

Community policing initiatives were noted for their value and benefits of addressing the root of crime and

building trust between police and the community. The Hon. Wally Oppal explained that community-based policing is a philosophy of policing in which police officers are proactive rather than reactive. Downtown Vancouver Business Improvement Association highlighted Community Policing Centres which are operated, staffed and governed by members of the community, and work in partnership with the police to create crime prevention programs and initiatives to address local concerns. They explained that this approach allows the police to be more accurately informed, enabling them to deal with public safety concerns more effectively. Further, one individual noted that many people have concerns about police wearing guns and full uniforms while providing services in communities. To address this, they suggested having police officers join community policing patrols once or twice a week to meet community members, learn from foot patrol volunteers about and be visible in the community. BC First Nations Justice Council suggested creating a legislated role for community peacekeepers to reduce contact between police and the public and increase the use of de-escalation techniques. They highlighted Kwanlin Dun in Yukon, who in 2017 trained a small group of unsworn, unarmed safety officers in first aid, substance use and addictions, conflict resolution, investigation and case management, bylaws, critical incident stress management, patrol and traffic, and child, youth and family dynamics and tasked them with patrolling neighbourhoods.

Many submissions and presentations drew attention to tiered policing models in which peace officers or community safety officers perform duties that do not require the level of training provided to police officers. Many noted that such models reduce demand on the police and allow police officers to focus on serious matters that are more in keeping with their training and capabilities. Surrey Police Service and an individual also commented on the financial savings associated with police community support officers and community safety officers. Further, Licence Inspectors' and Bylaw Officers' Association of British Columbia noted that tiered models provide local governments with governance and oversight, address community needs and values,

and allow for local and specific law enforcement priorities to be set. Mike Morris, MLA proposed a public safety model with three distinctive components: criminal investigation officers, public safety officers with training in mental health and social issues, and community safety officers. Similarly, BC RCMP spoke about the possibility of a two-tiered policing system that includes one group of officers with special training who collaborate with social service providers to work within vulnerable populations and another group of officers who focus solely on criminal investigations. Union of BC Municipalities suggested examining the role of peace officers and sheriffs as a potential solution to assist with RCMP law enforcement in underserved rural areas.

A few municipalities, including the District of Vanderhoof and the District of Squamish, specifically referenced auxiliary policing as a way to maintain a link to the local community, encourage relationship building, and enable police to focus on criminal activity. The City of Richmond noted that until recently, auxiliary activities included a range of services including operational patrols, call-response, check stops, scene security, person searches and a series of crime prevention-based functions; however, the RCMP introduced several restrictions on the auxiliary program following a series of public safety incidents in 2014 and 2015. One individual referred to auxiliary programs in Ontario, the UK, and the US and stated that including auxiliary constables from different walks of life can strengthen diversity of police services, improve public trust in policing, and provide built-in civilian oversight of police.

## Community Engagement

Several organizations and individuals commented on the perception of the police within various communities. The National Police Federation shared that according to Angus Reid polling, residents in BC have a 74 percent net favourability of police. Some individuals noted that policing is among the world's most stressful and dangerous jobs. On the other hand, the BC Association of Police Boards stated that a negative connotation has been cast over all police agencies in the public eye due to

incidents of inappropriate use of force. In the Committee's survey, many respondents indicated that there is a lack of public trust in the police and that many people fear the police. Some highlighted challenges associated with the imbalance of power between the police and the public and noted strained relationships between police and communities that are marginalized. A few organizations noted consequences of a lack of public trust in the police; for example, the BC Police Association stated that when any police officer causes the public to lose confidence in policing, it makes the work of all police officers more difficult and dangerous. Further, Union Gospel Mission stated that distrust of police by marginalized groups leads to a decrease in calls to police when help is needed.

The Committee heard about the need for police services to increase community engagement in order to build trust and understanding. While many survey respondents with police experience stated that police are good at building community relationships, other respondents commonly expressed an opposing view. A few survey respondents noted that police do not have sufficient time or resources to build relationships with the community or that this ability differs between individual officers. The District of Vanderhoof stated that positive community outreach enables officers to better understand and relate to the different and diverse populations within communities. Sergeant Jon MacIntyre with Tsay Keh RCMP noted that participating in cultural events expedites building relationships and trust, but such initiatives are limited by a lack of dedicated funding and resourcing. In MacIntyre's experience, becoming involved in youth and adult sport, social events, and cultural events led to community members and leaders requesting an extension of MacIntyre's posting in the community. MacIntyre noted that further funding to programs like provincial support teams, Indigenous policing services programs and local detachment budgets are absolutely necessary to support and expand this approach to building relationships.

In response to the Committee's survey question about what is working well in relationships between police and the community, common themes included police

attending and participating in community events, community policing, and police programs and outreach. Examples of programs included police cadets, lunch with the chief, educational or self-defense programs, and coffee meet and greets. Some respondents added that police officers should not wear uniforms when attending community events or emphasized that they should be there to participate and not to enforce the law. Community engagement and attending community events were also common suggestions to improve relationships between police and communities across all respondent categories. A smaller number of respondents without policing experience indicated that police should not attend certain community events such as Pride.

Community advisory committees were discussed as an aspect of community engagement. Victoria Police Department shared that it is part of the Greater Victoria Police Diversity Advisory Committee which aims to improve relationships between the many diverse communities and local police organizations of southern Vancouver Island by engaging with Black, Indigenous and persons of colour communities on how the police can do better to build trust between diverse communities and the police organization. The National Police Federation stated that they encourage the creation of bodies that aid in building relationships between the community and the police as they can be quite impactful to the communities they serve; however, they emphasized that it is vital to ensure that proper governance, training, and diverse perspectives are included in the creation of and appointments to these committees. The Committee received several recommendations to create such committees and to ensure that they reflect the community.

## Integration

The Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General explained that integrated teams provide specialized police services to more than one jurisdiction. The teams can be comprised of police officers from more than one police agency or from at least two levels of policing, and may have multiple policing jurisdictions, or levels

of government, that contribute to funding or staffing. They noted that the goal of integrated teams is to create service delivery models that centralize highly technical, capital-intensive and specialized services, while at the same time decentralizing functions that provide service directly to the public. The City of Richmond explained that under the *Police Act*, the provincial government has the authority to require local governments within a specialized service area to use and pay for the services of a specialized police service or integrated team; however, participation in integrated teams is voluntary. They noted that recent gang and drug conflicts, as well as the money laundering that fuels them, must be addressed in a regional and cooperative manner and that making the integrated teams a regional and cohesive unit will lead to greater effectiveness and cost containment for all municipalities in the Lower Mainland.

Several police organizations and detachments highlighted benefits of integrated teams including efficiency, their specialized focus, and cost sharing. BC Association of Police Boards stated that by integrating and sharing resources among police agencies, all communities can benefit and optimize the effectiveness and efficiency of such services without compromising the core community policing services. In reference to participation in Lower Mainland integrated teams, Superintendent Davy Lee of the Upper Fraser Valley Regional District RCMP noted that the ability to easily deploy specialized resources provides peace of mind that some of the best subject-matter experts in their respective fields have been engaged. Saanich Police Board suggested that integrating teams or police units works well, especially when the unit is particularly focused on specialized functions, as an alternative to creating large regional police services.

The Committee heard about some limitations of integrated teams, as both BC Association of Municipal Chiefs of Police and Victoria Police Department stated that integrated units' governance can have inefficiencies due, in part, to the tendency for parties to act in the individual best interests of their respective agencies or municipalities. Further, Delta Police Board stated that sharing of resources can lead to delays and inefficiencies

in certain instances and that discretion should be afforded to the police agencies in deciding membership in integrated police units, as some departments may be able to manage the area of specialty with existing talent while being afforded the opportunity to professionally develop their membership.

Chief Constable Norm Lipinski explained that the newly established Surrey Police Service is in a transition process of integrating with the local RCMP. The RCMP have the jurisdictional authority as they have the majority of officers; when the Surrey Police Service has the majority, they will become the police of jurisdiction and have this authority. Constable Lipinski stated that the transition model they are working with is going well; however, in the future, consideration should be given to amending the *Police Act* to allow for two police of jurisdiction. Chief Constable Lipinski noted that allowing a municipality to stand up a municipal police service alongside the contracted police agency with a phased handover is the best model. This means that when a certain number of embedded officers have been built up, the municipal service can take charge of individual districts to start running programs and processes. Chief Constable Lipinski stated that this is a viable alternative to the present model of being embedded as an integrated team.

## Regionalization

Multiple organizations referenced the fact that crime does not respect borders, yet policing is structured based on geographic boundaries resulting in duplication, lack of coordination, overlaps, and gaps in service. Union of BC Municipalities noted that some police services have been integrated on a regional basis which helps to improve efficiency and effectiveness; however, they added that it is necessary to make sure that residents continue to receive adequate service under this model. Mayor Kennedy Stewart referred to a 2012 report by the Hon. Wally Oppal which found that the investigation into missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls was greatly hindered by the lack of coordination between police services and agencies in the greater



Vancouver area. In the report, the Hon. Wally Oppal recommended the establishment of a Greater Vancouver Police service, noting that the changing nature of criminal activity, including organized crime, gang violence, cybercrime, human trafficking, and terrorism, demands increased regional coordination as well as investments in technology and training which many individual police departments cannot afford to adequately fund.

The Committee heard about some limitations of regionalization regarding local response and oversight. The District of Vanderhoof stated that the regional approach to policing has proven to inhibit a swift localized response to calls by the RCMP. They added that the RCMP's response should more often focus on a locally informed case by case servicing approach. BC Association of Police Boards cautioned against any attempts to force regionalization of police agencies without the full support of impacted municipalities. They stated that to advance trust and support of policing, core community policing services are best carried out within the municipality involved and with the oversight and governance of local police boards who are in touch with local conditions and requirements.

In addition to comments about regionalization generally, some submissions drew attention to specific regions. Specific to the Capital Regional District, Victoria and Esquimalt Police Board explained that Victoria and Esquimalt are the only two local governments in the province that share a local police department. They noted that when the cities of Victoria and Esquimalt were brought together by the province in 2002 through an Order in Council, it was understood that this would be the first step towards regional integration of policing in the Capital Region, but this has not happened. The Victoria Police Department stated that Greater Victoria would benefit from a single, regional police service, noting that they navigate unique complexities as the only municipal police department in BC serving two municipalities while simultaneously working in a relatively small region with three municipal police departments and multiple RCMP detachments. Regarding Metro Vancouver, Mayor Kennedy Stewart recommended creating a single Metro

Vancouver police department in recognition of the unique pressures and responsibilities of providing police services in this region.

## Organized Crime and Cybercrime

The Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General explained that while multiple efforts are underway to combat organized crime in BC, there is no federal strategy. Currently the Combined Forces Special Enforcement Unit is the lead agency responsible for collective efforts to combat organized crime. The Organized Crime Agency is a provincially designated policing unit but is used as a subordinate contingent within the RCMP-led Combined Forces Special Enforcement Unit. The City of Richmond noted that a 2018 City Council report outlined a lack of a cohesive strategy to combat organized crime and money laundering. They stated that BC should not wait for federal action and should introduce its own strategy, in consultation with municipalities and the federal government, supported with long-term funding and provincial police units. Similarly, Yvon Dandurand shared that local police services in BC are not equipped to address organized crime and cybercrime. Dandurand explained that, at the local level, the main determining factor for priority-setting in policing is typically the budgetary process, during which the need for sustained and intensive law enforcement efforts is often sacrificed to the need to come up with a balanced budget.

## Public Safety Continuum

E-Comm, the primary emergency communication services agency for BC, described a need for consistency of 911 services across the province. They explained that authority for police call-taking, policies and standards technically sits with every municipality and agency individually; however, the RCMP manages this for many of the interior and northern municipalities. This makes the introduction of provincially consistent new services very difficult. E-Comm noted that establishing provincial authority to set 911 policy and service standards would:

align BC with most other provinces in Canada; allow BC to establish and evolve one set of rules and practices for 911 answer protocols; and ensure consistency as emerging technologies and new responder services provide additional options to assist the public. They explained that moving the authority for police call-taking and dispatch work to the province would allow BC to harmonize police emergency communications protocols consistently with respect to best practices for Indigenous, racialized and other vulnerable populations.

Another theme in this area was the need for improved public safety planning and coordination. Union of BC Municipalities stated that it is important to establish meaningful dialogue between primary stakeholders and service providers in developing public safety plans. They added that local governments must have proper channels in place so that the issues that they are seeing on the ground are taken into account as provincial public safety priorities are established. Similarly, City of North Vancouver Mayor Linda Buchanan noted that policing services must be more integrated with local government, other public safety agencies and people with lived experiences. As an example of public safety coordination, Interior Health explained that they hold situation tables that help frontline staff from the public safety, health, and social service sectors to identify vulnerable people and collaboratively and rapidly connect them to services before they experience a negative or traumatic event.

With respect to emergency management, the City of Richmond stated that under the *Police Act*, the Minister of Public Safety and Solicitor General has authority to redirect municipal police resources in the case of a declared emergency; however, in recent history, the provincial government has not drawn on non-RCMP municipalities to respond to policing emergencies. They stated that it is inequitable that only RCMP municipalities should continue to bear the burden of emergency response. Superintendent Shaun Wright of the Prince George RCMP also commented on this issue noting that municipal detachments are often pulled in to assist with emergencies which impacts their ability to meet municipal needs. First Nations Leadership Council

highlighted how the role of the RCMP intersects with the wellbeing and jurisdiction of First Nations communities with respect to emergency management. They referred to the 2017 Flood and Wildfire Review which called for greater RCMP training, cultural sensitivity, coordination with First Nations governments, and communication of up-to-date information when communicating evacuation orders.

## Rural and Remote Communities

Organizations, individuals, and local governments drew attention to staffing and other challenges in rural and remote communities. For example, City of Rossland Mayor Kathy Moore shared that the local detachment is struggling to meet the 24/7 demands of policing due to low resources and a high number of officers on sick leave or on restricted duties; unmet needs due to insufficient police presence was a shared experience of local governments. Gabriola Health and Wellness Collaborative noted that currently Gabriola Island relies on overtime RCMP members and reservists to fill gaps. To prevent burnout, there is a high degree of staffing turnover in the community with officers serving short rotations, typically for three years. They noted that this model does not serve the community or the individual officers well in terms of allowing officers uninterrupted time-off and the ability to establish relationships with community organizations to set priorities and collaborate on prevention activities. The Committee heard about opportunities to be creative in work with other agencies to provide with community safety services; for example, the BC Conservation Officer Service explained that in Alberta and Saskatchewan, conservation officers are mandated to respond to 911 calls in rural areas. In contrast, conservation officers in BC provide backup to the RCMP on a regular basis but are not directly mandated to do so.

In addition to police staffing, some organizations noted unique challenges related to geography, and limited access to social and health services in rural and remote communities. Sergeant Anthony Fletcher explained that the Northern Rockies Detachment provides services for 97,000 square kilometres of northeastern BC, so

responding to a call can be the equivalent of an officer in Surrey responding to a call in Kelowna. They noted that the community lacks a lot of other services, such as mental health or social work, that get downloaded onto the detachment, taking resources away from proactive policing duties. Gabriola Health and Wellness Collaborative explained that policing in small rural communities must take into consideration several factors including unique population characteristics, isolation, and limited access to specialized services. They suggested the creation of a clear rural policing mandate that establishes evaluative criteria to guide the deployment of resources including consideration of unique population characteristics.

## Use of Force and Militarization

Several organizations and individuals commented on the overrepresentation of racialized and marginalized individuals in incidents of police use of force. The BC Coroners Service completed a review of 127 police-involved deaths among persons during or within 24 hours following contact with police between January 1, 2013, and December 31, 2017. Of the 127 deaths, 21 were attributed to police use of force. They noted that 29 percent of those whose deaths were associated with police use of force were Indigenous, and two-thirds exhibited mental health symptoms at the time of the event. Several individuals noted instances of police officers using unnecessary and sometimes lethal force in addition to targeting minorities and marginalized people and described instances of policing using excessive force with protestors. A few individuals, including Dr. Jamein Cunningham and Dr. Rob Gillezeau, suggested policies and other tools to help reduce police use of force, including implementing body-worn cameras, screening, procedural justice training, filing use of force forms, improving diversity and inclusion in police departments, and using community feedback to inform police department policies and practices.

BC Association of Chiefs of Police noted that it is important to recognize that although use of force is necessary at times, the ability to de-escalate and defuse

situations are foundational elements of policing in British Columbia. They further explained that all police officers in BC are well-trained in crisis intervention and de-escalation techniques, and in addition to police recruit training and in-service training, there are provincial training standards and a national police use of force framework built on the de-escalation of situations and underpinned by a high degree of oversight. They noted that recent research has shown that their officers use force in less than one percent of calls for service. BC RCMP explained that in 2009, as a result of several high-profile police-involved use of force events, peace officers are required to complete a Subject Behaviour Officer Response (SB/OR) report whenever they have used, drawn or displayed intervention weapons or techniques resulting in, or capable of resulting in, injuries to others or themselves. SB/OR reporting is a standardized method to record and explain the intervention strategies that an officer chose to manage an incident. The explanation must take into account the totality of the situation, including the officer's perceptions, assessment of situational factors, tactical considerations, and subject behaviour, all of which form the risk assessment.

*Recruits learn that their presence and communications are low levels of force that could easily escalate a situation if they are not self-aware of the impact they are having on others, especially those in crisis. (Steve Schnitzer, Director of the Police Academy, Justice Institute of BC)*

Another common theme in this area was the use of various weapons by police. BC Civil Liberties Association stated that police are increasingly using weapons and tactics that are legally questionable including tear gas which was banned in warfare by the 1925 Geneva Protocol and the 1993 Chemical Weapons Convention but is used by domestic police as a riot control agent. One individual also commented on use of tear gas as well as rubber bullets and foam projectiles as a means of crowd control and stated that restrictions are needed in this area. First United Church Community Ministry Society stated that due to institutional racism and bias,

the police should not carry lethal force weapons in Indigenous, Black, and low-income neighbourhoods. As alternatives, individuals and organizations including Hogan's Alley Society highlighted models in the UK and New Zealand where some police officers do not carry guns and are trained to detain individuals with minimal force. Canadian Bar Association British Columbia Branch pointed to some recent innovations in less lethal de-escalation tactics which could be deployed, such as the Bola Wrap, which is a projectile that ties a person up.

*As in other jurisdictions, prohibit the police from carrying and using all lethal weapons. Even in the most escalated scenario, there is no justification for a police-involved lethal shooting.*

*Eliminate the use of VPD restraint devices such as the hobble restraint device, and end the use of police dogs as weapons. (Recommendations from Red Women Rising)*

The Committee heard about policies and standards related to police use of force. A couple of individuals commented on the ability of individual police departments to set their own policies with respect to use of force and advocated for standardization in this area. First Nations Leadership Council called for a fulsome review of use of force standards and the use of conducted energy weapons noting that standards must explicitly prioritize an evidence-informed, trauma-informed, non-punitive, destigmatizing, and harm-reduction focused approach.

A number of individuals stated that there has been an increase in the militarization of policing and police technologies over the last decade with some relating increased police spending as well as higher rates of police involved killings to this trend. BC Police Association stated that in many cases, their members share the view of many others that police tactics appear to be unnecessarily violent and militaristic. In the Committee's survey, in response to a question about what is not working well in relationships between police and the community, militarization and police

use of force or violence were common responses from individuals with experience in healthcare and social services as well as those without frontline experience. These responses highlighted uniforms and weapons that appear militaristic or intimidating and how they make relationship building difficult. Many respondents cited the police response to protests at Fairy Creek as a significant issue.

*The militarization of the appearance of police in our communities negatively affects relations between police and community. Aggressive-appearing uniforms (i.e. military-like fatigues, blacked out patches, etc) and intimidating vehicles (i.e. black Chargers) have become the norm. In jurisdictions (parts of Europe) where police uniforms are less militaristic and vehicles are painted to be visible, not intimidating, there seems to be a gentler approach to policing. (Survey respondent who identified as having healthcare experience)*

## Police-Based Victim Services

Police Victim Services of British Columbia explained that police-based victim services workers provide a wide range of services to victims in the immediate aftermath of a crime or other serious incident. The organization called for inclusion of "police-based victim services" in the *Police Act* to compel police to engage these services on a more proactive basis, as well as reduce any inconsistency on when police-based victim services should be activated by responding police. They noted that timely connection to victim services has a positive impact on the healing outcomes of victims. These recommendations were supported by Marianne Brueckert, who has worked in the police-based victim services field for 30 years. Celine Lee-Gee shared that victims and survivors experience frustration and anger in trying to navigate services and resources in the aftermath of crime. Lee-Gee added that police, as the first point of contact a survivor has with the judicial system, are in a unique position to shape the survivor's experience of the system and their recovery.

Lee-Gee suggested that embedding a victim centric lens and victims' rights into the spectrum of policing activities could ensure police agencies are equipped with the resources to assist victims respectfully and fairly. In turn, this could create an environment for victims and witnesses to feel safe coming forward to the police. In addition to police-based victim services, the Committee heard about the need for community-based victim services, particularly in relation to gender-based violence, sexual assault, and racialized survivors (see page 47).

Regarding supports for families, the Independent Investigations Office noted that currently, victim services support is only available to persons who have been subject to a crime; however, providing those types of services to victims' families would greatly benefit those individuals. One individual noted that victims and their families need clear information provided to them as to when their case has gone cold, when their case should be handed over to another agency, when police inactivity is misconduct, and what to do if the police stop contacting them.

## Restorative and Alternative Justice

Vancouver Island Region Restorative Justice Association and North Peace Justice Society explained that restorative justice is an alternative judicial measure with the goals of accountability, repair, and healing as the best responses to harmful acts. They added that restorative justice encourages offenders to take responsibility for their behaviour, reduces recidivism, reduces the growing backlog and financial burden on police and courts, and helps make communities safer. Both organizations highlighted the importance of police education and awareness of restorative justice as most of their referrals come from police. Regarding the police role in restorative justice, the Ministry of Attorney General, Criminal Justice Branch explained that police have discretion as to whether they will refer someone or engage some form of restorative justice or another informal process, rather than doing a full investigation and forwarding charges. First Nations Leadership Council noted opportunities for discretion at the policing level that

would support diversion from the criminal justice system should be considered; they referenced the First Nations Justice Strategy which emphasizes a "presumption of diversion" at every stage of the criminal process. Staff Sergeant Darren Durnin of the New Hazelton RCMP noted that for restorative justice programs to succeed, access to services, support, or rehabilitation upon returning to the community must be improved.

Vancouver Island Region Restorative Justice Association also spoke about restorative justice for children and youth. They explained that the *Youth Criminal Justice Act* requires officers to consider the use of extra-judicial measures such as restorative justice before deciding to recommend charges; however, no documentation is required to track whether this has been done and what the reasons for not using restorative justice may have been. They stated that by improving access to restorative justice, BC and Canada will meet their obligations under the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child which requires states to develop and use alternative mechanisms to formal criminal proceedings that respect human rights and procedural safeguards and are child and gender sensitive.

With respect to funding, the Committee heard that restorative justice programs have potential for significant cost savings to both the judicial and corrections systems. Vancouver Island Region Restorative Justice Association noted that these programs only receive a \$4,000 annual grant from the Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General and advocated for sufficient and stable funding to ensure that this work is done effectively.

*Commit to using non-incarceration and alternative measures especially for minor offenses committed by Indigenous women. Governments must also provide sufficient and stable funding to Indigenous communities and organizations to provide alternatives to incarceration including community-based rehabilitation, diversion, community courts, and restorative justice methods geared towards Indigenous women. (Recommendation from Red Women Rising)*

# Recruitment, Training and Education

## Recruitment

The Committee heard about the need for increased diversity within police services. Centre For Israel and Jewish Affairs referred to a June 2020 national poll by the Association of Canadian Studies, which found that 61 percent of Indigenous respondents and 79 percent of Black respondents indicated that prioritizing the hiring of racialized police officers would be a good measure. They noted that diversity should be accompanied by changes in organizational culture that fosters increased accountability, inclusion and belonging. Victoria and Esquimalt Police Board explained that police departments will soon be facing an upcoming surge of officer retirements so recruitment will be an urgent priority. They noted that this is an excellent opportunity for key stakeholders to come together and find new and effective ways to attract applicants from diverse and minority backgrounds. BC Association of Police Boards linked recruitment to police culture noting that if police boards are to recruit and retain a diverse, highly skilled, and ethically minded police service, it must be made clear from both the provincial government and boards that a positive culture is expected and supported, and that policing is valuable and valued work is done on behalf of, and as part of, the communities they serve. While some organizations suggested increasing the diversity of recruits as a way to combat racism, others noted that this is not enough to address issues within the larger structure and system. Elizabeth Fry Society of Greater Vancouver recognized that police have made significant efforts to recruit members with greater diversity, and to provide training on the recognition of unconscious bias

and stereotyping. They stated that those efforts need to continue but structural change is also needed. Similarly, Vancouver Women's Health Collective stated that having diversity within the institution will not change the oppressive system, as recruits have to apply laws that are created to benefit those with privilege.

*Systemic racism and oppression are not HR problems. More policing, even if it is police from racialized communities, is not the only answer because the system is what needs to be different. If there is not an organizational culture that offers true accountability, inclusion and belonging, and there is lack of culture that empowers people to generate transformative change, it will not matter how many racialized people there are in the police force. (Queenie Choo, Chief Executive Officer, S.U.C.C.E.S.S.)*

Some organizations drew attention to the need for diversity at all levels of policing including leadership roles. Vancouver Police Department stated that 51 percent of their staff are not white men and 26 percent are from ethnically diverse backgrounds; women comprise 26 percent of their staff, and 37 percent of the senior management team. Conversely, Vancouver Women's Health Collective explained that when Indigenous women or people of colour go into policing to make a change, opportunities for advancement are fewer, and the risk is much greater, so that by the time they get into leadership roles, they will have been 'formatted'

to comply with the mainstream model. First Nations Leadership Council stated that Indigenous peoples are underrepresented in senior level and leadership positions within the justice and policing system. They noted that this is both evidence of systemic discrimination, and a factor in its perpetuation.

Regarding Indigenous representation, Pacific Association of First Nations Women stated that the *Police Act* should have provisions to ensure that Indigenous peoples are employed within police services. They noted that to affect change and improve public trust of the police, there needs to be a specific percentage of Indigenous peoples employed within each unit and at each level. Vancouver Police Department explained that they have made it a priority to proactively recruit Indigenous officers including through the Indigenous cadet program, which recruits Indigenous youth ages 19 to 30 who have a strong interest in policing, with paid work throughout the summer. Hiring more Indigenous police officers was frequently cited by respondents to the survey as a way to reduce systemic racism, promote reconciliation, and build relationships with Indigenous communities.

*9.3 We call upon all governments to fund an increase in recruitment of Indigenous Peoples to all police services, and for all police services to include representation of Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA people, inclusive of diverse Indigenous cultural backgrounds, within their ranks. This includes measures such as the following:*

- i Achieve representative First Nations, Inuit, and Métis diversity and gender diversity within all police services through intensive and specialized recruitment across Canada.*
- ii Ensure mandatory Indigenous language capacity within police services.*
- iv Include the Indigenous community in the recruitment and hiring committees/process.*

*vi Retain Indigenous officers through relevant employment supports, and offer incentives to Indigenous officers to meet their unique needs as Indigenous officers serving Indigenous communities, to ensure retention and overall health and wellness of the service. (Call for Justice from The Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls)*

In addition to diversity, the Committee heard about the value of ensuring broader community representation within police services to build trust and understanding. The City of New Westminster stated that feedback from the community consistently points to the importance of representation as a key factor in building trust between community and policing services. Similarly, the Pacific Society for the Advancement of Employment Equity highlighted the need to create a diverse and functionally representative workforce which has the ability to understand, relate to, and address the unique needs of the broad citizenry. Further, Union Gospel Mission stated that knowledge from lived experience is difficult to match with training; therefore, they suggested recruiting individuals who have experienced addictions and homelessness to better engage with the community.

Some organizations advocated for recruitment of individuals with specific skillsets or expertise into police services. Community Advisors of the Provincial Committee on Diversity and Policing suggested that officers should be recruited at a higher rank (rather than an entry level) in specialized fields such as addictions, mental health, money laundering, and cybercrime. Chief Fady Dagher of the Service de police de l'agglomération de Longueuil explained that since 75 to 80 percent of police work in their area is related to social issues, they will give preference to police candidates from social issue backgrounds such as mental health care or community workers.

## Screening

The Committee received input related to screening of both recruits and existing officers, especially in consideration of promotion or advancement. With respect to screening for bias, Dr. Benjamin Goold stated that it is important that efforts are made to select and recruit police officers thoughtfully and to ensure they understand the problems of systemic racism and their position as frontline agents of the state in relation to Indigenous communities, vulnerable populations and racialized groups. As an example, Chief Dagher explained that in the Service de police de l'agglomération de Longueuil, leadership candidates are evaluated by a psychologist on areas such as innovation, open-mindedness, and racial profiling. Both Pacific Association of First Nations Women and First Nations Justice Council stated that there should be a zero-tolerance policy for racism and bias towards people of Indigenous ancestry. Regarding psychological screening, Andre Piver, a physician with a background in mental health, stated that it is possible that early childhood trauma and its associated powerlessness may cause some individuals seeking power, control, and domination of others to enter the field of law enforcement. Dr. Piver noted that mental health screening may help detect these negative traits and unconscious attitudes that impact many aspects of policing and contribute to distrust of police. Similarly, Pacific Northwest Institute for Racial Trauma called for improved psychological evaluations to address certain authoritarian behaviours in police officers.

*9.3, iii Ensure that screening of recruits includes testing for racial, gender, gender identity, and sexual orientation bias. (Call for Justice from The Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls)*

## Police Culture

The Committee heard about the impact of police culture with several individuals and organizations, including S.U.C.C.E.S.S., noting that this culture is resistant to

transformative change. Dr. Angela Workman-Stark, who conducted studies on two large Canadian police services and interviews with police officers across Canada, described some common traits of police culture as: cynical, distrustful, suspicious, and resistant to change; a cult of masculinity; and a competitive environment where officers are expected to put their work before external commitments. Dr. Workman-Stark proposed three root causes of police culture: emphasizing that physical crime-fighting is what real policing is; reliance on traditional performance metrics such as crime statistics, crime clearance rates, and traffic tickets; and insufficient investment in leadership selection, development, and, in some cases, outdated leadership models. Dr. Workman-Stark noted, when interviewed, many officers highlighted that they love what they do and are proud of it, yet less than 50 percent of them would recommend it as a career which could be a problem with recruitment, as many officers come into policing through a family or friend connection. In addition, Dr. Workman-Stark noted that the conditioning effects of police culture are a larger cause of officers demonstrating negative police norms rather than inadequate screening and training.

Several individuals described how police leadership and hierarchy influences culture. Gordon Cole, a clinical psychologist and first responder critical incident stress debriefer, noted that the hierarchical chain of command structure of the police appears to be associated with greater risk for sexual and other abuses of power. John de Haas, a former police officer and police union president, reported that the police do not know a culture of well-developed leadership and that substantive change has to invariably come from government, courts, or public outcry. Dr. Workman-Stark stated that the *Police Act* currently focuses on standards for individual officers, but it is critical to have standards for leadership. Dr. Workman-Stark's research shows that with good leadership, there is less indication of negative police culture norms, which can make a difference in all levels of an organization.

With respect to police culture and gender, a former police officer noted that many women officers choose



to not have children and prioritize their career in order to have the ability to move through the ranks. They also noted that tactics are 80 percent of the training, and that other skills such as human relations and de-escalation are devalued which serves to keep men in authority positions. An individual stated that there have been many reports of harassment and bullying of members within police services, especially female officers and members of minority groups. Therefore, leadership, training, communication styles, and discipline procedures must be examined and reformed as necessary to foster an internal culture of diversity and acceptance.

## Police Mental Health and Wellness

Many submissions emphasized the need for mental health support for police officers due to the nature of their work. Jill Parker, a former police officer, shared the story of the loss of two co-workers to suicide, and noted that many fellow officers retired early due to posttraumatic stress disorder, and some died in their 40s from stress induced diseases. Parker stated that the average person experiences one to three critical incidents in their lifetime whereas a police officer over a 20-year career will face over 800 critical incidents. Another individual shared that at least 30 percent of Canadian police officers have experienced or are experiencing a mental health crisis, yet little is being done to ensure they are not exhibiting symptoms of posttraumatic stress disorder or any other form of mental illness when they step out on duty with lethal weapons. The Federation of Community Social Services of BC stated that the combination of frontline work, toll of attending court proceedings, and the often required overtime, can become overwhelming and the demands of the job may lead police to make unsafe decisions. They explained that adequate mental health support and psychological assessments after critical incidents will help to ensure officers can act in the best interests of their communities. The BC Psychological Association noted, however, that despite having wellness resources available, many RCMP officers do not make full use of them as cultural norms in policing, such as not wanting to be perceived

as vulnerable or weak, are a barrier to accessing mental health services.

## Recruit/Cadet Training and Education

Training for police recruits is delivered by different organizations, depending on whether the police service is a municipal police department or RCMP. The Justice Institute of BC provides recruit training for all municipal, St'atl'imx and transit police departments in BC. RCMP Depot Division provides basic training for RCMP cadets and RCMP E Division provides in-service training to BC RCMP employees at the Pacific Region Training Centre in Chilliwack. The Policing and Security Branch of the Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General sets and approves the training standards for the Justice Institute of BC Police Academy recruit training. Many provincial policing standards also have training requirements for the BC RCMP.

A few submissions offered suggestions to change training standards and delivery of training. Dr. Workman-Stark noted that the standards of training and expectations for a police officer in the *Police Act* are quite traditional and those standards could be expanded to build a healthy foundation for officers. Dr. Workman-Stark stated that as with other regulated professions, annual professional development could be considered on topics such as ethics, cultural sensitivity, or mental health. Victoria Police Department suggested creating a Centre for Policing Excellence within the Police Academy to ensure the highest standards of training, legal support, policing service standards, and other services to facilitate excellence and consistency across all agencies. For training delivery, S.U.C.C.E.S.S. stated that police training must use a comprehensive approach, rather than piecemeal workshops, as learning new practices and unlearning old practices requires constant attention and reinforcement. Chief Officer Dave Jones of the Metro Vancouver Transit Police further highlighted the difference between education, which is required to gain greater understanding and awareness of issues like systemic racism, and training, which is more skills-based.

The Committee's survey asked respondents who identified as having policing experience whether they were satisfied with the amount and type of training provided to them and the majority of respondents stated that their training was sufficient. Many noted that training is constantly evolving to meet demands and expectations, and continuous training throughout an individual's career is available. Conversely, some respondents stated that training was insufficient in certain areas, including de-escalation, driving, mental health issues, cultural diversity, and the *Criminal Code*, and that there is not enough time to attend training. Many respondents highlighted areas for additional training such as physical control including use of force, defensive tactics, conflict resolution and de-escalation, interpersonal skills, and police history.

Regarding training on de-escalation, the Justice Institute of BC explained that they use a combined model of crisis intervention and de-escalation and the National Use of Force Framework to emphasize the importance of de-escalation. These concepts are taught through an online course, scenario training with professional actors, and a seven-hour component in which recruits meet and hear from people with mental illness or their family members about their experiences with police. Similarly, RCMP Depot Division stated that their mental health emergencies training component requires cadets to apply crisis intervention and de-escalation training in scenarios with an actor. There is also province-specific mandatory training for new officers posted to BC as part of their field coach training. In contrast, an individual referenced findings from a Simon Fraser University criminology study that suggests pre-service training does not include substantial crisis intervention and de-escalation training, and that there are insufficient resources and training time, as well as minimal instructor qualifications and best practices standards.

In the Committee's survey, many respondents, especially those with experience in healthcare and social services commonly suggested improving education or training for police officers as a way to improve relationships between police and the community. Examples of training or

courses mentioned by respondents included community relations, sociology, anti-racism, de-escalation, history, mental health, trauma, sensitivity, and empathy. These areas are also reflected in recommendations from submissions that highlighted the need for training related to interpersonal skills and conflict resolution.

The Committee received a few suggestions to make university degrees a pre-requisite for entering the policing profession. One individual stated that six months of training for police officers is not enough and referenced that Finland and Norway require recruits to study at national colleges while interning with local police services. Jill Parker noted that in professions like nursing, teaching or social work, there is a college and a professionalization where a base set of skills are required. As an example, Parker referred to the Gove Inquiry which resulted in the creation of a college of social work and mandated social work degrees in order to respond appropriately to child protection needs.

A couple of submissions called for a review or evaluation of police training to ensure it is meeting local needs. Centre For Israel and Jewish Affairs stated that training must be evaluated and improved to ensure officers are accountable and appropriately trained for their role in the community. An individual highlighted that policing has changed in recent decades and many new skills are needed to adequately perform the tasks of being a police officer, so there should be a reassessment of the types of skills that are required in policing.

Some police organizations and departments noted that training is critical but not adequately funded. Oak Bay Police Board stated that the best way to ensure long-term public support of police and avoid potential risks is to ensure everyone involved is trained well. They noted that training should be informed by societal values as well as police best practices and that sufficient investment in the Justice Institute of BC is critical. Similarly, BC Association of Municipal Chiefs of Police stated that more work needs to be done to ensure high quality and sustainably funded police training for all police officers. They highlighted that being proactive in training builds and maintains public trust much better than having to regain trust following an incident through the complaints process.

# Mental Health and Addictions

## Coordination and Collaboration

Canadian Mental Health Association BC Division stated that one in five interactions with police in BC involves someone with a mental health or substance use problem. They highlighted that gender, being racialized, experiencing homelessness, and unemployment are factors associated with an increased rate of police contact among people living with mental illness. In their review of 127 police-involved deaths, the BC Coroners Service found a high proportion of encounters involved individuals experiencing a mental health crisis, and that a high proportion of individuals had chronic health conditions or substance use issues.

Both health related organizations and police organizations emphasized the need for collaboration between agencies and ministries with respect to mental health and addictions. The Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General noted that police responding to mental health crisis events impacts the ability to deliver frontline policing and is largely due to a lack of a collaborative and coordinated cross-government approach. BC Association of Police Boards stated that community trust in police has dropped over the last year and a comprehensive plan that acknowledges the role of policing in responding to mental health and addictions is important. Similarly, Island Health described how collaboration between police and staff promotes confidence and trust while also allowing for shared learning in areas such as trauma-informed approaches and services, crisis intervention and de-escalation skills, and knowledge and understanding of the *Mental*

*Health Act*. Further, Nurses and Nurse Practitioners of BC noted that nurses are ideally positioned to bring forward innovative ideas to ensure that system wide strategies are in the best interests of patients and the public in collaboration with police officers. On the other hand, Care Not Cops, representing healthcare workers from a variety of disciplines and care settings, shared that police presence often escalates conflict, as well as negates healthcare workers' ability to build trust and affirm patient autonomy and dignity. They also noted that there are no accountability mechanisms for police-healthcare partnerships and that the existing police and patient care oversight systems have failed to address fundamental program flaws.

In the Committee's survey which asked about experiences collaborating with other frontline service providers, those with self-identified policing experience reported a largely positive experience; however, responses from healthcare workers were slightly more negative. Examples of areas where collaboration worked well included good communication, mutual respect, and team training, whereas things that did not work well included perceptions of a lack of respect from police manifesting in ways such as bullishness or a dominance of the situation. Many respondents were of the view that bias and poor communication complicated the situation. Opportunities for improvement included increased funding to all areas of frontline work and better communication.

The Committee heard specifically about the need for information sharing to improve coordination between

police and other agencies and service providers. PRIMECorp, the designated service provider of information management services under the *Police Act*, explained that improved data collection and sharing among law enforcement and government bodies would allow police to be better informed when responding to calls, improve police interactions, ensure a more appropriate response, and help divert calls for service that may be better served by mental health support groups. They noted that quality data is currently being collected; however, there are inconsistencies as this is being done by multiple agencies following different policies. They stated that expanded data collection and sharing would ideally be incorporated into a more integrated, comprehensive, and multi-disciplinary provincial approach to managing the complex issues arising from mental health and substance use challenges. As an example of a positive practice, Vancouver Police Department stated that they have strong working relations with Vancouver Coastal Health that includes an information sharing agreement to advance the care that is provided to those experiencing mental health crises.

The Committee received a couple of recommendations to implement HealthIM which is an app-based database that provides officers immediate access to the mental health history of persons before their arrival on scene. Superintendent Shaun Wright of the Prince George RCMP noted that it also provides a medically based assessment tool and transmits information directly to the appropriate emergency department. Superintendent Wright stated that HealthIM has been shown to result in a reduction of mental health apprehensions by up to 61 percent. For the remaining incidents, it has been shown to decrease police wait times in emergency rooms from over four hours to less than two.

## Mental Health Crisis Response

There are several models in which police and mental health professionals work together to respond to mental health crises. One example is “Car programs” which exist in many areas including Surrey, North Cowichan/ Duncan, Vancouver, and Kamloops. These programs

pair an officer, sometimes in a muted or more casual uniform, with a mental health professional in a police vehicle to respond to a person who is experiencing a mental health crisis. The Committee heard about several benefits of this model. Fraser Health noted that the combination of medical records and RCMP Police Records Information Management Environment (PRIME) files allow the Car 67 program to have the bigger picture of the possible mental health or situational crisis which allows the nurse and the RCMP officer to make the most informed decision on how best to serve the individual in need. Both Island Health and Interior Health associated this approach to a reduction in emergency department use. Island Health also described how Car 60’s approach is less authoritative and more supportive than a police-only response and creates a sense of comfort and safety as opposed to authority and fear. At the same time, many organizations noted that “Car” programs are only available at certain times and wait times to access the service are long. Feminists Deliver and Vancouver Women’s Health Collective described mixed results with respect to the Car 87 model, particularly when working with marginalized communities. Further, Chief Dagher of the Service de police de l’agglomération de Longueuil noted that focusing on the efficiency of hybrid teams is good but shifting police culture is where attention is needed.

The Committee heard about other co-response models, including tactical emergency medical services in which specially trained paramedics are embedded with specially trained law enforcement teams to perform screening assessment and patient care in an environment that would not normally be appropriate for regular duty ambulance. Another model is Integrated Mobile Crisis Response Teams (IMCRTs) comprised of nurses, counsellors, child and mental health clinicians and police officers from Saanich and Victoria. Saanich Police Board noted that the IMCRT model has proved its effectiveness; however, with limited resources especially when there are multiple calls, they are unable to respond to every mental health crisis. Similarly, Staff Sergeant Boucher of the West Shore RCMP stated that despite the presence of IMCRT, mental health related complaints account for

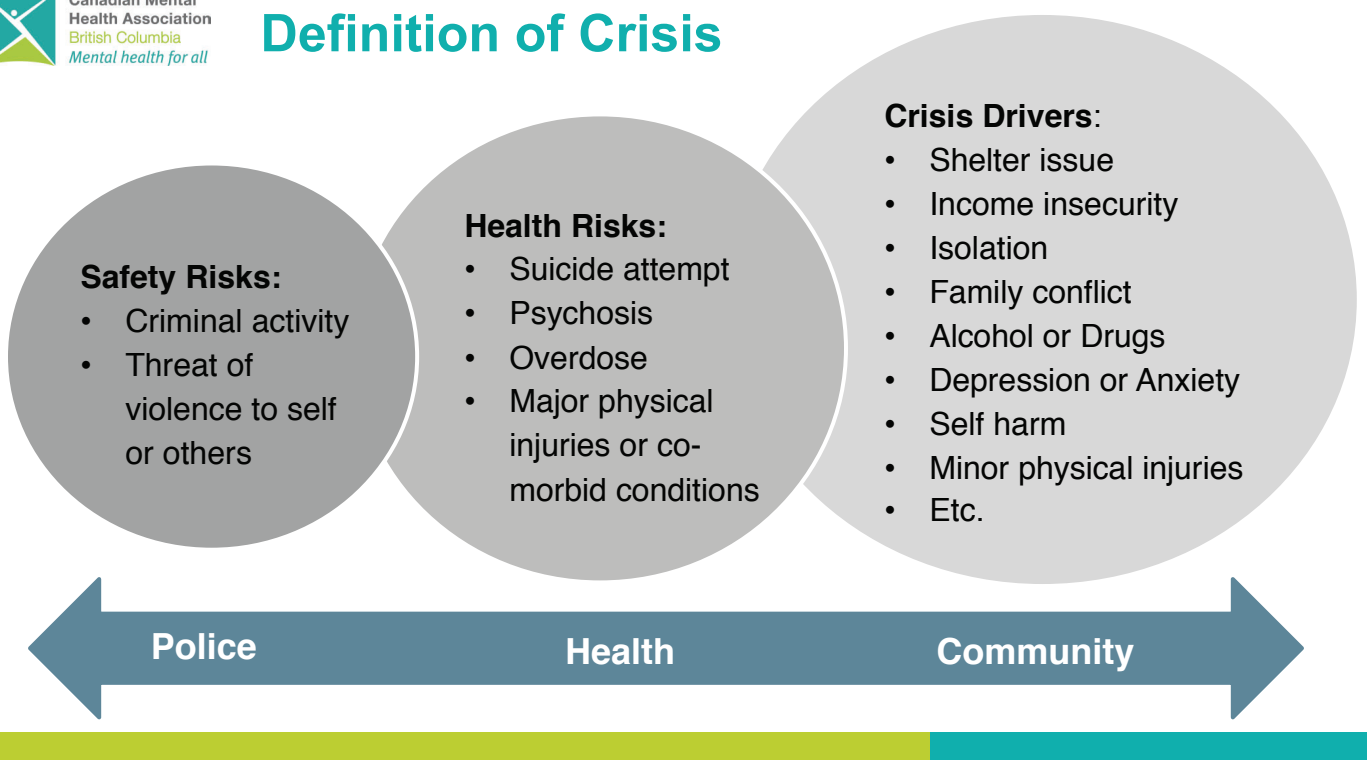
a large portion of the frontline policing workload. Ella Hale and Emma Epp shared their personal experiences having to call 911 which resulted in a police officer taking them to the emergency room after they were told that IMCRT was too busy. They stated that IMCRT needs to be available 24/7 and to have more staff as it is currently only available for half of the day and through the Vancouver Island Crisis Line.

A common theme in relation to co-response programs generally was that these models free up police time so they can respond to other matters. Covenant House Vancouver stated that by integrating mental health and addictions practitioners into crisis response, police officers can be alleviated of the added burden of addressing matters of a non-law enforcement nature, while offering greater frontline support to those in need. Mayor Moore of the City of Rossland noted that the RCMP would like to work with an outreach psychiatric nurse to attend every mental health call if possible. The Mayor added that even two days a week would make an immense difference and help the RCMP reduce their workload for mental health issues.

A few individuals and organizations highlighted that police presence is necessary on these teams due to safety concerns in responding to mental health crises. Vancouver Police Department stated that 84 percent of mental health calls require police attendance because they involve danger and 12 percent involve weapons. Further, a registered psychiatric nurse emphasized that in their experience police presence is necessary to ensure the safety of the Car 67 nurses. Victoria Police Department noted that police are, and will remain, an important part of the response to mental health crises where there is a real or perceived immediate or potential threat to public safety, or as statute requires. They added that appropriate funding, staffing, training, and resources for police must continue to be part of the available mental health response resources in communities. In the Committee’s survey, some respondents who identified as having policing experience suggested that responding to mental health and addictions events should not be within the scope of policing at all, while others suggested that police need to be involved should situations become violent. Reach Out Response Network stated that the ideal is to have a continuum of care where civilian-led teams respond to non-violent crisis calls,



## Definition of Crisis



and in situations where safety may be at risk, a mental health worker attends with a police officer. Similarly, the Canadian Mental Health Association BC Division outlined a continuum of response with different crisis situations falling under the responsibility of the police, health professionals, or community organizations according to health and safety risks (see image above).

Some organizations commented on the appropriateness of police responding to mental health calls without mental health professionals. Elizabeth Fry Society of Greater Vancouver stated that because police officers are trained to respond with deadly force when faced with a threat, they should not address mental health complaints. They made the distinction between police accompanying mental health professionals, and police being *accompanied by* mental health professionals, noting a preference for the former.

With respect to individual experiences of police response to mental health emergencies, British Columbia Schizophrenia Society shared results of their informal survey of families who reached out to emergency services for a loved one in a police-involved mental health crisis. The majority of families indicated that their experiences with police and a mental health worker were positive; however, families who described negative encounters stated they continue to feel the traumatic effect, even after a long period of time. A significant number of respondents indicated that a mental health professional could not accompany police because they were either unavailable or team responses did not exist in their community.

Civilian-led teams are another alternative or complement to co-response teams. Reach Out Response Network is developing four civilian-led pilots in Toronto that send mental health crisis workers to respond to select categories of non-violent mental health crisis calls instead of police. Different from a co-responder model that dispatches police with mental health workers, the service will be a partnership between the City of Toronto and community agencies that will deliver the programming. The service will be accessible via 911, 211 and its own direct number. Another model is

the Peer Assisted Crisis Team launched in North and West Vancouver in November 2021 and expanding to Victoria and New Westminster. These teams partner a mental health professional with a peer support worker who has lived experience of mental illness or apprehension under the *Mental Health Act* who can speak to that experience and share a message of hope that recovery is possible. The Committee heard several references to CAHOOTS, which started in Eugene, Oregon and pairs a mental health crisis worker with a medic to respond to crisis calls through the 911 dispatch system. The team responds to traditional mental health calls, calls related to people experiencing homelessness, substance use, welfare checks, and other issues that require an immediate response but do not require police. Chief Chris Skinner of the Eugene Police Department emphasized that triaging and matching responses to the situation must be prioritized when considering implementing a CAHOOTS-type program.

While the Committee heard from some organizations about the need for police involvement in crisis response due to safety concerns, advocates for civilian-led teams noted that there are many circumstances where safety is not an issue. Crisis Centre of BC noted that the perception that people in mental health crisis are generally dangerous and unpredictable is rooted in stigma more than fact. Reach Out Response Network stated that they talked to existing community responder teams about rates of frontline staff injuries, and found that there have never been any serious injuries or deaths of any staff member on any of the teams. To ensure safety, they suggested: providing police radios to civilian-led crisis response teams; exploring staging protocols where police wait nearby to prevent their presence escalating a situation while allowing them to respond quickly if a situation becomes violent; and ensuring that calls that are likely to become violent are not sent to civilian-led teams through adequate dispatcher training. Similarly, Chief Skinner noted the importance of de-escalation and safety training for teams and explained that CAHOOTS responders receive training on de-escalation and physical self-protection skills.

Regarding the benefits of civilian-led teams, several organizations noted that they save money and allow for police resources to be reallocated. Some also stated that the teams divert people from unnecessary use of hospital emergency rooms and interactions with the criminal justice system. Canadian Mental Health Association BC Division noted that civilian-led teams decriminalize responses to mental illness, enable health responses to health emergencies, and help populations who are reluctant to call 911 or access mental health services.

A common argument for civilian-led teams was that police do not need to be first responders to mental health crises due to a variety of reasons including a lack of training in this area, fear or mistrust of police, and stigma associated with a police response. Superintendent Triance of the Kelowna RCMP noted that crisis response could be diverted to healthcare professionals and social workers who could assist people in navigating systems and barriers to health and wellness. Several individuals, including Jessica Hart, Alex Murphy and Alexandra Calbery, were of the view that police training on mental health crises is inadequate and stated that police response often heightens tensions or escalates situations involving people in crisis. Another individual described how police responding to mental health complaints arrive armed with bullet proof vests and a police car, which is quite intimidating for the person in crisis. Further, the BC First Nations Justice Council stated that police are ill-equipped to deal with complex situations of a social rather than criminal nature, as illustrated by the outcomes for Indigenous peoples. With respect to fear and mistrust, Health Justice noted that when a person needs mental health support, and especially when they are in crisis, they need access to services that they perceive as, and that actually are, safe and inclusive for them; however, for many, police cause fear which means they will not seek help. Further, Crisis Centre of BC explained that those who are more likely to have a reason to fear the police are less likely to reach out for help; this means marginalized and racialized folks have less access to crisis support. Julia Kaisla, Executive Director of the Canadian Mental Health Association,

North and West Vancouver Branch stated that a significant number of people are not calling 911, even during a serious mental health emergency due to a lack of trust, either in police systems here or in their home countries. Kaisla added that many people are afraid of impacting the custody of children or their immigration status. Some organizations noted that civilian-led teams reduce stigma of mental illness and substance use, particularly when peer supports are involved. BC Urban Mayors' Caucus stated that using frontline police services to address mental health and addictions can be stigmatizing and perpetuates the criminalization of vulnerable people. Vancouver Area Network of Drug Users stated that the stigmatization is embedded in the function of the police since people who experience homelessness or addiction are seen as 'problems'; they noted that training will not solve this issue.

*Police can be vital in dealing with these complex issues, but only when they have particular interests and experience. Otherwise, police training and mentality can escalate the situations rather than defuse. I have seen a street entrenched street based sex working women hug the officer who was bringing her in on warrant because of his compassion, understanding and commitment to serve all community. At the same time, I have experienced police action/inaction that has led to community members being assaulted, and witnessed incredible unacknowledged racism and classism from officers. (Survey respondent who identified as having healthcare experience)*

The Committee received several recommendations to integrate a mental health option within 911 services. Both BC Urban Mayors' Caucus and Victoria & Esquimalt Police Board explained that having the 911 Fire-Police-Ambulance options as the only choices if someone is in urgent mental distress is not meeting the needs of people in mental health distress, as it most often results in armed police attending mental health-based situations which can escalate tensions. They pointed to

alternatives including a Fire-Police-Ambulance-Mental Health option or an expanded 811 call system as 811 currently does not enable rapid response or dispatch of mental health professionals. Chief Constable Lipinski of the Surrey Police Service and Superintendent Wright of the Prince George RCMP both commented on addiction and mental health issues in their jurisdictions and discussed the idea of placing a mental health worker in the operational communications centre to conduct assessments and provide immediate support for mental health calls without a criminal component. Superintendent Wright suggested that such a model would be particularly effective in smaller remote communities, which lack any resources other than police to attend those incidents. Reach Out Response Network noted that integration with 911 is a key to the success of the CAHOOTS model as 911 is often the only number people know to call and that this number is accessible to anyone, including when a phone is out of minutes or from a payphone. E-Comm noted, however, that a new responder agency for mental health emergencies would likely find it very difficult to be called on consistently and have standard information passed to them to enact their services because police call-taking, policies and standards technically sits with every municipality and agency individually. The public, particularly vulnerable members of the public, would not find consistent treatment easily and therefore, would not build the trust that would be needed for a service of that specialty nature to become effective.

## Preventative and Proactive Approaches

Many organizations emphasized the need for preventative and proactive approaches to mental health and addictions. Vancouver Police Department and Vancouver Coastal Health highlighted their Assertive Outreach Team (AOT) which provides support for individuals with substance use and mental health issues to help prevent their involvement in the criminal justice system. Another program, Assertive Community Treatment (ACT), provides wraparound multidisciplinary treatment to individuals with serious and persistent

mental illness with high emergency room use. Both AOT and ACT are proactive and involve information sharing agreements, and an early warning system identifying people before they are in crisis. Vancouver Coastal Health emphasized the impact of ACT and AOT on the healthcare system; since implementing these programs, there have been marked decreases in the number of mental health bed days as well as a decrease in police contacts and reduced lengths of stays in acute care units. BC Urban Mayors' Caucus advocated for increased investment and capacity in models such as ACT, AOT, and IMCRT so they can be available 24/7.

BC Association of Social Workers commented on the appropriateness of including police in these teams. They stated that the choice to embed police in ACT highlights beliefs and assumptions about the role of police with regard to mental health treatment as well as stereotypes about people with mental illness. They also shared that those who had interactions with ACT described perceptions of being continually monitored by their treatment teams, a general lack of personal agency in their healthcare decisions, and the constant worry that they could be detained and forcibly taken to hospital by police if they did not comply with their treatment team's demands.

Business Improvement Areas of British Columbia stated that prevention, treatment and harm reduction services and resources have not been sufficient to address the symptoms, nor the systemic root causes of mental health and drug addiction issues, which has increasingly and unfairly left police as the default solution. The City of North Vancouver stated that investing in upstream and preventative interventions, through the appropriate mental health and addictions services, as well as social services, will save money downstream in the healthcare and criminal justice systems over time.

## Continuum of Care

A common theme heard by the Committee was that increasing funding for health and social services will allow police to concentrate on core policing activities.



When asked what role and responsibility, if any, police should have with respect to mental health and wellness, addictions, harm reduction, homelessness, and other complex social issues, survey respondents expressed overwhelmingly that police should either not be involved or only play a supporting role, recognizing that funding needs to be increased elsewhere to support this shift. Both the BC Urban Mayors' Caucus and Victoria and Esquimalt Police Board referenced the need for a continuum of care for mental health and addictions services to allow police to concentrate their resources on frontline responsibilities and serious crime rather than calls which other services are better equipped to address. To reduce the presence of police where not required, First Nations Summit suggested equipping and integrating a host of community-based service providers to provide frontline and wraparound services into the models of community safety. The City of New Westminster stated that to be able to reduce the reliance on police, alternatives to prison or jail alternatives need to be created to respond to behaviours, situations, and crimes caused by poverty and desperation. Noting that demands on police across BC have steadily increased, the National Police Federation expressed support for increasing social services funding which would allow for officers to concentrate on core policing services while still being available for community-based work; however, they qualified that any additional investment in social services funding or resources must not come from already insufficient police budgets. Similarly, Rob Creasser, a retired member of the RCMP, shared that if roles are to be reallocated from police to other agencies, it is necessary that these agencies be provided with the resources to be effective because half measures will not help address mental health, addiction, homelessness, criminal behaviour, and other societal issues.

*The public safety system — police, fire, EMS, CAHOOTS, any of those things — is like an emergency room. It's a great spot for intake. It's a great spot to be the first touch for something. But if you don't build the hospital around it so that these folks that get stabilized out on the street don't*

*have off-ramps to wellness, then you're responding to the same people over and over and over again.*  
(Chief Skinner, Eugene Police Department)

*A crisis service is only as effective as the services it can divert people towards. If the ER is the only service available in your community, you're not going to be able to divert people away from the ER, because that's the only place. Making sure that there's an additional funding push, when you're building these models, for crisis beds, peer respite centres, reducing wait times for mental health services, supportive housing....* (Rachel Bromberg, co-founder, Reach Out Response Network)

Organizations and individuals emphasized the need for services and supports related to addiction as well as alignment between harm reduction and policing practices. Common Beacon Media stated that the length of time people are addicted to substances increases violent mental illness incidents, stress on police, and incidents of excessive use of force. They noted that without addressing the root of the problem, government costs will continue to rise as will negative policing outcomes. Homalco First Nation explained that a by-product of addictions in the community is increased assaults, sexual violence, and child apprehensions. They noted that treatment centres for addiction have not been effective; once a member returns to the community, their sobriety only lasts a couple of days, so it is essential to address the trauma underpinning the addiction. Interior Health noted that it is important that police do not disrupt harm reduction activities as this can lead to higher risk substance use practices. They also discussed community action teams which use a collaborative approach to helping communities develop partnerships to provide focused, action orientated strategies tailored to local community needs to support the overdose crisis. An individual referenced Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion as an example of a community-based diversion approach with the goals of improving public safety and public order

while reducing unnecessary justice system involvement of people who participate in the program.

*Experts say that addiction is a health issue, not a criminal one. In most cases, people living with addictions are best served by a health system response rather than a justice system response. For example, the use of police cells for sobering an individual is not the best use of that resource and isn't really the best solution for that individual either. Ultimately, we won't be arresting our way out of this crisis. (Christine Massey, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions)*

Indigenous peoples are overrepresented in overdose deaths. The Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions acknowledged that there is racism in both the health system and the police system and shared that Indigenous people accounted for 16 percent of overdose deaths between January and May 2020 but only represent 3.3 percent of BC's population. They also explained that experiences of stereotyping, profiling, and discrimination can result in people avoiding primary and preventative care for mental health and substance use challenges. Further, a lack of culturally appropriate and trauma-informed responses for Indigenous people who experience mental health crises can result in re-traumatization and the criminalization of behaviours that come from illness. Nurses and Nurse Practitioners of BC highlighted a 2019 research study published in the *Harm Reduction Journal* which employed the use of talking circles to learn more about healthcare needs of Indigenous peoples; the study identified primary themes including barriers to accessing effective detox and substance use treatment, long wait times, culturally inappropriate policies and structures (such as faith-based recovery plans), and the importance of providing Indigenous peoples with a peer-led treatment program.

The Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions noted there are unique challenges for mental health and substance use services in rural and remote communities, including fewer staff resources in both health and police services

which are often spread out over larger geographic areas, a lack of community-based mental health services to divert people from the criminal justice system, and lower capacity in smaller hospitals. Gabriola Health and Wellness Collaborative echoed these challenges and advocated for a rural mental health and domestic violence response model in which mental health services are resourced to work collaboratively with local police to ensure individuals suffering from mental illness are treated in a way that addresses the behaviour in the context of the illness.

## Training

BC RCMP explained that officers undergo mandatory training every three years in crisis intervention and de-escalation, as well as trauma-informed policing. Officers are also equipped with naloxone to treat overdose victims. They noted that an enhanced training program is in development for police officers who have an interest in this area or already have specialized education such as a psychology degree. The Committee heard several calls for increased police training in relation to mental health and addictions with several organizations pointing to limitations in current training. John Howard Society Pacific stated that without lived experience, police officers are not prepared to manage incidents involving active addictions and mental health, sharing that they have seen people under the influence assaulted because police do not understand mental health and addictions. Similarly, the BC Centre on Substance Use Family Member and Caregiver Representatives Committee stated that it appears police are not given the training necessary to handle some of the difficult situations they are put in, especially when dealing with people who are suffering from mental illness or intoxication. Native Courtworker and Counselling Association of British Columbia stated that there is a lack of comprehensive, ongoing training for police officers in the recognition of mental illness and in mental health crisis intervention. A mother of two sons who suffer from mental illness and substance use issues shared positive experiences of being treated with courtesy, respect, and kindness when calling the

police. This individual noted, however, that current police training seems to focus on suppressing and restraining an individual in distress as quickly as possible which can escalate the situation and dehumanize the person in distress. Mental health, including understanding addiction and the impact of police presence, was also a common response to the Committee's survey question asking in which areas officers would like to receive additional training. While the Committee received several recommendations related to mental health and addictions, de-escalation, and trauma-informed practices, First Nations Leadership Council highlighted that a lack of capacity among police services to respond to complex social issues can be partially addressed by training; however, while a culturally relevant, trauma-informed policing service is crucial, it cannot mitigate the need to engage the expertise and services of other social service professions and organizations.

## *Mental Health Act*

The Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions outlined different roles for police in mental health and substance use related incidents under the *Mental Health Act* including assisting with apprehension and transportation (section 22), apprehension by police and warrant for admission (section 28), and returning individuals to facility (sections 39 and 41). They explained that, under section 28, the police officer is responsible for determining if the criteria for apprehension under the Act (if the individual is endangering themselves or others and if they appear to have a mental health disorder) are met. If the criteria are met, then the individual remains in custody of police until a physician has determined whether criteria for involuntary admission to a facility have been met. They noted that the requirement that police can only hand off a patient to a physician is what often drives the issue of long wait times in emergency departments as police officers often need to wait for an extended period for a physician to examine an individual in their custody. Many police organizations commented on this requirement noting that it is both expensive and time consuming and that this time could

be used to respond to calls for service or engage in proactive policing. According to a 2008 report by the Vancouver Police Department, police were reluctant to take a person into custody under the *Mental Health Act* because after spending many hours waiting for the person to be admitted, police found that patients were quickly released, or admission was denied because they had committed a crime. To address this issue, several organizations advocated for giving special constable status to health authority security to take custody of individuals apprehended under the *Mental Health Act* on arrival at the hospital. Victoria and Esquimalt Police Board and BC Urban Mayors' Caucus qualified that this should be subject to security staff completing training equivalent to that provided to police department special constables, including trauma-informed care training. BC Schizophrenia Society explained that allowing, when safe, the use of a first certificate which allows mental health staff or sheriffs, relatives, or ambulance personnel to apprehend and transport a person experiencing a crisis, would reduce the need for police resources and create less anxiety and stigma for the person.

As for the number of *Mental Health Act* occurrences in BC, the National Police Federation stated that between January and August 2020, the BC RCMP responded to 46,705 occurrences which eclipses the 41,755 occurrences in the rest of Canada combined. Further, First Nations Leadership Council noted that, in one year, Vancouver police alone apprehended 17,000 people under the *Mental Health Act* and Indigenous people and young adults are disproportionately reflected in these numbers. They explained that these statistics are indicative of a system that is not adequately equipped or resourced to meet the unique vulnerabilities of those dealing with mental health and substance use issues, and instead relies on enforcement and constraint.

Regarding involuntary admission, Canadian Mental Health Association BC Division noted a significant discrepancy between the number of calls that the RCMP respond to for a *Mental Health Act* occurrence and the number of people that are involuntarily admitted into a hospital. They explained that the majority of people

transported by police to a hospital appear to not meet the criteria for involuntary hospitalization and are not likely to receive the care they need. Community Legal Assistance Society stated that involuntary admissions often involve police contact and noted that apprehension by police should be a last resort when there is an imminent risk of harm; instead, interventions should be carried out by mental health and community resources with the training to assist a person in crisis whenever possible. They added that warrants often have the unfortunate and counterproductive consequence of driving people into hiding, away from supports and services, for fear of being apprehended by police. Further, they stated that warrants are unfair because they are issued unilaterally by the director of the detaining facility, without independent review by a judge or justice of the peace.

The Committee heard about the experiences of individuals apprehended under the *Mental Health Act*. Health Justice explained that when apprehension by police takes place, it carries the risk of creating harm or trauma for the person apprehended and detained. The harms generated by these experiences can lead people with mental health needs to avoid health and social services. Further, Care Not Cops explained that embedding police in the *Mental Health Act* specifically impacts communities that continue to be disproportionately harmed and targeted by police violence, including Black and Indigenous people, people of colour, youth, people with disabilities as well as people who live in poverty and use substances. The Crisis Centre of BC reached out to supporters to ask them to share experiences with mental health crisis response and they frequently heard about the 'revolving door' where police would respond to a mental health crisis, take the person to hospital, and after a lengthy wait, emergency room staff would determine the crisis did not warrant hospitalization, and the individual would be released, sometimes without any way to get home, having been taken under duress with no time to get their wallet. They stated that in every mental health apprehension that ends without hospitalization, someone is stripped of their basic rights and did not get the help they needed.

One individual shared that their granddaughter had just passed her fourteenth birthday when she first ran away from home. Police did their best to help track her down but explained that they were prevented from delivering her for treatment without her consent. The individual stated that the *Mental Health Act* prevented police from properly helping their granddaughter.

With respect to individual rights, Community Legal Assistance Society stated that the *Mental Health Act* should require that police inform the individual why they are being apprehended and of their right to speak with a lawyer. In particular, it is critical that people understand they are being apprehended under the *Mental Health Act*, and not for criminal purposes. They added that for the right to counsel to be meaningful, an independent rights advice service must be established to provide timely advice to those apprehended or detained under the Act. Canadian Bar Association British Columbia Branch stated that BC is one of the only provinces that does not provide independent legal advice for people who are involuntarily detained for mental health treatment. Having someone readily available to provide legal advice ensures that patients will have access to an advocate who can explain what is happening and help them understand their legal rights and choices.

## Wellness Checks

Vancouver Police Department provided several examples in which police are required to undertake wellness checks or requests to physically confirm the wellbeing of an individual who is not responding. They noted that no other agency is equipped or available 24/7, 365 days a year to be able to attend these calls and that 46 percent of their 10,000 wellbeing checks each year occur in the evening. Additionally, they stated that there are statutory authorities that allow police to be able to breach doors or to apprehend someone if they are experiencing a mental health crisis. Many organizations and individuals, including BC Urban Mayors' Caucus, advocated for wellness checks to be performed by healthcare workers or other non-police professionals who have specialized knowledge and training. First United Church Community

Ministry Society stated that there are too many cases of wellness checks that result in Indigenous or Black people being killed by police or cases which have resulted in tenants being evicted for the disturbance that the police cause. Dr. David Fisher and social worker Gisele Benoit shared that the current system for wellness checks lends itself to escalation of mental health crises with a command and control approach that often creates fear. They stated that specially trained police should be called upon only as backup and instead the first person to meet with the recipient should be chosen from a continuum of peer support and mental health professionals. British Columbia Schizophrenia Society advocated for more police and mental health worker teams modelled after Car 87 in Vancouver for wellness checks, noting that there are often safety concerns in these calls. Another model highlighted by Nurses and Nurse Practitioners is a pilot project in Ontario in which Indigenous-led crisis response teams replace police officers on mental health calls and wellness checks.

*Imagine for yourselves: two in the morning, a bang on your door and the shout "Police." In 40 milliseconds, adrenaline is coursing through your body. You're on high alert. A quarter of a second later, your brain kicks in and explains your physiological reaction: "Something terrible has happened." ...Imagine a peer intervention. A knock. "Hey, sis. This is Bill. I'm worried about you. Are you hearing me?" Police backup would be out of sight. (Dr. David Fisher)*

investigations. Further, the Advocate stated that specific training for police officers is required to understand and identify the unique characteristics and nuances of the aging process that can lead to abuse, neglect and self-neglect. Additionally, the Advocate noted that uniformed police presence can exacerbate issues of potential abuse or neglect during wellness checks for seniors.

The Committee also heard about wellness checks for seniors. The Office of the Seniors Advocate stated that BC's growing senior population requires improved procedures, defined roles for police, consistency across related legislation, and improved data collection and reporting regarding wellness checks for seniors. The Seniors Advocate shared that there were 1,429 missing person reports for those over 65 years of age in BC in 2020, which represents 11 percent of all adult cases, and raised the importance of reliable data for missing person

# Complex Social Issues

## Gender-Based Violence and Sexual Assault

Several organizations commented on the prevalence of gender-based violence and sexual assault in BC. Ending Violence Association of BC shared that thousands of women and girls, two-spirit and gender non-binary people, racialized women, Indigenous women and others are sexually assaulted in BC every year. As explained by the Downtown Eastside Women's Centre and the Vancouver Rape Relief and Women's Shelter, intersecting factors, including identity, health issues, occupation, and poverty (which disproportionately impacts Indigenous, Black and racialized communities), put women at heightened risk of violence. With respect to domestic violence calls, BC RCMP shared that between 2013 and 2019, there was an increase in both call volume, which increased by 36 percent, and in service time, which increased by 48 percent. Further, Canadian Bar Association British Columbia Branch referred to reports that during the peak of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, calls to a Vancouver domestic violence crisis line spiked by 300 percent. Regarding police response, West Coast Legal Education and Action Fund Association stated that policing has failed survivors of gender-based violence, including sexual assault, because it is inadequately investigated by police officers. They added that survivors of sexual assault, particularly those who face intersecting forms of marginalization, frequently state they do not want to go to the police or would require additional support to do so. Further, Jill Parker, a former police officer, stated that it is inhumane to put survivors through the investigation process, the invasive collection of physical evidence, and the often humiliating and

traumatizing court process for a system that is most often futile and potentially harmful to survivors.

Several organizations and individuals, including Ending Violence Association of BC, noted that there are no standard policies, guidelines, best practices, mandatory training or oversight for sexual assault response and investigation; rather, each department has their own policies and regulations. Battered Women's Support Services discussed the need for a comprehensive review of the policing of domestic violence and sexualized violence. They explained that they hear of troubling responses by police when they arrive at domestic violence circumstances, where they tend to not follow policies that have been created and designed to guide them to perform proper investigations, particularly with respect to assigning the primary aggressor and interviewing neighbours and other potential witnesses. Regarding data, Canadian Bar Association British Columbia Branch stated that Vancouver Police Department statistics only record sex offences and assaults; they do not record domestic violence, and the statistics do not report the victim's or the assailant's gender. They noted the need for consistent and accessible data to identify patterns of gender-based violence that could aid in prevention.

The Committee heard about the need for police training with respect to gender-based violence and sexual assault. Ending Violence Association of BC explained that a survivor's interaction with the police will make the difference in how they respond to this trauma for the rest of their life. They shared that a police officer, due to unconscious bias, may imply blame or that they

do not believe a survivor, may express concern for the accused, and may not understand consent and the effects of trauma. They shared a young woman's story about her experience dealing with an untrained police officer following a sexual assault; the young woman said that the sexual assault was nothing compared to how she was spoken to and treated by police. One individual shared their experience going to the police following a sexual assault of a roommate. Following their deposition, one of the officers stated that they thought their roommate was lying for attention. The individual stated the experience left them feeling small and powerless and that they do not believe police are equipped to or trained to handle sexual assault cases.

Many organizations advocated for improved supports and services for survivors and pointed to the need for police to collaborate with service providers. Battered Women's Support Services shared that community-based services are a vital part of ensuring women's safety. They stated that these services are underfunded and under-resourced in relation to the amount of violence that is occurring, both in families and around sexualized violence. With respect to police response and investigation, Vancouver Rape Relief and Women's Shelter highlighted the importance of women being able to report assault in the language they are most comfortable speaking. Although police have written commitments to use interpreters, women are often pressured to use a language they have limited comfort and ability with, and so the Shelter is put in the position of arranging volunteer interpreters. Further, they noted that straightforward accommodations to make women more comfortable and more confident in reporting to police, such as having a female officer take their statement or for an advocate to be present, are treated as exorbitant requests.

## Children and Youth

The Committee heard differing perspectives about police in schools and about school liaison officer programs. The Human Rights Commissioner noted that concerns have been raised by marginalized and racialized students, their parents, and communities about having police in schools.

The Commissioner stated that the rationale for school liaison officer programs is unclear, and that research and the experience of racialized students show that these programs make them less safe at school and expose them to harmful impacts including disproportionately high rates of suspension and expulsions of Black students. She noted that this can damage prospects, criminalize common student indiscretions and signal to those whose cultural histories involve oppressive police action that school is not a welcoming, safe place for them. Similarly, one individual, who works in a public elementary school, stated that the presence of officers in school districts, contributes to an unnecessary climate of fear and hypervigilance that debilitates the learning process and socio-emotional outcomes for marginalized students and staff. Further, another individual noted that school liaison programs divert funding from educational institutions and that police presence in schools enforce the school to prison pipeline and create a dangerous environment for children both physically and psychologically. While some respondents to the Committee's survey similarly noted that school liaison officers make students uncomfortable and suggested removing police from schools, school liaison officers and school programs generally received positive reviews. Respondents who indicated they had experience in policing and healthcare referenced these programs as positive initiatives that help build relationships between police and the community. Implementing these programs was frequently suggested as a means to improve relationships between police and the community across several respondent categories and many respondents expressed disappointment that these programs have been removed from certain schools.

Another common theme related to children and youth was trauma. The Representative for Children and Youth provided examples of personal stories of youth who interacted with police in which police behaved inappropriately and stated that they need to be held accountable to ensure public confidence. The Representative noted that the use of police in these types of situations is a comment on the lack of support services for children and youth and demonstrates how policing cannot be looked at in isolation. Elizabeth Fry

Society of Greater Vancouver explained that the arrest of a parent can have a significant impact on a child whether or not the child is present at the time of the arrest. The Society has raised the matter of developing a policy to safeguard children of arrested parents with different police departments, but to their knowledge this has not occurred. Delegated Aboriginal Agencies also highlighted the trauma experienced when Indigenous children are taken from their parents. They discussed the need for the *Police Act* to clearly address the way police and the Ministry of Children and Family Development work together. Vancouver Aboriginal Child and Family Services Society also advocated for investment, support, and a trauma-informed response to shift the experience of Indigenous children in care. The Committee also heard about the Kelowna Child Advocacy Centre, where child abuse, sexual violence and serious crime involving youth are investigated and family support provided. Superintendent Triance of the Kelowna RCMP explained that the RCMP partners with service providers, social workers, the Westbank First Nation and others to respond to children impacted by trauma, providing them trauma-informed policing services and culturally appropriate services at the centre. Superintendent Triance stated that these centres are best practices to improve outcomes for victims of child abuse and trauma, so long it is done in purposeful collaboration.

## Decriminalization and De-stigmatization

The Committee received many submissions related to decriminalization, including recommendations related to all poverty-survival behaviours, sex work, immigration, and drugs. Pivot Legal Society explained that criminalization exerts control on people through formal systems, like the court system and legislation, as well as informal mechanisms, such as tools for managing private, hybrid, and public spaces and practices that control individual conduct. They stated that to address the broad harms of criminalization, law and policymakers must make recommendations that extend beyond the *Police Act* or risk a siloed and ineffective approach to eradicating stigma and bias. BC Civil

Liberties Society and First United Church Community Ministry Society stated that achieving community safety includes full decriminalization of sex work, drugs, public intoxication, poverty, and immigration status as well as the recognition of the unique nature of Indigenous protests to immediately lessen how Black, Indigenous and racialized communities are criminalized, surveilled, stigmatized and marginalized.

*End the criminalization of homelessness by eliminating bylaw infractions and criminal charges for sleeping or tenting in public spaces, and end the displacement of tent cities.*

*Develop guidelines to facilitate greater use of police discretion not to lay charges especially for minor poverty-related offences. (Recommendations from Red Women Rising)*

With respect to sex work, the Committee heard about the criminalization of the demand for sexual services. Living in Community Society explained that in 2013, the Supreme Court of Canada unanimously determined that Canada's sex work related laws were unconstitutional; however, they noted that when new legislation, the *Protection of Communities and Exploited Persons Act* received Royal Assent in 2014, it reinforced the same unconstitutional laws and practices. They added that this legislation focuses on trying to criminalize the demand for sexual services; while sex work is legal, many related aspects such as materially benefiting, recruiting, advertising, public communications, and purchasing of sex work are not. Both Living in Community Society and Centre for Gender and Sexual Health Equity noted that end-demand criminalization and associated policing undermine sex workers' occupational health and safety as workers are forced to work in more clandestine and isolated locations, they cannot work indoors, work together, and are unable to set clear and safe boundaries with clients.

*Repeal laws that criminalize or increase harm for Indigenous women in the sex trade. (Recommendation from Red Women Rising)*



Organizations highlighted that sex work is often conflated with trafficking which fails victims of trafficking as resources are spent trying to “save” sex workers. One individual stated that criminalization, repressive policies, and efforts to “rescue”, not only harm migrant sex workers, but also deny migrant sex workers’ agency. Further, SWAN Vancouver stated that training is not enough to shift the inherent culture of policing, in which police only see sex workers as victims in need of saving or criminals breaking the law and are unable to see sex work as legitimate work.

The Committee heard there is a need for consistent guidelines related to enforcement of sex work. Living in Community Society explained that in 2013 the Vancouver Police Department developed Sex Work Enforcement Guidelines which adopted a non-intervention approach for consenting adults in the sex trade and that in 2017, the British Columbia Association of Chiefs of Police also developed similar guidelines that superseded and effectively replaced the Vancouver Police Department guidelines. Living in Community Society noted, however, that little to no progress has been made on disseminating harm reduction-based sex work enforcement guidelines throughout BC and the overarching British Columbia Association of Chiefs of Police guidelines are not always enforced as sex workers continue to report being routinely surveilled and harassed by law enforcement.

*9.11 We call upon all police services to develop and implement guidelines for the policing of the sex industry in consultation with women engaged in the sex industry, and to create a specific complaints mechanism about police for those in the sex industry. (Call for Justice from *The Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls*)*

*All police forces should implement Sex Work Enforcement Guidelines similar to those in Vancouver that support the safety of sex workers in police interactions. (Recommendation from *Red Women Rising*)*

Organizations described a general distrust towards police officers among women who engage in sex work, including im/migrant sex workers. Centre for Gender and Sexual Health Equity stated that because of the historic and continued violence perpetrated by law and immigration enforcement systems, for many sex workers calling the police may never be a preferred or safe option. They noted that scaling up support for sex worker- and community-led initiatives should be prioritized over policing and criminalization. For im/migrant sex workers, SWAN Vancouver explained that federal Immigration and Refugee Protection Regulations prohibit temporary residents from working “with an employer who, on a regular basis, offers strip tease, erotic dance, escort services or erotic massages”, and that there is surveillance of “at-risk” communities through preventative policing, especially police stings, workplace raids and rescue campaigns. These policing practices result in feelings of trauma and victimization as well as makes it dangerous for im/migrant sex workers to seek help from authorities if they experience violence or victimization, for fear of arrest, detention or deportation. Regarding immigration, BC Civil Liberties Association stated that data shows that police officers across Canada call the Warrant Response Centre of the Canada Border Services Agency more than 10,000 times every year. In most cases, these calls are to conduct a “status check” to actively seek out information about someone’s immigration situation in encounters unrelated to immigration warrants. They stated that municipal police departments across Canada have no statutory or common law legal duty to seek out or disclose immigration status to federal officials and that immigrant communities have been calling for sanctuary city policies across Canada for a long time. In addition, they noted that “don’t ask” regulations in the *Police Act* would prevent police officers from inquiring into anyone’s immigration status during encounters with police, and “don’t tell” provisions would mandate that the police treat personal information as confidential and be restricted from communicating this information to federal immigration and border services agencies.

Provincial Health Officer Dr. Bonnie Henry noted that addressing the overdose crisis through a predominately criminal justice-based approach does not address what is ultimately a health issue. Dr. Henry described how the criminal justice system cycles individuals through the system and discussed a need for an effective decriminalization program and holistic supports to help people rebuild, connect and move away from that cycle. While the *Criminal Code* is federal, Dr. Henry explained how adjustments to the *Police Act* could move BC towards decriminalization. The 2018 report, *Stopping the Harm: Decriminalization of People Who Use Drugs in B.C.* presents two options: one is to use the powers under the Act to allow the minister to set broad provincial priorities to not pursue charges against people who had possession of small amounts of drugs; and another is to develop a new regulation under the Act to include a provision that would prevent members of a police service in BC from expending resources on enforcement of simple possession offences under section 4(1) of the *Controlled Drugs and Substances Act*.

The Committee heard that decriminalization is needed to divert Indigenous people from the criminal justice system. First Nations Summit stated that the decriminalization of drugs can play a key role in the presumption of diversion and, ultimately, the successful implementation of the first path of reform in the BC First Nations Justice Strategy. They noted that recent changes to federal mandatory minimum sentences related to non-violent drug offences are a step in the right direction and that it is imperative that both the provincial and federal governments champion initiatives and policies that provide support and programs intended to divert Indigenous peoples from the criminal justice system towards programs focused on their health. Similarly, First Nations Leadership Council stated that decriminalizing people who use drugs, working towards regulating illicit substances, increasing harm reduction programming and education, and vastly increasing supports for culturally appropriate addiction treatment must be part of a national strategy to reduce the number of Indigenous people drawn into the criminal justice system through drug offences, especially simple possession offences.

*End the criminalization of people who use or possess small amounts of illicit substances.*  
(Recommendation from *Red Women Rising*)

## Homelessness

The Ministry of Attorney General explained that research shows that people experiencing homelessness are more likely to be victims of violent crime than perpetrators and that police play an important role supporting the safety and security of people experiencing homelessness and those in housing programs. They noted that overrepresented groups in homeless populations include people in mental health crisis, Indigenous peoples, racialized groups, gender diverse people, and women who have experienced violence. As such, they stated that a trauma-informed approach is needed in police response. When asked what role and responsibility, if any, police should have with respect to mental health and wellness, addictions, harm reduction, homelessness, and other complex social issues, respondents to the Committee's survey with policing experience were largely of the view that the role of police in complex social issues is unfortunate. Many of them expressed that funding in other areas has been reduced and the responsibility of addictions and homelessness has fallen on police. Many identified that while homelessness is not a crime, it can be associated with property crime and police should only be involved when violence or crimes occur.

The Committee received a few recommendations that addressed property seizure and confiscation of personal belongings from people who rely on public space. Canadian Bar Association British Columbia Branch explained that section 489(1) of the *Criminal Code* and section 23 of BC's *Offence Act* provide police with the power to seize items based on the officer's discretion. The powers are broad and limited only by the term "reasonable grounds." They noted that people who rely on public space, who are often in possession of all or most of their belongings, experience a risk that their personal property will be seized and potentially disposed of by police.

Another common theme was the need for increased housing supply and supports for individuals experiencing homelessness. Vancouver Police Department Diversity and Indigenous Relations Unit explained that the Department's priority with homelessness is to prevent victimization. They stated that adequate supports need to be available, given the prevalence of mental health and addiction issues associated with many of the street entrenched, and that failing to provide these supports results in significant impact to the individual and community. They added that an integrated trauma-informed approach to health care, including mental health and addiction, is needed to address homelessness.

# Indigenous Peoples and Reconciliation

## Community Tripartite Agreements

As described by the Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General, Community Tripartite Agreements are between Public Safety Canada, a provincial government, and a First Nations community to provide policing services that are dedicated and responsive to the needs and cultures of the communities. Common concerns about these agreements included lack of resources leading to under-policing, poor communication between RCMP and communities in negotiating or signing new agreements, confusion, and concerns about funding as well as complaints of crimes going uninvestigated.

Several First Nations described their experience with Community Tripartite Agreements including Fort Nelson First Nation, Tsleil-Waututh Nation, Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc, the Tahltan Band, Xaxlí'p Nation, St'át'imc Nation communities, and Nisga'a Village of Gitwinksihlkw. Fort Nelson First Nation shared that, for over a decade, they have been promised an RCMP officer to work directly with the community; however, the officer's time is split with another community, resulting in both communities being under-served. Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc noted that they have not had a Community Tripartite Agreement meeting in four years and that annual extensions are simply made to the agreement. Similarly, the Chief of the Tahltan Band shared that their Community Tripartite Agreement seems to be signed every year but not really negotiated or examined. Additionally, the Penelakut Tribe described their experience trying to establish a Community Tripartite Agreement, noting that the process has been delayed due

to a lack of communication by the provincial government. A positive example was shared by the Nisga'a Village of Gitwinksihlkw who noted that they have a letter of expectations with the Lisims detachment which is updated annually and that they work closely with the sergeant on establishing requirements concerning public safety, alcohol and drugs, cultural awareness, and going into schools. They have found this to be effective and would like to see this practice occur in all areas. The Committee heard from the BC Assembly of First Nations that the short-term nature of Community Tripartite Agreements makes long-term strategic planning challenging; therefore, community leadership is not able to effectively build vision and capacity around community safety needs.

## First Nations Policing Program

The Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General shared that the First Nations Policing Program (FNPP) provides policing services that are in addition to those provided under the provincial policing services agreement in order to enhance the effectiveness of policing services in communities in terms of cultural relevance and responsiveness to the public safety need of communities. To participate in the program, a First Nations community must enter into a Community Tripartite Agreement with Government of Canada and the provincial government. The BC RCMP stated that in most communities, FNPP members can focus on enhancing police service which typically involves proactive initiatives in communities but also involves direct support to frontline policing by

leveraging cultural knowledge, community resources and relationships to build trust and cooperation of victims and witnesses and ensuring trauma-informed approaches. Conversely, the First Nations Leadership Council, BC Assembly of First Nations and BC First Nations Justice Council stated that rather than augmenting existing police services, as was the intention, FNPP funding is often used to provide basic services. First Nations Leadership Council further explained that the FNPP is classified as a discretionary program which permits its underfunding in comparison to municipal and provincial police services.

*5.4 We call upon all governments to immediately and dramatically transform Indigenous policing from its current state as a mere delegation to an exercise in self-governance and self-determination over policing. To do this, the federal government's First Nations Policing Program must be replaced with a new legislative and funding framework, consistent with international and domestic policing best practices and standards, that must be developed by the federal, provincial, and territorial governments in partnership with Indigenous Peoples. (Call for Justice from The Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls)*

## Indigenous Administered Policing

The Committee heard from the BC First Nations Justice Council that jurisdictional ambiguity between federal, provincial or territorial, and Indigenous governments has resulted in the development of a "programming and funding" approach to policing that neglects to treat policing as an essential service on reserves as it is in non-Indigenous communities. They suggested that a new funding model should include resources for Indigenous peoples to begin establishing self-determined models of policing and public safety for their communities.

The Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General noted that the Stl'atl'imx Tribal Police Service is the only

example of a self-administered agreement in BC in which the police service is a designated policing unit under the *Police Act* and the agreement is between the federal government, the provincial government and the St'at'imc band council. The Chief Officer of the service described how the Indigenous-led police services functions with ten communities participating in the governance of the service; the communities have a say as to who will be their chief officer and can influence the initial hiring of other police officers, many of whom come from within the nation or neighbouring nations.

The Committee heard that community-based security patrols can often offer a timelier response, particularly in northern, rural, or remote communities, and may be more effective at de-escalating situations due to their own local knowledge. Additionally, the Nuu-chah-nulth Tribal Council stated that community-based security models, such as local peacekeeper officers, or the Bear Clan Patrol program based in Winnipeg, need to be expanded and legitimized.

## Over-policing and Under-policing

With respect to policing services in Indigenous communities, the BC Assembly of First Nations stated that First Nations people find themselves simultaneously over-policed and under-protected, which results in different but serious safety gaps which are rooted in racism, sexism, and colonialism. Several organizations and individuals emphasized the effects of over-policing on Indigenous peoples and the overrepresentation of Indigenous peoples in the criminal justice system as victims and offenders. The Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General stated that Indigenous peoples continue to be overrepresented in the criminal justice system as both victims and offenders, and crime rates in Indigenous communities are typically higher than in other communities.

The Committee heard from numerous Indigenous communities and leaders that they require better policing service and more involvement in police services. Chief Cliff Arnouse of the Adams Lake Band described a

limited relationship with the RCMP and a lack of police presence that contributes to an overall lack of trust in policing. Tk'emlúps Te Secwépemc stated the RCMP needs to be accountable for the services they provide as the community continues to experience a lack of investigation and follow up on files or incidents. Further, Homalco First Nation shared that they have discussed hiring a private security firm to do work that police are not doing in their community such as dealing with minor issues such as noise complaints and minor infractions. In regard to this, the First Nations Leadership Council stated that while addressing the root causes of this violence is key to transformational change, it is important that, when First Nations people do seek help from police and first responders, they receive it. They further shared that decades of inadequate responses impact the modern-day relationship and may cause First Nations peoples to be less willing to seek help from the police.

Additionally, many individuals expressed concern about the RCMP's interactions with Indigenous peoples, especially Indigenous activists and land defenders. BC Assembly of First Nations raised the ongoing issue of criminalization of Indigenous activists and land defenders and discussed the RCMP infringing upon the title and rights of the Wet'suwet'en citizens. They noted that language such as "rule of law," "national security" and "radicalized protestors" serve to delegitimize the laws, authority and legitimate interests of Indigenous communities involved.

## Police-Community Relations

Relationships between Indigenous communities and police were frequently highlighted as an area of concern by individuals and organizations. Mistrust, poor communication, and the short-term nature of officer postings were frequently highlighted as impediments to relationship building.

In relation to mistrust, Delegated Aboriginal Agencies shared findings from their own studies and survey which noted that Indigenous peoples did not trust the RCMP and would not use the RCMP service. Additionally,

Vancouver Aboriginal Community Policing Centre explained that no one is more policed than Indigenous peoples; however, when police arrive, the reaction from Indigenous people is fear, suspicion, mistrust, and hatred. The Committee often heard that one solution to address the mistrust of police is to provide data on the complaint and oversight process.

*Unfortunately, when the uniforms show up, the reaction from Indigenous People is this fear, suspicion, mistrust and hatred, because they don't expect them to come and help — hardly ever. (Norm Leech, Executive Director, Vancouver Aboriginal Community Policing Centre Society)*

Several First Nations expressed concerns about the lack of communication and consultation between police and the Indigenous communities they serve. For example, Chief Carmen McPhee of Tahltan Band stated that during a situation where a person with a warrant was on the Tahltan Band Reserve, the RCMP would not provide updates and did not communicate with leadership despite attempts to contact. Chief McPhee stated that more communications and leadership involvement would improve the relationship between RCMP and the community. Tk'emlúps Te Secwépemc also described a similar concern about lack of communication between their nation and police stating that their members feel they are not heard by police.

Regarding retention, Adams Lake Indian Band shared that often police officers are hired for two years, and then leave before any kind of relationship has been established. The Committee heard many similar concerns about the lack of retention and issues with the short durations of officer postings in communities which impede community relationships and trust. Sergeant Jon MacIntyre of the Tsay Keh Dene RCMP explained that the two-year, limited-duration postings makes it difficult to build community trust and foster police-community relationships. This can also limit the ability to build understanding of the cultures and practices of each community. Sergeant MacIntyre further noted

that this high turnover often leaves these communities underserved and under-resourced. Staff Sergeant Boucher of the West Shore RCMP stated that the West Shore detachment has a strong and positive relationship with both the Esquimalt and Songhees First Nations, largely due to the full-time First Nations policing officer who is dedicated to fostering a trusted relationship between the police and the community. Sergeant Boucher noted that postings at West Shore detachment are not limited in their duration and this stability in their First Nations policing officer position has allowed for the time necessary to build trust and respect.

*9.2 We call upon all actors in the justice system, including police services, to build respectful working relationships with Indigenous Peoples by knowing, understanding, and respecting the people they are serving.*

*9.3, vii End the practice of limited-duration posts in all police services, and instead implement a policy regarding remote and rural communities focused on building and sustaining a relationship with the local community and cultures. This relationship must be led by, and in partnership with, the Indigenous Peoples living in those remote and rural communities. (Calls for Justice from *The Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls*)*

## Culturally Appropriate Training

Numerous individuals noted that improving understanding and awareness of Indigenous peoples and cultures, including localizing the training to each community, could improve relations and help decrease racism and stereotyping. Dr. Judith Sayers, President of the Nuu-Chan-nulth Tribal Council, stated that there needs to be an understanding of the history of First Nations, and what is important to First Nations. Dr. Sayers stated that this should be done by mandating cultural training for police officers provided by Indigenous peoples in the *Police Act*. Similarly, First

Nations Summit stated that the need for clear standards for cultural competency and a consistent and systematic training program regarding Indigenous people in the justice system has been identified by all actors as a critical aspect of moving away from the discrimination of Indigenous peoples. Superintendent Wright of the Prince George RCMP stated that in personal experience, general Indigenous history and cultural awareness training on a national or provincial scale is insufficient to address the needs of local communities. In relation to this, Sergeant Fletcher of Northern Rockies RCMP detachment in Fort Nelson described how the Indigenous Policing Service members are working with Elders to develop a new orientation tour where members will meet with the local community, participate in cultural teachings and hear about the impact of residential schools in the communities they serve.

Additionally, Delegated Aboriginal Agencies discussed the need to reflect on the youth component within policing. They noted that many Indigenous children are in care, were formerly in care, or have been living in poverty; therefore, training on trauma-informed practice needs to incorporate an Indigenous lens.

*9.2, iv Undertake training and education of all staff and officers so that they understand and implement culturally appropriate and trauma-informed practices, especially when dealing with families of missing and murdered Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQIA people.*

*9.3, v In training recruits, include: history of police in the oppression and genocide of Indigenous Peoples; anti-racism and anti-bias training; and culture and language training. All training must be distinctions-based and relevant to the land and people being served; training must not be pan-Indigenous. (Calls for Justice from *The Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls*)*

## Justice System Reform

The BC Assembly of First Nations explained that there is a critical gap in the existing legislative framework affecting the ability for First Nations to effectively enforce and prosecute their own bylaws. Due to gaps in the jurisdictional coordination for prosecution of these bylaws, often neither the provincial nor the federal government will choose to prosecute, and First Nations governments typically do not have the financial resources required for prosecution. The BC Assembly of First Nations further explained that this often results in many police services ignoring First Nations bylaws which contributes to the lack of public safety and the under-protection experienced by First Nations communities. Moreover, they noted this demonstrates a fundamental gap in the recognition of First Nations jurisdiction. Similarly, the Musqueam Band shared that the Vancouver Police Department will not enforce Musqueam bylaws which has led to frustration in the community.

Further, Chief Councillor Marilyn Slett of Heiltsuk Nation noted that the Public Prosecution Service of Canada created a new initiative with the RCMP called Indigenous Communities Bylaw Prosecution Protocols in which the RCMP and the Prosecution Service agree to assist an Indigenous community by enforcing and prosecuting the community's COVID-19 related *Indian Act* bylaws; however, the RCMP and the Prosecution Service must agree that a bylaw is enforceable before they will agree to help enforce it. They stated that further changes must be implemented to strengthen the support Indigenous communities receive from the RCMP for *Indian Act* bylaw enforcement. To address these challenges, the Committee heard that the legislative framework should set a strong basis for enhancing partnerships, coordination, integration, and communication in First Nations jurisdictions within all sectors and reflect the critical need for First Nation governments to be able to enforce their laws.

Many organizations called attention to the BC First Nations Justice Strategy which was jointly developed by the BC First Nations Justice Council, BC First Nations communities, and the provincial government. A parallel

approach is being undertaken in collaboration with the Métis Justice Council. The strategy aims to make transformative changes to the justice system and address the lack of culturally appropriate justice services and over-incarceration of Indigenous peoples. The strategy mandates the justice system and its partners undertake work to reform the existing justice system to make it safer, culturally relevant, and more responsive to Indigenous peoples as well as undertake consistent and coordinated action to support the development of First Nations justice systems and institutions consistent with UNDRIP. The Union of British Columbia Indian Chiefs explained that the BC First Nations Justice Strategy's major challenge relates to systemic support and implementation of proactive and preventative measures within the existing justice system. Additionally, the Committee heard calls to implement Strategy 20 of the BC First Nations Justice Strategy which outlines actions to develop standards of cultural competency, and a training program regarding First Nations and the justice system, to be used by all who interact with the First Nations in the justice system, including police.

## United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

The Committee heard from many organizations and individuals on the need to align the *Police Act* with UNDRIP and the *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act* (DRIPA). The Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation highlighted the following articles of UNDRIP as relevant to the Committee's work:

- Article 2 - the right of Indigenous peoples and individuals to be free from discrimination;
- Article 7 - the right of Indigenous peoples and individuals to life, physical and mental integrity, liberty and security of person; and
- Article 46(3) - the provisions set out in UNDRIP shall be interpreted in accordance with the principles of justice, democracy, respect for human rights, equality, non-discrimination, good governance and good faith.



The First Nations Leadership Council stated that a key component of implementing UNDRIP involves ensuring the full participation and free, prior, and informed consent of Indigenous peoples in decisions that impact them; as such, measures must be taken to ensure that First Nations are able to partner in amending and developing the *Police Act* in a meaningful way. Similarly, the Nuu-chah-nulth Tribal Council explained that the legislative process must be changed so that First Nations can be part of drafting changes to the *Police Act* and that any proposed changes must also come back to First Nations for their consent before it goes to the legislature. Additionally, the Union of BC Indian Chiefs, First Nations Summit, and BC Assembly of First Nations emphasized that in order for reform to align with DRIPA and UNDRIP, it must recognize First Nations jurisdiction and ensure that First Nations have the requisite authorities and capacities to choose and develop for themselves policing, justice and community safety initiatives that operate in their territories and how those activities should be governed. Some individuals called for a new provincial police service that could either be designed with Indigenous peoples in the spirit of DRIPA or replicate the model of the Stl'atl'imx Tribal Police Service.

*There is no group of people in BC who have been more profoundly or adversely affected by policing than Indigenous people, and yet no group of people who have had less say in how policing has been established. (BC First Nations Justice Council)*

*We call upon the federal, provincial, and territorial governments to commit to the recognition and implementation of Aboriginal justice systems in a manner consistent with the Treaty and Aboriginal rights of Aboriginal peoples, the Constitution Act, 1982, and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, endorsed by Canada in November 2012. (Call to Action from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada)*

# Systemic Racism and Discrimination

## Systemic Racism

Many submissions and presentations drew attention to the need to recognize systemic racism within policing and the justice system in order to move forward with reconciliation and improve public safety. The Human Rights Commissioner shared that systemic racism, which consists of patterns of behaviour, policies or practices that create and maintain the power of certain racial groups over others or reinforce the disadvantage of certain racial groups, is well documented in policing in Canada. Further, the Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General stated that systemic racism continues to negatively impact public safety while preventing effective implementation of harm reduction strategies and initiatives.

Additionally, the Committee heard about the need to ensure consultation with experts and the community within any recommendations that require police departments to conduct a review of policies with regard to systemic racism. Many individuals and organizations highlighted that there needs to be more consultation with those most impacted by policing in relation to policing practices and the reform of the *Police Act*.

*9.2 We call upon all actors in the justice system, including police services, to build respectful working relationships with Indigenous Peoples by knowing, understanding, and respecting the people they are serving. Initiatives and actions should include, but are not limited to, the following measures:*

*i. Review and revise all policies, practices, and procedures to ensure service delivery that is culturally appropriate and reflects no bias or racism toward Indigenous Peoples, including victims and survivors of violence. (Call for Justice from The Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls)*

## Over-Policing

Several organizations and individuals highlighted that racialized people are overrepresented in the justice system including interactions with police and chargeable incident statistics. Elizabeth Fry Society of Greater Vancouver stated that Indigenous, Black, and racialized women report that, despite no indication of illegal activity, they will be asked for identification and checked for breaches or warrants. Regarding this issue, the Human Rights Commissioner shared that she was heartened to see Provincial Policing Standard 6.1 which seeks “to provide consistent pathways for advancing equitable and unbiased policing throughout the province by requiring policies and procedures, training, audit activity and community engagement.” At the same time, the Commissioner expressed concern that aspects of the standard, such as the embedded discretion and the frequency of review, are inadequate to understand the nature of systemic discrimination and the impact of future interventions on achieving equitable policing in British Columbia.

Numerous individuals and organizations emphasized how street checks are discriminatory and target Black, Indigenous, persons of colour, and other marginalized groups which increases incarceration rates of these groups. As described by the Human Rights Commissioner, a street check occurs when “identifying information [is] obtained by a police officer concerning an individual, outside of a police station, that is not part of an investigation.” The Law Union of British Columbia stated that datasets that have been collected point to the overrepresentation of Black and Indigenous persons when it comes to illegal street checks. Additionally, the First Nations Summit explained that the level of hyper-vigilance and surveillance involved in the street check practice is not conducive to healthy relationships between police and community members. Deputy Chief Howard Chow of the Vancouver Police Department shared that police in BC do not practice carding, random or arbitrary checks, and further explained that street checks are an important, proactive tool for policing that impacts public safety. The Deputy Chief also noted that street check data does not align with population demographics as, for example, Indigenous people represent only two percent of the population, but 16 percent of the street checks conducted by the Vancouver Police Department.

## Race-Based Data

Some organizations and individuals noted that there is a lack of race-based data being collected and shared particularly regarding racial inequalities. The Canadian Bar Association British Columbia Branch stated that this data could be used to support calls for change and make it possible to measure the impact of reforms to policing. The Human Rights Commissioner explained that disaggregated demographic data, which provides sub-categories of information to show whether certain groups are disproportionately over-policed, can be essential to addressing systemic racism. The Canadian Bar Association British Columbia Branch stated that early collection of disaggregated data would provide a more complete picture on the degree to which marginalized

or targeted groups may experience disproportionate police intervention at each step of the justice system. Additionally, the First Nations Leadership Council shared that data must be reported in a number of areas, including use of force, police procurement of paramilitary unit and military equipment, and many others, to better understand the current reality of policing and to measure progress towards change.

## Training

When asked how to address systemic racism within policing, increased education and training were the most common themes among survey responses from individuals with experience in healthcare, social services and public safety, and individuals without frontline experience. Common areas of training cited by individuals and organizations included anti-racism, cultural competency, trauma-informed practices, and bias training, as well as local training and education based on the community police are serving. Chief Dagher of the Service de police de l’agglomération de Longueuil highlighted the localized training of their immersion program for professional development which aims to develop an officer’s knowledge and experience with vulnerable populations they will be interacting with on the job. In this program, officers spend five weeks without weapons or uniforms completely immersed in different kinds of environments, such as schools and families with special needs or culturally diverse backgrounds.

The BC Police Association stated that that there is no reason to believe that toxic, discriminatory, attitudes are more firmly embraced by police officers than by society at large. They also recognized that because of the special and direct impact that the police can have on the general public, toxic attitudes among police may have a greater deleterious effect than similar attitudes held by other social or occupational groups. They stated necessary measures to combat racism include measures to educate police officers on how to recognize and eradicate discriminatory attitudes and practices, and measures to sanction officers who act in a discriminatory manner

towards any member of the public, or who tolerate discrimination displayed by officers.

Several policing organizations provided insight on current training practices in this area. Regarding cultural competency, the RCMP shared that all employees at Depot are required to complete a cultural, humility and anti-racism course and cadets learn about systemic racism in module one of their applied police science components. They also collaborate with local Indigenous communities to include the KAIROS blanket exercise, a workshop that explores the nation-to-nation relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples, to further explore cultural awareness and sensitivity. Justice Institute of BC shared that they dedicate two weeks of training which includes participating in a “Circle of Understanding” with the Vancouver Aboriginal Community Policing Centre Society. Additionally, the recruits work in small groups on a diversity project in their home police departments to research underrepresented groups or populations.

## Discrimination

Organizations highlighted the unfair treatment of women and girls and members of the LGBTQ2SAI+ community during police interactions including when they are victims of crimes. The Vancouver Rape Relief and Women’s Shelter stated that women’s unequal position in society, exacerbated by factors of colonization, racism, and capitalism, are responsible for the imprisonment of women and the steady increase in overall numbers. Additionally, Justice For Girls shared that girls have reported being incarcerated in holding cells in response to foster care issues, mental health crises, addictions and where they have been the victim of physical or sexual violence. They highlighted that Indigenous girls and young women in remote and northern communities are routinely placed in police holding cells due to a lack of safe and appropriate places for them to go. They stated it is therefore necessary to focus resources on creating gender-specific and community-based safe housing for all girls, LGBTQ2SAI+ and other youth in those communities.

The Committee also heard from Inclusion BC that police do not currently have the training to interact with or support people who have an intellectual disability. This has left many parents of children with disabilities fearful of calling the police.

In relation to hate crimes, the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs shared that as the province becomes more diverse, it is essential that police have more knowledge of and information about BC’s diverse populations especially on the nature and extent of hate-motivated crimes. They also noted that greater emphasis should be dedicated to online hate, which often sparks and provides an enabling environment for individuals to carry out physical hate crimes. SWAN Vancouver discussed the need to integrate anti-Asian racism into anti-racism efforts, noting that there has been a significant increase in anti-Asian racism throughout the pandemic.

# Funding

## Funding Model

Several municipalities shared concerns about the funding model for policing. The Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General explained that municipalities with a population under 5,000 are not responsible for their policing costs, municipalities with a population of 5,000 or more are responsible for 70 percent of policing costs, and municipalities with populations over 15,000 are responsible for 90 percent. The Committee heard concerns about the additional costs municipalities face when a community reaches the 5,000 population threshold and the need to adjust the funding model to allow for a more incremental increase in the municipal share of policing costs. The Town of Creston explained that when a community's population exceeds this threshold, there is a very large and quick shift in costs to the municipality from the province and this can cause communities to abandon development. This concern was also expressed by the Town of Rossland and the Town of Gibsons. The Union of BC Municipalities stressed that due to the significant portion of policing costs paid by local government, municipalities should be consulted on changes to the funding model and policing in general.

## General Police Funding

A common theme in many submissions was defunding or reallocating funding from the police. Pivot Legal Society explained that defunding the police is not about dismantling safety, but rather about prioritizing the safety of marginalized communities in BC. The Committee heard that police have been tasked with responding to

a wide range of social issues resulting in many duties that they are not equipped to perform. Many individuals and organizations highlighted that police funding should be reallocated to social supports and evidence-based solutions to address these areas. Hogan's Alley Society stated that police are not trained in areas such as mental health and de-escalation, and that social workers and mental health workers would be better suited to respond to these issues. Similarly, the Downtown Eastside Women's Centre explained that money that is currently spent on police delivering services they are not trained to deliver would be better spent on critical community needs that are severely underfunded and which, in their absence, increase the likelihood of engagement with police. Some organizations, including West Coast Legal Education and Action Fund Association and the Office of the Human Rights Commissioner, called for police to be de-tasks from responsibilities and areas in which they are not appropriately trained where possible, and stated that funding that would otherwise go to policing should be put towards infrastructure and services that strengthen and support communities. The Committee also heard from the City of Vancouver that to achieve meaningful and long-lasting change, municipalities and communities will require the support of the provincial government to address funding and capacity gaps in areas of social development, such as affordable housing, livable income, and health and addictions supports.

Conversely, the District of Squamish noted that if they were to reduce their local government's police budget that money would not go to mental health and addictions services as that is provincial jurisdiction but rather to

roads, sewers, and other programs within their local jurisdiction. As well, they currently have no other resource in the community that can provide a 24/7 response to those in crisis. Additionally, Victoria Police Department stated they provide service within an expanded mandate due to the erosion of other public service options. They supported reallocating some of the tasks currently provided by police only where funding and coordination is first invested to ensure there are established systems to take on these tasks.

Some organizations noted that police services are underfunded, and decreased funding would hinder services especially if there is no alternative to fill the services provided by police. The National Police Federation noted that over the past few years, the RCMP in BC has experienced significant cutbacks, including wage freezes, which have impacted staffing, training, work-life balance, recruitment, and other challenges. They also noted that funding has remained flat in previous years despite increasing populations, rising costs of equipment and infrastructure, as well as more complex threats. Similarly, the Committee heard from policing organizations as well as individuals currently or formerly involved in policing that they are underfunded and overworked as the police mandate has expanded but funding has not increased with this additional work.

Issues related to police funding were prevalent among responses to the Committee's survey. In response to a question regarding possible changes to policing, numerous respondents across all sectors identified interest in defunding or reallocating resources from police to other bodies. Conversely, respondents with experience in policing shared that they are overworked and under resourced and numerous respondents called for more support and resources for policing.

## Police Foundations and Charities

Concerns about the accountability and oversight of police foundations and charities were raised to the Committee. The BC Civil Liberties Association was of the view that police charities do not feature any democratic oversight, and with that, individuals and corporations can donate to the charities which raises the possibility of conflicts of interest. Several individuals also remarked that large donations could impact police discretion in instances where the donors are involved.

# Oversight and Accountability

## Oversight Framework

Multiple layers of police oversight are provided through separate entities. The Office of the Police Complaints Commissioner (OPCC) is an independent office of the Legislature responsible for oversight and monitoring of complaints concerning municipal and provincially appointed officers. RCMP officers in British Columbia are subject to a separate system of oversight by the Civilian Review and Complaints Commission (CRCC), established under the federal *Royal Canadian Mounted Police Act*. The CRCC is a federal entity independent from the RCMP that receives complaints from the public concerning on-duty RCMP officers, and conducts reviews when complainants are not satisfied with the RCMP's handling of their complaints. For incidents of police-involved serious harm or death involving on and off-duty RCMP and municipal police, the Independent Investigations Office (IIO) is responsible for investigating. Additionally, police boards may study, investigate, and prepare reports on matters concerning policing, law enforcement and crime prevention in their municipalities, and are required to submit reports that suggest a breach of discipline or criminal liability of any of its municipal constables, special municipal constables, or bylaw enforcement officers. With the exception of the CRCC, the *Police Act* establishes the legislative framework for these oversight bodies, providing authority, procedures, and responsibilities for the OPCC, IIO, and police boards. Some law enforcement personnel, such as provincial jail guards and special provincial constables, are not included in this oversight system. Special provincial constables, including conservation officers and SPCA constables,

operate within a hybrid legislative structure in which constables are appointed by the *Police Act*, but receive their primary mandates from specific legislation, such as the *Environmental Management Act* or *Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act*.

## Limitations of the Oversight Framework

The BC Police Association, BC Association of Municipal Chiefs of Police, municipal police departments and survey respondents with policing backgrounds described a number of challenges related to inefficiency and duplication within the existing oversight system. The BC Association of Municipal Chiefs of Police described the multiple layers of oversight and investigation by the IIO, OPCC and police boards, as well as WorkSafeBC and coroner investigations, as causing unnecessary delay, cost, duplication, and frustration for all those involved. As an example of inefficiency, the Vancouver Police Department reported that the OPCC will suspend their review of a complaint during a criminal trial as to not prejudice the criminal investigation, and after the trial, assign new analysts effectively starting a new investigation of the same event. They described that this practice can delay results for years, re-victimize participants, negatively impact the mental and financial wellbeing of participants and department morale and budgets, and were of the view that negative impacts could be avoided by a single oversight agency simultaneously overseeing a criminal and a *Police Act* review. Survey respondents with policing backgrounds described the existing oversight system as stressful

and excessive compared to other professions and supported a complete overhaul of the oversight system or amalgamating the IIO and OPCC as methods to reduce duplication. With respect to amalgamation, the BC Police Association was of the view that OPCC analysts often do not have the necessary training or experience with police work and proposed authorizing the IIO to conduct all investigations, criminal or disciplinary in nature that result in serious harm, as one method to reduce unnecessary layers of oversight.

Many Indigenous organizations and communities described a lack of accountability, trust and independence of the current oversight and complaints system. The First Nations Leadership Council stated that a lack of confidence in the complaints process results in Indigenous people living in urban areas rarely considering filing a police complaint because it is not perceived as an effective method for holding police accountable. They explained that a new independent oversight system designed to address challenges and concerns regarding Indigenous peoples and the justice system is needed. They noted that while past commissions and inquiries have called for greater Indigenous participation within inherently colonial processes, such as reviewing critical incident planning, there needs to be a more powerful and meaningful Indigenous voice on the basic principles under which colonial justice structures interact with Indigenous peoples. The Human Rights Commissioner supported Indigenous oversight bodies as a human rights-based and decolonizing approach to police oversight. West Coast Legal Education and Action Fund Association similarly shared that police accountability only works if marginalized members of society can both access justice and see value in the process, and stated that Indigenous, Black, people of colour, and gender-diverse civilian monitors could act as safeguard against bias and discrimination within the police accountability process.

*5.7 We call upon federal and provincial governments to establish robust and well-funded Indigenous civilian police oversight bodies (or branches within established reputable civilian oversight bodies within a jurisdiction) in all jurisdictions, which must include representation of Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA people, inclusive of diverse Indigenous cultural backgrounds, with the power to:*

- i. Observe and oversee investigations in relation to police negligence or misconduct, including but not limited to rape and other sexual offences.*
- ii. Observe and oversee investigations of cases involving Indigenous Peoples.*
- iii. Publicly report on police progress in addressing findings and recommendations at least annually.*

*9.2 iii Ensure appropriate Indigenous representation, including Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA people, on police services boards and oversight authorities.*

*9.6 We call upon all police services to establish an independent, special investigation unit for the investigation of incidents of failures to investigate, police misconduct, and all forms of discriminatory practices and mistreatment of Indigenous Peoples within their police service. This special investigation unit must be transparent in practice and report at least annually to Indigenous communities, leadership, and people in their jurisdiction. (Calls for Justice from *The Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls*)*

A number of organizations and individuals raised concerns that all persons with law enforcement authority or powers under the *Police Act* do not follow the same



oversight processes. The Office of the Ombudsperson pointed to a gap in independent oversight for special provincial constables, civilian employees, contractors, and jail guards. The IIO reported that most jail guards in BC are classified as civilian employees and therefore do not fall under the IIO's jurisdiction and noted that if a person dies or is seriously injured in custody, the IIO can only investigate the actions of police personnel and not the actions of jail guards.

Oversight of RCMP officers was another theme. The Committee heard from the Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General that CRCC oversight mechanisms are not as robust as those of the OPCC as the CRCC is dependent on the RCMP detachments to conduct its investigations and lacks the authority to step into the investigative process. The Ministry stated that long-standing concerns with respect to oversight of RCMP officers contributes to a perceived lack of trust and accountability in police oversight at large. The Hon. Wally Oppal further noted that the CRCC does not have the strict time limits for dealing with complaints that are present in the BC *Police Act* and does not have the authority to make binding decisions and was of the view that the RCMP has been an unwilling participant in BC's complaints process.

The Committee heard about issues related to how each oversight agency has different responsibilities for operational reporting and systems for when the public or officers have a complaint about how oversight agencies conduct their duties. As a statutory office, the OPCC must regularly report to the Legislative Assembly and respond to questions about their operations, as well as maintain complaint records, monitor trends, and recommend improvements to the complaints process. While operationally independent, the IIO is a branch of the Ministry of the Attorney General and does not share the same direct reporting as the OPCC. As a federal entity, the CRCC does not have direct reporting to the provincial government. The IIO, along with community groups such as the Resilience BC Anti-Racism Network Hub and Elizabeth Fry Society, supported oversight agencies directly reporting to the Legislative Assembly.

Several organizations proposed creating legislation specific to oversight separate from the *Police Act* or community policing legislation. The IIO was of the view that separate oversight legislation could increase the perception of independence and rationalize the interplay between oversight agencies. Should new oversight statutes be developed, Delegated Aboriginal Agencies and the BC Civil Liberties Association emphasized that new oversight legislation must be developed with an Indigenous voice.

## Oversight Agency Staffing

The Committee heard contrasting perspectives regarding civilianization with many organizations and individuals opposed to the practice of police overseeing police while others highlighted the benefits of having police investigators or investigators with policing experience. Some individuals shared that police investigations of police impede perceptions of trust, accountability, transparency and independence, and can be a deterrent to individuals reporting complaints. The Canadian Bar Association British Columbia Branch questioned if police or former police could adequately implement discipline of their peers. In contrast, survey respondents with policing experience explained that most investigators are unqualified to be assessing police actions and events and do not understand the judgements officers have to make in real world scenarios. They also emphasized that oversight staff should have experience in policing and law. Policing associations made similar recommendations, proposing that oversight agencies should include both civilian staff and staff with former police experience. The National Police Federation stated that a blend of civilian investigators and those from a policing background would improve the integrity and efficiency of investigations.

Specific to oversight agency leadership, the BC Police Association called for more transparency in the selection of the civilian director of the IIO and the Commissioner of the OPCC. They detailed that the Police Complaint Commissioner, or a civilian director of a replacement agency, should have training and experience with the

overlapping areas of law relevant to police discipline: labour law, the law of professional discipline, and administrative law. To increase transparency, former police officer and Vancouver Police Union President John de Haas recommended establishing selection criteria that reflect the requisite knowledge, experience, integrity, reputation, and selflessness required by the Police Complaint Commissioner, as well as the proper understanding of the background, complexities, and intentions of the *Police Act*. Others proposed that oversight agency leadership be elected or truly civilian with no professional experience in law enforcement.

Another theme was the need to improve training for oversight agency staff. Survey respondents with social services backgrounds identified compassion and sensitivity, Indigenous and cultural sensitivity, de-escalation and intimidation awareness, bias and racism, and trauma-informed approaches as desired training areas. Respondents with policing backgrounds proposed training on the road with officers in various districts or formal mentoring by retired members. Pivot Legal Society suggested a training academy could be created for civilian investigators to provide non-police officers the investigatory skills necessary to work in police oversight.

Recommendations were made to ensure oversight bodies have sufficient resources. The Federation of Community Social Services of BC was of the view that oversight agencies need more funding, capacity, and authority to address issues of structural militarization, such as body armor, shields, and heavy weaponry, and increasingly aggressive responses to non-violent crimes such as homelessness, drug use, sex work, and mental health struggles. Other individuals were of the view that legislated funding would ensure oversight agencies have the staff, legal and practical resources to conduct investigations within reasonable time limits.

## Authority and Discipline

Oversight agencies have varying levels of authority and processes regarding police discipline. For municipal and provincially appointed officers, the OPCC is responsible for administering discipline and proceedings defined in the *Police Act* and is empowered to make recommendations to police boards regarding services and policies. The OPCC is authorized to determine complaint admissibility, order further investigation, and review discipline decisions by the 'discipline authority' (chief constable or designated senior officer at the police agency); if the OPCC determines discipline measures are not appropriate or adequate, they can reject the discipline and direct that the matter proceed to a disciplinary proceeding. Following a discipline proceeding, the OPCC can order further adjudication through a public hearing permissible to new evidence and witnesses, or an independent review by a retired judge. RCMP officers are exempt from this process as they receive oversight through the federal CRCC.

For municipal police departments, complaints specific to service and policy issues are addressed by police boards under limited oversight of the OPCC. The Vancouver Police Board noted that service and policy complaints help the police board identify policy gaps and ensure department accountability; however, there are challenges with vague wording and an unclear definition of a service or policy complaint in the *Police Act*.

For special provincial constables who are outside of the scope of the OPCC, complaint review and discipline is administered by supervisors. There is no formal hearing process or ability to present evidence counting a complaint, discipline threshold, or process for appealing supervisory decisions, other than a judicial review, which the BC Government Employees Union Correctional and Sheriff Services Section noted typically defers to the supervisor. Dr. Bryce Casavant detailed that constabulary duties require the individual officer to enforce certain statutes, make on-the-spot decisions, and respond to complex and fast changing scenarios and cannot be assessed in the same structure as general labour matters as labour boards do not have the necessary training

or exclusive expertise to properly assess constabulary conduct. A 2021 regulation amendment addresses this issue by empowering the Director of Police Services to determine if a public complaint is related to a special provincial constable's constabulary duty, a function that was previously fulfilled by the special provincial constable's supervisor.

Timelines and proceedings for discipline processes were noted as challenges by multiple organizations. The Vancouver Police Department shared that the discipline process is supposed to occur within 60 to 80 business days; however, the majority of discipline processes take more than a year to conclude, largely due to adjournments. They indicated that the extended discipline process negatively impacts the wellbeing of the complainant and the police officer and causes financial and resource burdens. The BC Police Association noted that discipline proceedings are not open to the public or the complainant and were of the view that private proceedings do not foster public confidence in police discipline.

Several police departments, municipal police boards, and survey respondents with policing experience, as well as the BC Police Association, suggested that minor infractions, such as failing to meet professional standards of conduct, should be addressed differently than serious charges, noting that full investigations with lengthy investigative reports are not always necessary or a good use of resources. Potential alternatives included: delegating serious offences to an oversight body and minor infractions to the police department or municipal police board; enabling informal resolution; expediting processes for police officers who admit misconduct; setting uniform professional standards with performance metrics and transparent consequences; or creating a professional college to oversee professional performance, licensing and conduct review for all persons with enforcement authority.

Some organizations and individuals described limitations for oversight agencies to self-initiate investigations and conduct systemic reviews. The Hon. Wally Oppal identified that the *Police Act* does not provide for

independent investigations in the absence of a complaint as a potential gap for the OPCC. Regarding a previous proposal from the OPCC to authorize the OPCC to conduct systemic reviews, the BC Association of Municipal Chiefs of Police and Vancouver Police Board were of the view that enhancing the mandate of the OPCC would further complicate and duplicate existing accountability mechanisms. The IIO described how there are times when police actions raise significant public interest issues; however, if there is no serious harm or death, the IIO can only investigate on the order of the Director of Police Services. They recommended providing authority to the IIO to self-initiate public interest investigations.

Concerning police compliance with oversight agency processes, the Canadian Bar Association British Columbia Branch noted that the *Police Act* does not have explicit, sanction-backed duties for police to cooperate with IIO investigations and civil negligence suits, or for police and the IIO to safeguard evidence. The Association was of the view that explicit sanction-backed duties would lead to greater police accountability and enhance the ability of families to successfully bring negligence claims for police-involved deaths. In a doctoral dissertation shared with the Committee, Celia Pinette described that because cooperation between the IIO and police agencies is not established by regulation, there is less legal authority to compel officers to cooperate with IIO investigations and as a result, officers have refused to participate. Pinette noted a BC Supreme Court ruling requires officers who witnessed incidents of police-involved serious harm and death to cooperate with the IIO; however, the officers directly involved in the incident are not compelled to provide evidence, including their notes of the incident.

Some organizations and individuals described a need to revise the definitions of misconduct and serious harm. The BC First Nations Leadership Council highlighted that sexual assault and gender-based violence are not included in the definition of serious harm despite repeated calls for a change. The Leadership Council, along with the Office of the Human Rights Commissioner, BC Civil Liberties Association and several others, made

proposals to amend the definition, cease any informal resolution of gender-based harm, or expand the IIO's mandate to investigate matters critical to public confidence, such as domestic violence and sexual offences by police officers, sheriffs, and jail guards. Ending Violence Association of BC and West Coast Legal Education and Action Fund Association recommended classifying psychological injuries as police misconduct to address police not acting in trauma-informed ways and victim-blaming.

Regarding the perception of accountability and repercussions for police alleged of misconduct, the Committee heard a range of perspectives. Peer mentors with the John Howard Society Pacific shared that in their lived experience with addictions, police have absolute power to do what they want because no one will believe an "addict." They were of the view that there are few repercussions for police, pointing to disciplinary measures that have allowed officers to transfer departments rather than be removed from service. Some social services survey respondents were of the view that existing disciplinary measures lack punitive action and do not always result in behavioural change by police. Several survey respondents with public safety and policing backgrounds were of the view that adequate accountability exists and suggested stronger discipline for serious offences and prohibiting officers from quitting or retiring to avoid discipline. They also recommended establishing a registry for corruption and serious offences to prevent officers from continuing to work in the profession. The Victoria Police Department emphasized that the oversight system should be based on corrective measures over punitive actions.

A small number of survey respondents with healthcare experience cited that the current system does not encourage officers to take action against the abuses of their peers and suggested there needs to be a better process for whistleblowing. An individual explained that police officers must be trained to understand that their first duty is to the public and to the law, and as such, officers must be free to question fellow officers, including

superiors, and to come forward if they are aware of improper behaviour.

## Complaints Process

The OPCC noted that courts have described the complaints process as dense and complicated. This sentiment was repeated in multiple submissions and the survey with respondents noting that the complaints process is excessively long. Timelines were cited as a problem for the CRCC, OPCC and IIO, though some survey respondents noted that IIO timelines have improved in recent years. The lengthy process for complaints was described as negatively impacting officers and complainants. Survey respondents with policing experience additionally stated that the number of unsubstantiated complaints is a significant burden and that there is no mechanism to hold false or vexatious complainants accountable. Some respondents were of the view that the OPCC's time is wasted on smaller issues and should be focused on serious and corrupt acts; they suggested imposing fines or charges for repeated false complaints, or a process to vet out such complaints. Including defined timelines in legislation, establishing time limits for filing complaints, and creating processes for early resolution were suggested as ways to address challenges with complaint timelines.

A number of organizations identified accessibility barriers for complainants. The complaints process was described as intimidating as a result of being embedded in the police system and several groups expressed concerns of retaliation for making a complaint. For those in rural areas and small towns, individuals noted that making a complaint can be an intensely personal action and anonymity is needed. The Native Courtworker and Counselling Association of British Columbia, Battered Women's Support Services and West Coast Legal Education and Action Fund Association named access to the internet, phones, computers, and navigating the multiple steps of the complaints process and understanding legal jargon as accessibility barriers. Barriers were noted as being amplified for individuals whose primary language is not English as well as

for those experiencing homelessness or addiction, or those involved in street survival work. Pivot Legal Society emphasized that following through with a complaint requires active support; however, there is no dedicated funding for legal representation to support complainants. To ensure accountability, the Human Rights Commissioner noted that individuals who want to make a complaint about the police, regardless of the forum, must have dedicated support and representation. The Canadian Bar Association British Columbia Branch proposed creating an advocate for police complaints to support complainants throughout the process, including assisting with collecting information and providing representation or funding for legal assistance. They stated that an advocate could also help identify and advocate for changes to the complaints process.

## Data, Reporting, and Transparency

The Committee heard about for a need to improve data collection and reporting on police misconduct and complaints. Celia Pinette noted that a standardized method to collect and record police-involved death data is necessary to understand if police-involved deaths are decreasing, if new policies or training are making an impact, and if the state of police accountability in general is improving. The Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General, Canadian Bar Association British Columbia Branch and other organizations supported collecting data on the number of substantiated and unsubstantiated complaints demographics, and creating a single source, searchable database for police misconduct. The UBC Innocence Project emphasized that a lack of access and transparency of police misconduct files can perpetuate wrongful convictions and encourage future police misconduct, because misconduct is hidden from discovery and public scrutiny. The Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General also noted the need to increase transparency, access and reporting of race-based data along the public safety continuum in order to identify and respond to departments with acute issues regarding systemic racism.

The Native Courtworker and Counselling Association of BC stated that there is a lack of transparency about how instances of police misconduct are handled, and that police continue to serve in the community they have allegedly victimized because the outcomes of criminal investigations of police are not made public. Several survey respondents with policing experience shared that police are not permitted to be fully transparent about investigations which impacts public trust and officer reputation as they cannot defend themselves, while a small number of respondents with policing experience were of the view that police intentionally do a poor job with communication. Many respondents advocated for oversight agencies to publicly report on how and why they make decisions and expressed that oversight agencies need to play an active role in publicly exonerating officers who are cleared of misconduct allegations or whose actions were lawful.

Several individuals were of the view that body cameras could help alleviate problems with police credibility, transparency, and public trust with some referencing Myles Gray, who died due to injuries sustained during an encounter with Vancouver police officers, to demonstrate the need for cameras. Others suggested that body cameras could help protect innocent officers, deter violence and misconduct, or help speed up investigations. The Vancouver Police Department identified several challenges with implementing body cameras, including cost, information management and privacy. The Department suggested establishing a provincial standard and reasonable timeline for municipalities and departments to prepare for potential implementation. BC Civil Liberties Association was of the view that body cameras should not be used unless police agencies have undertaken specific privacy measures, such as a privacy impact assessment, public consultation, and approval from a police board or Director of Police Services.

# Committee Discussion

During their deliberations, Committee Members carefully considered all the input they received. In reflecting on what they heard, Members identified several key themes and connections across subject areas. This section summarizes Members' discussion according to these themes.

## Building Trust in Public Safety

The Committee highlighted the need to build trust in public safety by shifting the culture and structure of police services to make it more open, inclusive, and respectful. Committee Members discussed the importance of police culture in relation to many of their recommendations. An important aspect of shifting police culture and building public trust is addressing systemic racism and discrimination in policing. Committee Members acknowledged that systemic racism exists in policing in BC, including the over-policing of racialized people, especially racialized youth, and other minority groups. They also recognized the impact of socio-economic factors on relationships with police. While part of addressing systemic racism and discrimination includes training and education for new and existing police officers, Members discussed ways to increase accountability for inappropriate conduct. Further, they noted the need for race-based data that is standardized and consistently collected to better understand the issues and make improvements. In addition, the Committee recognized the need for a clear definition of hate crimes as well as a concrete plan to address them. Members emphasized the importance of working with communities

and external consultants to address systemic racism and discrimination, especially with respect to reviewing police service policies.

Members noted that shifting police culture will help with recruitment by making policing a safe and welcoming place for police officers from all backgrounds. They emphasized policing as a "service", rather than a "force", and discussed how this could affect recruitment, referencing the model in New Zealand that has moved away from hyper-aggressive masculinity. To make policing an attractive job for people with other skills and experience, Members discussed changing remuneration and recruiting at community or social service organizations. The Committee contemplated the possibility of recognizing post-secondary degrees and utilizing those degrees within policing as a way to help attract people with different backgrounds and qualifications to the profession. Committee Members additionally noted the benefit of recruiting people with diverse lived experiences who can bring different understandings to the profession.

Committee Members were intrigued by the Periscope evaluation program used in Longueuil, Quebec which evaluates officers throughout their careers according to social and soft skills as well as competencies and abilities related to working with the community. Members identified a number of key considerations, including honesty, humility, empathy, sympathy, awareness of bias and diversity of background, life experience and education, that could be included in performance evaluation and assessment, as well as in screening during

the recruitment process. They noted that performance indicators must move beyond traditional crime statistics in order to shift police culture.

Members discussed the difference between training, which is skills-based, and education, which is about gaining deeper knowledge and understanding. They noted that currently police are provided with a lot of tactical training and that both training and education are needed to shift the culture of police services and build public trust. Further, Members heard that training is not adequate in several areas and discussed the need for training and education to be delivered and developed in consultation with experts and the local community. Key areas for training identified by the Committee include: trauma-informed practices; history of policing and colonialism; de-escalation; cultural competency; systemic racism; gender presentation; LGBTQ2SAI+; and mental health and addictions. The Committee emphasized that core competencies, including awareness of racism and bias, need to be required for all police officers, and delivered in a meaningful and impactful way. Committee Members discussed the possibility of immersion programs or internships to address this issue and the need for additional education and training on the local community's historical, cultural, and socio-economic context. Members noted that there is not much ongoing police training, except for tactical training, and suggested that there should be training when new laws are introduced or updated to ensure officers are aware of the changes and understand the reason why they are being made. They noted that ongoing professional development and training would help to increase trust in policing.

The Committee discussed whether postsecondary education should be required for police officers. They noted that a university degree is required in other professions like nursing, teaching and social work and linked this requirement to professionalization of policing, which may in turn draw more people to policing as a career. They recognized that such a requirement may create a barrier to recruitment which is already an issue. Rather than requiring a degree, Members discussed incentives for police to pursue additional education that

is specific to their particular job or role within policing and noted that this education may differ depending on the community in which they work.

With respect to measuring the efficacy of training and education, Committee Members emphasized the importance of measuring outcomes. As an example, they noted that there is already training on trauma-informed practices; however, this has not had the desired effect, as indicated by many participants in the consultation. Members agreed that education should not be delivered and created by police for police and discussed whether an external body or authority could develop appropriate courses to meet the desired expectations, as well as an oversight mechanism to ensure benchmarks are achieved. The Committee acknowledged that investment needs to be made in police training and education to ensure they have the best tools, information and supports to fulfill their responsibilities.

## Consistency of Policing and Public Safety Services

The Committee recognized the need for consistent policing and public safety services, governance, oversight, and training throughout the province, while ensuring that these services are responsive to the needs of each community served, including rural, remote, and Indigenous communities. The Committee linked ensuring consistency of services to the adoption of minimum staffing levels and quality of service, including having officers who have specialized training in certain subjects, and discussed a standard formula for determining appropriate resource levels. Members emphasized that there should be consistency of 911 services across BC as currently individual experiences calling 911 differ according to location. In addition, Committee Members highlighted the important work of restorative justice programs and supported expanding these programs throughout the province. They further noted that police play an important role in the justice system and other parts of that system may require examination.

With respect to governance, Committee Members noted that there are opportunities for local input, responsiveness and accountability with municipal police boards that are lacking with the current provincial police service, contracted with the RCMP, which does not have this board structure. Members identified limitations of the current governance model of the provincial police service including the impact on the province and local communities when officers are seconded for federal priorities; the disconnected process of officer resourcing decisions or service approvals being made at the federal level; and the lack of nimbleness and ability of police departments to be adaptable and responsive to react to real time situations.

Regarding municipal police boards, Members heard many challenges associated with having mayors acting as chairs. They discussed the inevitable conflict in financing the police through the municipal budget and noted that budgeting and resourcing can be impacted by an election cycle. The Committee acknowledged the need for an arms-length relationship between the board and local government, and suggested that removing the responsibility of board chair from the mayor could alleviate existing challenges. With respect to board composition, Members discussed how police boards should include community representation and diversity of experience. They also noted the importance of having mechanisms for community input. Further, they agreed that training for board members should be reflective of emerging needs and responsibilities of the board. Members discussed ways of ensuring accountability of police boards, such as vetting members or an oath of service.

Regarding jurisdictional responsibility for funding police services, Committee Members highlighted the need to examine cost sharing agreements for municipalities. They noted that there is inequity for some municipalities in covering policing costs related to visitors who may come into a city for recreation or entertainment and considered regionalization as a potential solution to this issue. Further, the population of municipalities, especially tourist destinations, may fluctuate throughout the year, which

is problematic when responsibility for policing costs is tied to population. Rather than the current population threshold, Members considered incremental steps to phase in the municipal share of costs. They also discussed the importance of having a funding model that reflects local policing needs and existing social supports and considers the impact of climate and geography.

Committee Members emphasized the need for consistency with respect to oversight and accountability as having different agencies and processes complicates an already difficult experience for the public. They identified challenges and limitations of the existing oversight framework, noting that the RCMP, special provincial constables, and others with constabulary powers such as prison guards do not have the same oversight processes or policies as other police officers in the province. Further, Members heard about duplication and investigative delays related to having the IIO and OPCC as separate oversight agencies as well as public distrust of the existing oversight system in part due to the different mandates and processes of these agencies. Members discussed either expanding the role of the IIO or establishing a new oversight agency to address these issues. They recognized that investigation of minor matters could be managed with alternative processes to reduce the amount of time and resources spent on investigations and improve outcomes for those involved. Members contemplated a professional college for police, similar to colleges for other professions, that could oversee requirements for hiring, credentials, and higher training; however, they noted that establishing a professional regulatory college may duplicate existing disciplinary measures, unintentionally adding an obstacle to entering the profession, and does not align with a streamlined system for managing complaints. Further, as a self-regulating entity, a professional college would not address public concerns related to police investigating or disciplining police. As an alternative, Members discussed a law enforcement standards branch to ensure police recruits and transfers from other provinces have the appropriate training and requirements.



With respect to the complaints process, the Committee noted that current processes do not best serve complainants or police officers. Many complainants find the process cumbersome and difficult to navigate and face unrealistic expectations and multiple barriers to making a complaint, including feeling intimidated by police, fear of retaliation, and distrust they will be believed. For officers, an overly long investigation process or investigation of false complaints impacts officer credibility and job opportunities, and can put them under scrutiny of being perceived as guilty until proven innocent. Members reflected on police culture and the ability to not comply with investigations by refusing to provide a statement on a call they attended, which is a serious threat to trust in the process. The Committee noted that the judgement threshold for determining if egregious misconduct occurred is too rigid, and even if an investigation rules in the complainant's favour, the outcome may not have provided reconciliation for the complainant as the process can be traumatizing. Members discussed alternative ways to process complaints and provide resolution, such as direct conversations, that may be more meaningful and efficient than the existing process. A robust system could include guideposts such as time limits for the investigation and for when the complainant needs to be informed.

The Committee recognized that while there is public mistrust of police investigating police, police are capable and do a good job investigating; the issue is not necessarily who is investigating a complaint, but rather the lack of trust in the oversight system at large, in part due to the colonial structure and systemic issues. Members discussed using body cameras to improve accountability and noted that while in certain scenarios body cameras can help determine misconduct or build trust, they do not solve the root issues in the oversight and accountability framework. They concluded that body cameras should be an available tool, especially if there is an advantage for an investigation or service, but do not need to be mandated across the province.

Training and education were identified as areas that need to be made consistent across the province. Committee

Members agreed that a provincial standard and benchmarks for training and education should apply to all officers in BC. They considered whether there should be a requirement for all officers to attend training at the Justice Institute of BC, which teaches to a provincial standard, rather than just municipal police.

## Police Roles and Responsibilities

Another major theme identified by the Committee relates to the roles and responsibilities of police officers and ensuring a continuum of response. Members discussed the idea of a tiered approach to policing, with clearly defined roles and responsibilities, to reduce demand on police officers and enable more proactive policing. The Committee considered enabling other groups such as the Conservation Officer Service, sheriffs or Commercial Vehicle Safety and Enforcement officers to assist with certain police functions, particularly in rural areas. They emphasized that many police functions do not require an armed response and discussed how a more specialized approach would address concerns related to militarization and intimidation. The Committee agreed that further training and education should be provided for officers to specialize in certain areas depending on their specific roles and responsibilities and to create sustainable expertise in key and specialized areas. While specific training on investigation and response to sexual assault could be seen as a specialist area, Members noted that in many communities, patrol officers are the first to respond to sexual assault calls, so it is important that they receive training in this area as well. They reflected on how in some areas of the province, regionalization and integrated teams could help to address the need for specialization in responding to mental health, homicide or sexual assault in the absence of specially trained officers.

Committee Members discussed how ensuring mental health professionals respond to mental health calls, instead of or in partnership with police officers, would provide more understanding of the individual's needs and if or when hospitalization may be required under the *Mental Health Act*. As an example of a good practice,

they referenced Peer Assisted Crisis Teams that partner a mental health professional with a peer support worker who has lived experience of mental illness or apprehension who can speak to that experience. With respect to the criteria for involuntary admission, Members noted difficulties associated with revising the criteria while balancing individual rights and freedoms. Members noted the need to ensure that police are not spending an inordinate amount of time waiting in the emergency room after apprehending an individual under the Act and discussed allowing other persons, such as health authority security, to take custody of individuals apprehended under the Act. The Committee noted that the *Mental Health Act* has not been substantially updated in many years and discussed the need for a broad review that goes beyond the scope of this Committee's terms of reference.

The Committee remarked that criminalization of mental health, homelessness and poverty is a theme that runs throughout the input they received, particularly as it relates to police as the default responder. Members noted that police response to complex social issues is not the best use of police and not necessarily the best response and outcome for the individual concerned. They acknowledged that a large percentage of police calls for service have a base in mental health and addictions, and as such, mental health and addictions are often criminalized due to a lack of alternative supports. This points to a need for investments in a variety of areas and services rather than relying on police intervention. Related to this need for investment, the Committee discussed opportunities to re-task and reallocate funding from police to mental health and social services. Members noted that police services are already overwhelmed and that more funding will be needed to improve police training and capacity. They recognized that shifting responsibility for mental health calls may lead to cost savings for police. They referenced the Vancouver Police Department who noted that 16 percent of the 13,592 mental health calls they receive, which is the equivalent of \$1.051 million annually, may or may not have required police attendance. Members linked re-tasking to decriminalization as many areas

such as homelessness, sex work, mental health, and addictions are not criminal acts and do not require policing services in most cases. They noted that to ensure sufficient supports, more mental health and social service professionals will need to be educated and hired.

Committee Members reflected on the role and responsibilities of police in wellness checks and recognized concerns from racialized communities in this area. Members noted that the presence of uniformed police may escalate wellness checks; however, in some cases, it may be a safety issue for mental health or social services professionals to perform wellness checks without police. The Committee discussed co-response models that team mental health and social services professionals with police as a possible solution. They recognized that there are many different situations in which wellness checks are required or requested, including wellness checks for seniors and in situations that are not related to mental health. Committee Members noted that many wellness checks are requested by concerned individuals who have important and relevant information that should be considered by the police, which requires trust between police and the community. Further, they emphasized that there should not be an assumption that a wellness check will be violent. While there is existing training for police in relation to wellness checks, Members noted that this training is not working.

The Committee supported a continuum of responses to mental health, addictions and other complex social issues with a focus on prevention and community-led responses. Committee Members were impressed by a number of models that could be replicated or expanded across the province, including "Car" programs, Assertive Community Treatment teams, Peer Assisted Crisis Teams, and CAHOOTS. They also noted opportunities to integrate alternative responses through dispatch services, such as New Zealand's mental health option when calling their emergency line, or Saskatchewan's pilot program where psychiatric nurses are embedded in the RCMP's operational command centre. At the same time, the Committee emphasized the need to be proactive and to focus on prevention to reduce the need for these services,

as well as ensure services are available whenever and wherever British Columbians need them. This means that services will need to be adaptable, flexible and innovative to meet local contexts in a province as large and diverse as BC.

The Committee emphasized the need for coordination and integration across police, mental health, health, and social services. Regarding mental health and addictions, Members identified the importance of information sharing to help make good decisions and improve responses; however, they recognized that there may be privacy issues in sharing mental health information with police.

Another area in which coordination is needed is police investigation and response to sexual assault. Members discussed the violence against women in relationships (VAWIR) policy which includes coordination across multiple ministries and services, and supported a similar approach for sexual assault as there are currently no standards in this area. Committee Members reflected on the input they received with respect to police response to sexual assault and noted that many cases of sexual assault do not get reported due to stigma, out of date policies, and difficulties navigating the system and the complaints process. The process is also traumatic for the survivor, so they need to be supported throughout the process. Committee Members highlighted the need to balance creating a caring, compassionate response with administering a justice system and protecting the integrity of the investigation where the evidentiary standard that must be met is very high. The Committee noted a lack of coordination between healthcare, community organizations and police in this regard and discussed best practices that could be expanded such as those used by the Victoria Sexual Assault Centre and the Philadelphia Model in which frontline workers coordinate with police to review sexual assault cases to improve the investigation process. With respect to the type of supports that should be offered, Members discussed how there are some circumstances in which embedding victim services in police departments works well and

others where community-based services may be more appropriate.

Regarding sex work, Members discussed the relationship between poverty and sex work, structural traps, and the need for de-stigmatization. They noted that sex work is not illegal but many related aspects are such as materially benefiting, recruiting, advertising, public communications and purchasing sex work which creates dangerous situations for sex workers and difficulties for those who want to rent indoor space or hire a driver. Further, Members discussed the need for an intersectional perspective as not all sex workers are treated equally by police; they heard about discriminatory behaviour towards Indigenous and racialized sex workers, as well as discrepancies between the treatment of indoor and outdoor sex workers and those who engage in survival sex work. Committee Members agreed that sex workers need to feel safe and not afraid to call the police and considered recommendations related to expanding or harmonizing sex work guidelines as well as training for officers. The Committee additionally reflected on how sex workers also experience gender-based violence and face unique challenges in engaging with the police and the need to explore ways to address intersecting policy issues in this area.

## Relationship Building

Committee Members highlighted the need for police services to build relationships with the communities they serve. They discussed ways to increase community consultation and accountability to the community, including using community advisory or engagement committees. The Committee reflected on the importance of police outreach and events that provide opportunities for relationship building. As an example of a positive relationship, Committee Members referred to the presentation by Sergeant Jon MacIntyre of the Tsay Keh RCMP who stated that becoming involved in youth and adult sport as well as social and cultural events have led to community members and leaders requesting an extension of Sergeant MacIntyre's posting in the community. Members noted that funding is required to

support officers' efforts to integrate into communities and build relationships, including through participation in community events. With respect to police officers in schools, the Committee noted that school programs are an opportunity to build relationships and trust with students; however, this depends on having the right officer involved in the program. Members recognized concerns brought forward by racialized communities that many children and youth feel anxious or less safe due to police presence in school and tied these concerns to police culture.

Another important element in relationship building is officer recruitment and retention. Committee Members agreed that police officers should be part of the community, but they do not necessarily have to be from the local area to do this. With respect to retention, short or rotating postings were identified as an impediment to relationship building as time is needed for both officers and members of the community to build trust. The Committee recognized that the current practice of moving officers to different communities, with seemingly no explanation, undermines relationship building. Members agreed that officers who are invested in communities and want to stay should be able to continue to work in those communities. They noted that regionalizing police services would allow officers to have more career advancement opportunities while remaining in the community longer. The Committee discussed ways to retain officers in rural, remote, and northern communities, including through resources, training, and compensation or tax credits. Further, Members recognized that there are challenges for officers working in areas with high housing costs who are unable to afford to live in those areas.

## Partnering and Collaborating with Indigenous Peoples

Another theme that the Committee highlighted was the need to partner and collaborate with Indigenous leaders and First Nations to improve public safety in Indigenous communities and to challenge the colonial

structure of policing. Members stressed the importance of self-determination and of Indigenous communities developing public safety solutions that work for them. Committee Members reflected on the input they received from Indigenous communities who frequently request more police presence and a desire to have healthy, productive relationships with the people who are policing their communities. Members noted that building such relationships requires resources, ensuring officers are appropriately matched to the community, and allowing those officers to stay in the community rather than being transferred elsewhere. Increasing representation of Indigenous peoples within police services as well as the number of Indigenous Liaison Officers were also discussed as ways to help build trust between Indigenous communities and police. While the Committee agreed that police services should be standardized and consistent throughout the province, they recognized the need for flexibility, especially in responding to the unique needs of different Indigenous communities. Members supported the creation of more Indigenous-administered police services, and noted that these services could police neighbouring jurisdictions as well. The Committee acknowledged that there are several recommendations and action items from the Calls for Justice from the National Inquiry on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, Calls to Action from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, and UNDRIP that should be implemented and that would improve policing in Indigenous communities. They agreed that as a next step in the process, the Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General should meet with Indigenous nations to have a more in-depth and detailed discussion about Indigenous policing in BC.

# Conclusions and Recommendations

The Committee's vision for policing and public safety includes: ensuring equitable access to police and public safety services with consistent oversight, governance, training, and policies; ensuring all policing is responsive to and informed by the community; improving coordination to ensure a continuum of response; building trust by shifting the culture and structure of police services; and partnering and collaborating with Indigenous leaders and nations. The following recommendations intersect and build upon each other to transform policing and public safety according to this vision. The ordering of recommendations does not indicate priority.

*The Committee recommends to the Legislative Assembly that the provincial government:*

- 1) **Implement a new Community Safety and Policing Act to govern the provision of policing and public safety services based on values of decolonization, anti-racism, community, and accountability. This includes:**
  - a) Ensuring Indigenous peoples and nations, and municipal governments, are engaged in the drafting of the legislation.

Over the course of their consultation, it became clear to Committee Members that the *Police Act* is not meeting the needs of British Columbians, and that transformative change is required to modernize policing in BC. A new Act that incorporates the principles, goals and expectations outlined in the Committee's recommendations will serve as the framework for policing and embed values that should be at the core of how policing is delivered. The legislation will ensure that all policing services are subject to the same standards, requirements and policies. By including "Community Safety" in the name, the Committee emphasizes the goal of ensuring that all British Columbians feel safe in their communities and how positive and collaborative relationships between the community and the police increase public safety.

- 2) **Transition to a new BC provincial police service that is governed by the new Community Safety and Policing Act. This includes:**
  - a) Establishing a governance model, such as municipal or regional police boards or committees, that is representative of the community and provides opportunities for local input on policing and public safety priorities.

- b) Ensuring municipal council representation on municipal police boards or committees, while not allowing the mayor to serve as board chair.
- c) Amalgamating police services on a regional basis where there are opportunities to address fragmentation, ensure equitable access to policing and public safety, and improve efficiency and effectiveness.
- d) Enabling two police of jurisdiction to facilitate the process of transitioning from one service to another.

The Committee recommends that a new provincial police service take over services formerly contracted to the RCMP. As with the current model, municipalities would still have the opportunity to establish a municipal police service, contract with the provincial police service, or enter into an agreement with another municipality or Indigenous community that has a local police service to meet their policing needs. Members emphasized that addressing fragmentation of police services should be considered alongside these options. Committee Members were of the view that transitioning to a new provincial police service will improve local accountability and decision-making, and responsiveness and connection to the community. The Committee emphasized that transitioning to a provincial police service is not a reflection on the work of individual RCMP officers; rather, it is a reflection of the challenges with governance and accountability with the current federal model.

A new provincial police service will also improve consistency of services, training, oversight, standards, and policies across all police services in BC. The transition provides the opportunity to establish a provincial police service that is more reflective of the modern-day policing needs of British Columbians. As this will be a major change in the delivery of police services, Members stress that government must ensure an open, transparent and collaborative approach to working with partners, including local governments and Indigenous communities, that will be impacted.

Members recognized that such a move will have fiscal considerations for provincial and local governments. They highlighted that there may be savings in other areas as a result of the Committee's other recommendations, especially as they relate to service delivery and ensuring the provision of appropriate responses, services, and supports to individuals experiencing mental health crises.

With respect to governance, Committee Members noted the importance of local input, responsiveness, and accountability and ensuring all communities have this opportunity through a board or committee structure. Regarding the membership of such structures, Members recognized that having the mayor as chair in the current municipal police board model is challenging and can lead to political or financial conflicts of interest. The Committee heard that there needs to be an arms-length distance between the board and local government to ensure public trust and recommends retaining municipal representation on boards while not allowing the mayor to serve as chair. With respect to broader board or committee composition, it should be reflective of the diversity of the community and include Indigenous peoples and persons of colour as well as a diversity of experiences, including policing experience, lived experience, and business and law experience.

The Committee additionally noted difficulties associated with having police services structured according to municipal boundaries given that crime does not respect these boundaries. This structure has led to gaps in communication and administration as well as fragmented service delivery. Amalgamating police services by region can provide consistency in service delivery and increase efficiency and effectiveness in the provision of services that are highly technical, capital-intensive, and specialized without sacrificing policing that is informed by and responsive to the community. Many smaller or remote departments do not have officers with specialized training in certain areas or access to joint

initiatives such as “Car” programs. Regionalization will enable resources to be shared throughout a geographic area and help fulfill the Committee’s other recommendations with respect to equitable access to police services and ensuring appropriate first response. In addition, regionalization can offer a career path for officers to remain in community which also enables ongoing, meaningful community connections. Members discussed several areas that might benefit from regionalization including southern Vancouver Island and parts of the Lower Mainland and Okanagan.

As well, Members recognized that having only one police of jurisdiction while transitioning from one service to another presents difficulties with respect to implementing new programs and processes. They recommend allowing two police services to have authority, with a phased handover, to facilitate the transition process.

**3) Ensure all Indigenous communities have direct input into their police service structure and governance, including self-administered services which could provide policing to neighbouring non-Indigenous communities.**

Committee Members emphasized the importance of partnering and collaborating with Indigenous leaders and First Nations to improve public safety in Indigenous communities. The Committee heard throughout the consultation about the lack of trust Indigenous peoples have in the police, particularly in relation to the colonial history of police in BC and Canada. They heard that Indigenous communities want to be actively involved in determining how policing is delivered in their communities. The *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act* obliges government to consult and cooperate with Indigenous peoples and obtain their free, prior and informed consent before adopting and implementing legislative or administrative measures that may affect them. Members stressed the importance of self-determination and of Indigenous communities developing public safety solutions that work for them, including the creation of self-administered services.

**4) Create and appropriately fund a continuum of response to mental health, addictions and other complex social issues with a focus on prevention and community-led responses and ensuring appropriate first response. This includes:**

- a) Increasing coordination and integration across police, health, mental health, and social services.
- b) Integrating mental health within 911 call options.

Members emphasized that police should not be the primary or only first responders to calls related to mental health and addictions and other complex social issues. A large percentage of police calls have a base in mental health and addictions, and in many cases, police are responding to situations for which they are not trained because nobody else is available. This points to a need for investments in a variety of areas and services rather than relying on police intervention to ensure appropriate first response. This includes creating a continuum of response to mental health, addictions and other complex social issues with a focus on prevention and community-led responses. The Committee discussed the presentation by the Canadian Mental Health Association BC Division which outlined a spectrum where there is: a police response to criminal activity and safety risks including threats of violence to self and others;

a health response, with police on occasion, to health risks, including suicide attempts, very severe mental health crises, major injuries, and overdose; and a community response to crisis drivers, including shelter issues, isolation, grief, bereavement, loss, depression, anxiety, and minor physical injuries. Committee Members noted that increasing investments in health and social services, and in prevention and community-led responses, will benefit British Columbians by ensuring they are receiving appropriate supports and services. This also allows police to focus on performing policing and law enforcement functions rather than responding to calls related to complex social issues. Further, a continuum of response serves as a tool to de-stigmatize poverty, homelessness, mental health and sex work by ensuring police are not the only or primary first responders.

The Committee noted that such a continuum should also include integrating mental health within 911 call options to ensure that the appropriate services are dispatched to calls. They were also intrigued by a pilot project currently underway in Saskatchewan in which psychiatric nurses are embedded in the RCMP's operational command centre. The continuum should include co-response models, such as "Car" programs and Victoria Police Department's Assertive Community Treatment teams, that pair police and mental health or social services professionals, to respond to calls where safety is a concern. For those calls without safety concerns, Members support community-led responses and referenced models such as Peer Assisted Crisis Teams, CAHOOTS program in Eugene Oregon, and Reach Out Response Network's pilot programs, while emphasizing the need for a made-in-BC solution. Services and supports must be available 24/7 and in all communities to prevent crisis and to support individuals following crisis. Technological solutions may also assist in addressing the need for services in remote areas.

With respect to coordination and integration, Members agreed that there should be provincial standards that require coordination and collaboration across ministries and service providers where these services exist. In particular, Committee Members noted that there are many existing community-based supports and services for survivors of gender-based violence and sexual assault and emphasized the need for police services to work with these organizations and service providers. Responses to mental health crises and wellness checks were also highlighted as areas in need of coordination.

- 5) Ensure equitable access to high quality police and public safety services across BC. This includes:**
- a) Ensuring all policing is responsive to and informed by the community.
  - b) Implementing and enforcing provincial standards, policies, and expectations for service with respect to responding to individuals experiencing a mental health crisis, conducting wellness checks, responding to sexual assault, and conducting trauma-informed interviews.
  - c) Adopting a dynamic and flexible approach to policing that provides for different categories of policing and public safety personnel who have clearly defined roles, responsibilities, and functions such as responding to non-violent incidents and other situations that may not require uniformed police.
  - d) Expanding the use of culturally appropriate restorative justice programs throughout BC, including increased funding for these programs and education for police officers.



Throughout the consultation, the Committee heard about inconsistencies in the provision of police services in BC. The Committee's recommendations for a new provincial police service and amalgamating services by region are integral to achieving this goal. Members also discussed the need for standards that apply to all police services in BC as well as accountability in the application of these standards. While standards exist in some areas, they are lacking in others such as investigation of sexual assault, which has a significant impact on those who interact with police. Members agreed that all British Columbians should have access to consistent and equitable police services that are informed by and responsive to the community. Methods to ensure connection to the community include structures such as police boards or community engagement committees, as well as shifting police culture to emphasize the value of community relationships.

In some jurisdictions, a tiered approach to policing allows for different categories of police and public safety officers such as peace officers, community safety officers, bylaw enforcement officers, or auxiliary police officers who perform certain police functions. Examples of these functions include protecting crime scenes, responding to calls not in progress, traffic control, and other functions that may not require full police powers. This approach reduces demand on police officers and allows them to focus on matters that are more in keeping with their training and capabilities which results in cost savings. Having additional tiers of personnel that are not necessarily armed or uniformed addresses concerns with respect to militarization and intimidation. Members emphasized that triaging will be an important component of this approach to ensure the individual with the appropriate level of training and responsibility is dispatched to the right situations.

Members recognized the value of restorative justice in leading to positive outcomes for participants and reducing costs but noted that funding for these programs is insufficient. Increasing funding will allow for these services to be expanded throughout the province, while education for police officers will ensure for more referrals to these programs.

**6) Create a fair and equitable shared funding model for municipalities. This includes:**

- a) Consideration of local needs, health and social supports, and the geography of a service delivery area.
- b) Exploring options to phase in or incrementally increase the municipal share of policing costs.

Many municipalities nearing the various population thresholds that determine their share of policing costs expressed concerns about the significant jumps in share at the current intervals of 5,000 and 15,000 people. Linking responsibility for policing costs to population also creates inequity for some municipalities in covering expenses related to visitors from outside the community, such as in downtown cores, and for municipalities that have population fluctuations throughout the year. Members agreed that implementing incremental steps to phase in costs for municipalities as their populations increase may help to address this issue. They recommend a fair and equitable funding model that reflects policing needs, and also considers social supports, climate, and geography.

- 7) Enhance and standardize initial and ongoing police education and training to reflect key values and competencies in order to shift police culture. This includes:**
- a) Ensuring police and public safety services are representative of the diversity of the communities served (including diversity of race, ethnicity, gender, and sexuality) via recruitment.
  - b) Implementing screening and performance evaluation for existing officers and new recruits that reflects desired values and principles, including humility, honesty, empathy, and lack of bias and prejudice, to ensure that these individuals are best suited for their current position or for advancement and are a good fit for the community.
  - c) Conducting regular mandatory psychological assessments for all police officers in BC.
  - d) Enhancing and standardizing training required for police recruits and implementing mandatory and meaningful ongoing education with respect to anti-racism, cultural competency, and trauma-informed practices.
  - e) Requiring police officers to complete training and education that is based on the historical, cultural, and socio-economic context of the communities in which they will be serving and is developed and delivered in consultation with the communities.
  - f) Developing benchmarks to measure the efficacy of police training and education with respect to a shift in police culture and conduct.

Members discussed how both training and education are needed to shift the culture of police services and build public trust and recommend enhancing and standardizing these practices throughout the province. They further recommend that training and education be delivered and developed in consultation with experts and the local community, including anti-racism, cultural competency, and trauma-informed practices. While some courses related to these core competencies already exist, the Committee emphasized the need for training and education to be delivered in a meaningful and impactful way. Members particularly noted opportunities to improve and enhance training requirements, including ongoing training, education and professional development, to better reflect the evolving responsibilities and expectations of policing as a profession. This may require increasing the amount of time recruits spend in training and education. In addition to core training, Members recommend further education and training specific to the location in which an officer is serving based on that community's historical, cultural, and socio-economic context.

With respect to measuring the efficacy of training and education, Committee Members emphasized that the outcome measured should be a shift in culture and behaviour (for example, bias-free policing) rather than completion of a specific course.

The Committee agreed that shifting police culture will help with recruitment and retention by making policing a safe and welcoming place for police officers from all backgrounds. Committee Members identified a number of key qualities for police recruitment including: diversity of race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, life experience and education; awareness of bias; humility and honesty; and empathy and sympathy. They recommend that these qualities also be considered

in performance evaluation and assessment, similar to the evaluation model in Longueuil, Quebec which emphasizes social skills as well as competencies and abilities regarding diversity and community. Members noted that there are psychological assessments of police recruits and recommend that these be conducted more regularly given the effect of trauma and stress on police mental health.

**8. Require police services to collect and publicly report disaggregated race-based and other demographic data and conduct comprehensive reviews of and amend policies and procedures to address systemic racism in policing.**

Committee Members heard clear evidence of systemic racism and discrimination in policing during their consultation and emphasized the urgent need to acknowledge and address these issues. In addition to highlighting anti-racism as a value in a new Community Safety and Policing Act and enhancing training in this area, the Committee recommends collecting and publicly reporting race-based data that is standardized and consistently collected. Members noted that this data is needed to better understand systemic racism and make improvements to policies and practices across policing. To ensure communities are not further harmed by the collection and use of this data, they must be consulted in the process. To identify and address systemic racism at the department level, the Committee recommends that all police services review their policies and procedures and emphasizes the need to partner with the community in this process. These reviews should be conducted on an ongoing basis and the results should be shared with the Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General to ensure accountability and monitor the progress of policy amendments.

**9. Establish a single, independent, civilian-led oversight agency responsible for overseeing conduct, complaints, investigations, and disciplinary matters for all police and public safety personnel with powers or authority under the new Community Safety and Policing Act. This includes:**

- a) Prioritizing the creation of stand-alone legislation for police oversight.
- b) Ensuring the oversight agency is reflective of the diverse population and cultures of BC.
- c) Providing navigation and triaging services to assist complainants throughout the complaints process.
- d) Implementing a multi-stream approach to processing complaints, expediting minor performance and procedural matters, and offering multiple resolution pathways such as direct conversations, mediation, or restorative justice.
- e) Revising the definition of misconduct to include demeaning and discriminatory conduct, language, jokes, statements, gestures, and related behaviours.
- f) Establishing a duty to cooperate with investigations and a duty to report misconduct for all police and public safety personnel with protections for reporting.

The Committee's vision is that all police and public safety services are accountable to the communities they serve and to each other and are held to high standards that are consistent across the entire profession. Committee Members reflected on how the current oversight framework is complex and confusing to navigate and can result in duplication. They noted that the Independent Investigations Office appears to be working well and that there were several challenges highlighted with respect to the Office of the Police Complaint Commissioner and the Civilian Review and Complaints Commission for the RCMP. To achieve their vision and address these issues, Members recommend a single, independent, civilian-led, oversight agency that provides oversight of all police and public safety personnel in BC with powers or authority under a new Community Safety and Policing Act. This agency should receive all complaints and determine the appropriate approach for resolution based on the nature of the complaint, such as conducting investigations of criminal and serious issues, facilitating direct conversations, or triaging performance or service issues to a police board or union. The agency must be appropriately funded and empowered to be dynamic and use a multi-level system to address complaints to ensure efficiency, timely resolution, and appropriate accountability. The agency's guiding approach to complaints should include accountability for actions, repairing of relationships, and trust in the system. This includes demonstrating transparency and embedding a trauma-informed approach in the complaints process, such as ensuring complainants have enough time to initiate a complaint, and having navigation supports to guide complainants through the process, communicate status updates, and support with language, transportation, or other accessibility barriers. Navigators could also help identify resolution options, whether it be restorative justice, mediation, or access to legal advice. Further, mechanisms must ensure officers have the duty to report misconduct, including misogyny and racism, are compelled to cooperate with investigations, and are protected from any retaliation. A single oversight agency will eliminate the existing duplication and complication of multiple oversight bodies, clarify the complaints process, and help to build public trust and attract new people to policing as a profession. The Committee emphasized the urgent need to address the fragmentation of the current oversight system and recommends prioritizing the creation of standalone oversight legislation.

***The Committee recommends that the Legislative Assembly:***

- 10) Immediately appoint an all-party parliamentary committee to undertake a broad review of the Mental Health Act with a view to modernizing the Act and ensuring it aligns with the recommendations in this report.**

Committee Members examined the role of police with respect to the *Mental Health Act* and observed that, at minimum, the issue of the authority to make apprehensions needs to be addressed as police currently spend a lot of time waiting in the emergency room after apprehending an individual. They discussed how ensuring mental health professionals respond to mental health calls, rather than – or with – a police officer, will provide more understanding of if or when an individual needs to go to a hospital. At the same time, the Committee noted that the *Mental Health Act* has not been substantially updated in many years and that there are broader issues with the Act and its administration which necessitates an immediate and comprehensive review.

**11) Establish an all-party select standing committee on policing and community safety to:**

- a) Oversee the implementation of changes recommended in this report.
- b) Conduct regular reviews of the new Community Safety and Policing Act.
- c) Examine standards, policies, and programs related to the provision of policing and public safety in BC and report annually on this work.
- d) Work with key partners to address colonial structures and systemic racism in policing.
- e) Receive and review annual updates from the Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General regarding emergent issues in policing and community safety and the effectiveness of police services in BC.

The Committee highlighted the value of all-party parliamentary committees, including this Special Committee, in providing a venue for collaborative and constructive discussions of policy issues and legislation. Committee Members acknowledged that their recommendations will take multiple years and parliaments to realize, and that an all-party committee would be helpful to oversee the implementation process. As well, such a Committee should undertake periodic reviews of the new Community Safety and Policing Act. Members also noted that a parliamentary committee could provide further and ongoing oversight of policing and public safety in BC as well as serve as a mechanism to work with the Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General, as well as other partners and stakeholders, to address existing and emerging issues.

# Appendix A: Participants

The following is a list of individuals and organizations who participated in the Committee’s consultation. For those who presented to the Committee, the meeting date is noted.

Susan Abells	BC Psychological Association (29-Nov-21)	Canadian Bar Association BC Branch (28-Jul-21)
Adams Lake Indian Band (9-Apr-21)	BC RCMP (29-Jul-21)	Canadian Mental Health Association BC Division (23-Feb-21)
Ambulance Paramedics & Emergency Dispatchers of BC (26-Jan-22)	BC Society of Transition Houses (12-Mar-21)	Care Not Cops (29-Jul-21)
Claire Anderson	BC Urban Mayors’ Caucus (27-Jul-21)	Conway Carruthers
David Antrobus	Geoff Berner	Kelly Carson
Paul Arssov	Stephanie Blais	Bryce Casavant (26-Jul-21)
Danial Asadolahi	Larissa Blokhuis	Bet Cecill
Carol Auld	Bob Boase	Centre for Gender and Sexual Health Equity (22-Jul-21)
Gordon Bailey	Samantha Bohmert	Kim Charlesworth
John Balderson	Elizabeth Borek	Robin Chauhan
Shirley Ballin	David Bouvier	Jordan Christopher
Bill Bargeman	Barbara Bradbury	Michelle Chu
Nycki Basra	British Columbia Association of Social Workers (23-Feb-21)	City of Delta (27-Jul-21)
Francine Bassie	British Columbia Schizophrenia Society (23-Feb-21)	City of New Westminster (27-Jul-21)
Battered Women’s Support Services (12-Mar-21)	Margaret Broderick	City of North Vancouver (27-Jul-21)
Kurtis Baute	Pauline Brooks	City of Richmond (27-Jul-21)
BC Assembly of First Nations (26-Mar-21)	Marianne Brueckert	City of Rossland (29-Jun-21)
BC Association of Chiefs of Police (7-Apr-21)	John Bruzas	City of Vancouver (27-Jul-21)
BC Association of Municipal Chiefs of Police (7-Apr-21)	Gosia Bryja	Andrea Clark
BC Association of Police Boards	Gölök Z Buday	Rob Clarke
BC Centre on Substance Use (26-Jul-21)	Business Improvement Areas of British Columbia (28-Jul-21)	Gordon Cole
BC Civil Liberties Association (19-Mar-21)	David Byrnesret	Margaret Coles
BC First Nations Justice Council (26-Mar-21)	Taitania Calarco	Cynthia Colligan
BC Government Employees Union - Correctional and Sheriff Services Section (26-Feb-21)	Alexandra Calbery	Joan Combes
BC Police Association (26-Jul-21)	Maery Callaghan	Common Beacon Media
	Derrick Campbell	
	Jade Campbell	

Community Advisors of the Provincial Committee on Diversity and Policing (27-Jul-21)	Carolina Evans	Gary Guthrie
Community Legal Assistance Society (26-Jul- 21)	Jon Farebrother	Ella Hale and Emma Epp (20-Jul-21)
Conservation Officer Service (26-Feb-21)	Jeffery Fast	Nichola Hall
Glenn Countryman	Federation of Community Social Services of BC (23-Feb-21)	Olivia Hall
Covenant House Vancouver (26-Jul-21)	Suzanne Fehlauer (26-Jan-22)	Judith Hammill
Peter Cox	Feminists Deliver (22-Jul-21)	Sally Hammond
Rob Creasser	Avalon Findlay	Amy Hanser
Crisis Centre of BC (29-Jun-21)	Sarah-Lynne Findlay	Jessica Hart
Morley Crosby	Artemis Fire	Brendan Haws
Jen Currin	First Nations Leadership Council	Graham Hayes
Yvon Dandurand (24-Feb-21)	First Nations Summit (26-Mar-21)	Health Justice (29-Jun-21)
Ankit Dassor	First United Church Community Ministry Society (26-Jul-21)	Neil Heard
Denise Davis	Ullrich Fischer	Heiltsuk Nation (25-Feb-21)
Susan Davis	David Fisher and Gisele Benoit (20-Jul-21)	Marjorie Herle
Roseanne Day	Blake Fisher	Karen Hertz
John de Haas (26-Jul-21)	Jeff Fitton	Heather Hiebert
Delegated Aboriginal Agencies of BC (26- Mar-21)	Alison Fitzgerald	Hives for Humanity
Delta Police Board	Barry Fleming	Hogan's Alley Society (23-Apr-21)
Delta Police Department (27-Jul-21)	Fort Nelson First Nation (5-Mar-21)	Homalco First Nation (5-Mar-21)
Raj Dheensaw	Irina Fox	Doug Hopwood
Adam Dickson	Cathy Frances	Robert Horne
District of North Cowichan (29-Jun-21)	Fraser Health Authority (29-Mar-21)	Ethan Hsu
District of Squamish (29-Jun-21)	Dion Freeman	Connie Hubbs
District of Vanderhoof	Jennifer Freeman	Katie Hyslop
Downtown Eastside Women's Centre (12- Mar-21)	Frances Friese	Steven Ignas
Downtown Vancouver Business Improvement Association	Joanna G	Inclusion BC (20-Jul-21)
Kim Drescher	Gabriola Health and Wellness Collaborative (29-Jun-21)	Interior Health (29-Mar-21)
Craig East	Thierry Garrel	Robert Ireland
E-Comm (26-Feb-21)	Betty Geier	Island Health (29-Mar-21)
Carla Edge (26-Jul-21)	Gary George	Sara Jellicoe
Elizabeth Fry Society of Greater Vancouver (26-Jul-21)	Rob Gillezeau	Trisha Joel
Laurie Embree	Gitanyow Band (9-Apr-21)	John Howard Society Pacific (26-Jul-21)
Ending Violence Association of BC (12-Mar- 21)	River Glen	Bill Johnstone
Engaged Communities Canada Society (27- Jul-21)	Mary Glynn	Barbara Jordan
Daisy Espinosa	Karen Goodfellow	Dominus Rex Joseph
Eugene Police Department (14-Dec-21)	Dr. Benjamin Goold (16-Apr-21)	Michelle Joyce
	Louise Gordon (27-Jul-21)	Justice for Girls (22-Jul-21)
	Catherine Griffin	Justice Institute of BC (23-Apr-21)
	Nicholas Guerreiro	Kheft Kaligari
	Adina Guest	Joe Karthein
		Kelowna RCMP (10-Nov-21)
		Will Kershaw

Roberta King	Alan Moran	Pacific Society for the Advancement of Employment Equity
Greg Klein	Giuseppe Morelli	Pacific Wild Alliance
Allison Knox	Mike Morris	Simone Page
Aaron Korbacher	Vivien M. Muir	Jill Parker (29-Jul-21)
Erin Kowbel	Multicultural Advisory Council (27-Jul-21)	Craig Paterson
Kaylea Kray-Domingo	Alex Murphy	Kirsten Pedersen
Finn Kreischer	Barbara Murray	Peer Assisted Crisis Team (Canadian Mental Health Association BC Division) (29-Nov- 21)
Peter Labanic	Shelina Musaji	Penelakut Tribe (25-Feb-21)
Peggy Lalor	Musqueam Indian Band (25-Feb-21)	Erin Peters
Julia Lane	Marney Mutch (26-Jan-22)	Daniel H. Phelps
Patricia Lane	Robert and Helen Nation	Celia Pinette
Law Union of British Columbia (28-Jul-21)	National Police Federation (26-Jul-21)	Andre Piver
Christopher Lawrence	Native Courtworker and Counselling Association of British Columbia (24-Feb- 21)	Pivot Legal Society (19-Mar-21)
Brian Lee	Nelson Police Department (27-Jul-21)	Tony Plourde
Elizabeth Lee	Nadeane Nelson	Police Victim Services of British Columbia (12-Mar-21)
Celine Lee-Gee	New Hazelton RCMP (10-Nov-21)	Jon Povill
David Lemire	Robyn Newton	Sandra Prentice
Adam Leszczynski	Dave Nickle	PRIMECorp (7-Apr-21)
Rachel Levee	Dennis Nicoll	Prince George RCMP (10-Nov-21)
Licence Inspectors' and Bylaw Officers' Association of British Columbia (26-Jul- 21)	Nisga'a Village of Gitwinksihlkw (9-Apr-21)	Sundar-Jovian Radheshwar
Lil'Wat First Nation (16-Apr-21)	North Peace Justice Society (12-Nov-21)	Amrit Randay
Joey Liu	North Shore Black Bear Society	Sara Ratner
Living in Community Society (22-Jul-21)	North Shore Restorative Justice Society (12- Nov-21)	Kelly, Ron and Audrey Rauch (22-Jul-21)
Patrick Longworth	Northern Rockies RCMP (10-Nov-21)	RCMP Depot Division (23-Apr-21)
Madelyn MacKay	Nurses and Nurse Practitioners of British Columbia (29-Jun-21)	Reach Out Response Network (30-Nov-21)
Jordan Magtoto	Nuu-chah-nulth Tribal Council (9-Apr-21)	Resilience BC Anti-Racism Network (27-Jul- 21)
John Mainland	Oak Bay Police Board	Marianne Rev
Andrew Maksymchuk	Office of the Ombudsperson (22-Feb-21)	Roberts Creek Coast Care Consulting
Yvonne Marcus	Office of the Provincial Health Officer (22- Feb-21)	Gordy Robson
Hilary Marks (26-Jan-22)	Office of the Representative for Children and Youth (22-Feb-21)	Anneke Rosch
Monika Marlowe	Office of the Seniors Advocate (20-Jul-21)	Thomas A Ross
Wayne Masters	OpenMedia	Marcelle Roy
Zoya Matheos-Fairey	The Honourable Wallace T. Oppal (16-Apr-21)	S.U.C.C.E.S.S. (19-Mar-21)
John Maxwell	Graciela Orlando	Saanich Police Board
Karen McDonald	Pacific Association of First Nations Women (27-Jul-21)	Sigurd Sabathil
Krystal McKenzie	Pacific Northwest Institute for Racial Trauma	Aitor Sánchez
Leonard Meilleur	Pacific Region Training Centre (23-Apr-21)	Bill Schram
Metro Vancouver Transit Police (27-Jul-21)		Michelle Schreinders
Onni Milne		Erica Scott
Mindful Badge		
Steven Miros		



Alysha Seriani	Tk'emlúps Te Secwépemc (6-Apr-21)	Ian Ward
Service de police de l'agglomération de Longueuil (9-Nov-21)	Together Victoria	Larry Wartels
Christopher Shepherd	Carole Tootill	S. Watkins
Jennifer Shutek	Town of Creston (29-Jun-21)	Agnes Watts
Ana Simeon	Town of Gibsons (29-Jun-21)	Dorothy Watts
Alena Simmons	Tsay Keh Dene RCMP (10-Nov-21)	West Coast LEAF (26-Jul-21)
Simon Fraser Student Society	Tsleil-Waututh First Nation (25-Feb-21)	West Kootenay People for Racial Justice (27-Jul-21)
Simon Fraser University Institute for the Humanities (24-Feb-21)	William Tubbs	West Shore RCMP (10-Nov-21)
Jan Slakov	UBC Innocence Project (26-Jul-21)	Nikki White
Russell Slater	Union Gospel Mission (26-Jul-21)	Peter White
Annie Smith	Union of BC Indian Chiefs (26-Mar-21)	Marlowe Whyte
Lee Smith	University of Victoria Environmental Law Centre	Bruce Wilkinson
Solaye Snider	Upper Fraser Valley Regional District RCMP (10-Nov-21)	Chris Wilkinson
Snuneymuxw First Nation (5-Mar-21)	Scott Van Denham	Paul Willinsky
Deric Soohochoff	Jan van't Land	Jenifer Wilson
Ronald Spector	Vancouver Aboriginal Child and Family Services Society (27-Jul-21)	Peter Wing
Kathy Sperling	Vancouver Aboriginal Community Policing Centre Society (26-Feb-21)	Robert Winston
Chris Stackaruk	Vancouver Aboriginal Transformative Justice Services Society (27-Jul-21)	Women Transforming Cities
Eric Stevenson	Vancouver Area Network of Drug Users (23-Feb-21)	Jodene Wood
Kennedy Stewart	Vancouver Coastal Health Authority (19-Mar-21)	Robert Woodhead
Stl'atl'imx Tribal Police Service (9-Nov-21)	Vancouver Island Region Restorative Justice Association (12-Nov-21)	Angela Workman-Stark (3-Nov-21)
Strategic Crime Management	Vancouver Police Board	Xaxli'p First Nation (6-Apr-21)
Kristin Street	Vancouver Police Department, Diversity and Indigenous Relations Unit (7-Apr-21)	Joanna Young
Catherine Strickland	Vancouver Police Department (27-Jul-21)	Teri Young
Lynne Stuart (26-Jan-22)	Vancouver Rape Relief and Women's Shelter (22-Jul-21)	Linda Ypenburg
Substance Users Teaching Advocacy Instead of Neglect	Vancouver Women's Health Collective (22-Jul-21)	
Surrey Police Service (30-Nov-21)	Suzanne Vetterli	
SWAN Vancouver (22-Jul-21)	Victoria & Esquimalt Police Board (26-Jul-21)	
Neda (Nina) Taghaddosi	Victoria Council of Canadians	
Tahltan Band Council (6-Apr-21)	Victoria Police Department (27-Jul-21)	
Vivien Tarkirk-Smith	Village of Lumby	
Alison Taylor	Kate Vincent	
Kachina Teixeira	Sheri Walsh	
The Adam Project Peer Support Initiative	Brenton Walters	
The BC Wrongful Death Law Reform Society		
The Fur-Bearers		
The Jewish Federation of Greater Vancouver and the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs		
Alan Thurgood		
Parker Tian		

# Appendix B: Survey

The Special Committee on Reforming the Police Act (“Committee”) is looking at policing in British Columbia and related systemic issues. The Committee is interested in hearing from individuals about their lived experiences and frontline perspectives, as well as challenges and opportunities for improving policing in the province. British Columbians are invited to complete this survey form to provide input to the Committee’s work. Please note that the Committee cannot comment on the merits of specific complaints or investigations.

Deadline for participation is Friday September 3, 2021 at 5:00 p.m.

The survey includes several open-ended questions provided below. You have the option of uploading a document (including written or audio files) with your responses, filling out an online survey or providing a written response using this form and emailing or mailing in a document with your responses to [PoliceActReform@leg.bc.ca](mailto:PoliceActReform@leg.bc.ca) or

Special Committee on Reforming the Police Act  
c/o Parliamentary Committees Office  
Room 224, Parliament Buildings  
Victoria, BC V8V 1X4

Please note all survey questions are optional.

As applicable, please include any relevant information explaining the context of your responses (e.g. is your response related to experiences with mental health, addictions, harm reduction, homelessness, gender-based violence, discrimination and/or systemic racism).

If you require assistance or alternative arrangements in completing the survey, or have questions about participating, please contact the Parliamentary Committees Office at [PoliceActReform@leg.bc.ca](mailto:PoliceActReform@leg.bc.ca) or 250-356-2933 (toll-free in BC at 1-877-428-8337).

For more information about the consultation, visit the Committee’s website: [www.leg.bc.ca/cmt/rpa](http://www.leg.bc.ca/cmt/rpa)  
[Privacy Policy](#)

The Parliamentary Committees Office of the Legislative Assembly of British Columbia, which supports the Committee, is committed to protecting personal contact information it collects from individuals during public consultation.  
Collection of personal contact information

Individuals providing input to a parliamentary committee must provide their full name and personal contact information (i.e., valid email address and phone number) for verification purposes. Anonymous submissions will not be accepted.

### Protection of personal contact information

Personal contact information will only be viewed by staff in the Parliamentary Committees Office and by technical support staff of the Legislative Assembly and used by staff in the Parliamentary Committees Office for the purpose for which it has been provided. It will not be disclosed to Committee Members or any third parties. The Parliamentary Committees Office protects personal information by taking appropriate safeguards against unauthorized use or disclosure.

### How input will be used

Participants' responses will be viewed by staff in the Parliamentary Committees Office and by Committee Members. The information provided will be used to inform the Committee's work and recommendations to the Legislative Assembly and may be included in the Committee's report. The information will not be linked to individual participants by name and will be incorporated into the report so as not to reveal an individual's identity. Individual responses will not be publicly posted, and names of participants to the survey will not be included in the Committee's report.

### Contact Form (Required)

1. Name (First and Last)
2. Email
3. Phone Number
4. Community

### Survey Questions

Please note that all survey questions are optional and you only need to answer the questions applicable or of interest to you. Answers are not limited to the space provide below.

### General (Optional)

1. What are your experiences with the police?
  - a. What has worked well during your experiences?
  - b. What has not worked well during your experiences?
  - c. Are there any changes you would like to see to policing in BC? Please explain.

### Role of police in relation to complex social issues (Optional)

2. In your opinion, what role and responsibility, if any, should police have with respect to mental health and wellness, addictions, harm reduction, homelessness, and other complex social issues?

### Police Oversight (Optional)

3. How do you view police oversight, transparency and accountability?
  - a. What is working well with regard to police oversight, transparency and accountability?
  - b. What is not working well with regard to police oversight, transparency and accountability?
  - c. Are there any opportunities to improve police oversight? Please explain.

### Policing and Systemic Racism (Optional)

4. How can systemic racism within policing be addressed? What changes and practices are needed?

### Police and Community Building (Optional)

5. How do you view the police's ability to build community relationships?
  - a. What is working well with regard to relationships between police and the community?
  - b. What is not working well with regard to relationships between police and the community?

- c. Are there any opportunities to improve relationships between police and the communities they serve? Please explain.

#### Policing and Indigenous Relations (Optional)

6. How do you view the police's ability to build relationships with the Indigenous communities they serve?
  - a. What is working well with regard to relationships between police and Indigenous communities?
  - b. What is not working well with regard to relationships between police and Indigenous communities?
  - c. How would you like to see policing change to reflect reconciliation?

Do you have experience, current or past, working in any of the following sectors?

- a. Policing – proceed to questions 7-11
- b. Public safety sector (e.g. corrections, victims services, emergency dispatch); healthcare including the mental health and addictions sector; and/or social services – proceed to question 12-16
- c. I do not have experience working in any of these sectors – proceed to question 17

If you have experience in policing, please refer to the following five questions (7-11).

#### Training (Optional)

7. Were you satisfied with amount and types of training provided to you? Please explain.
  - a. Are there any areas in which you would like, or would have liked, to receive training? Please explain.

#### Operations (Optional)

8. In the course of your day-to-day activities, do you feel safe and supported? What opportunities are there to improve day-to-day operations with respect to safety?

#### Collaboration (Optional)

9. What has been your experience working in collaboration with other frontline service providers such as healthcare workers, mental health professionals, or social workers?
  - a. What has worked well when collaborating with other frontline service providers?
  - b. What has not worked well when collaborating with other frontline service providers?
  - c. Are there any opportunities to improve collaboration between police and other frontline service providers? Please explain.

#### Oversight (Optional)

10. What has been your experience, if any, with internal police oversight and the complaint process? Please explain.
  - a. What has worked well with respect to internal police oversight and the complaint process?
  - b. What has not worked well with respect to internal police oversight and the complaint process?
  - c. Are there any opportunities to improve internal police oversight and the complaint process? Please explain.

#### Closing Question (Optional)

11. Do you have other information you would like to share?

If you have experience in public safety, health care including mental health and addictions, and/or social services, please refer to the following five questions (12-16).

#### Frontline Collaboration (Optional)

12. What has been your experience, if any, working in collaboration with police?
13. What worked well when collaborating with the police?

14. What has not worked well when collaborating with the police?
15. Are there any opportunities to improve collaboration between police and other frontline workers? Please explain.

Closing Question (Optional)

17. Do you have other information you would like to share?

If you do not have experience in policing, public safety, health care, and/or social services, please refer to the following question (17).

Closing Question (Optional)

18. Do you have other information you would like to share?

Demographic Questions

The Committee is collecting demographic information to help with the analysis of and reporting of survey responses. The information will not be linked to specific individuals and will be written so as not to reveal an individual's identity. All questions below are optional.

1. What is your age?
  - 17 years or under
  - 18-34 years old
  - 35-54 years old
  - 55 years or older
  - Prefer Not to Answer
  
2. Which best describes your current gender identity? Choose one of the following answers
  - Woman
  - Man
  - Non-binary
  - Other – please specify:
  - Prefer Not to Answer
  
3. Do you identify as transgender (meaning your gender identity does not align with your sex assigned at birth)?
  - Yes
  - No
  - Prefer Not to Answer
  
4. Do you consider yourself to be:
  - Heterosexual or straight
  - Gay
  - Lesbian
  - Bisexual
  - Not listed above
  - Prefer Not to Answer

5. Do you identify as an Indigenous person, that is, First Nations, Métis or Inuit?

Yes, First Nations

Yes, Métis

Yes, Inuit

No

Prefer Not to Answer

6. Do you identify as:

White

South Asian (e.g., East Indian, Pakistani, Sri Lankan)

Chinese

Black

Filipino

Arab

Latin American

Southeast Asian (e.g., Vietnamese, Cambodian, Laotian, Thai)

West Asian (e.g., Iranian, Afghan)

Korean

Japanese

Other group — specify:

Prefer Not to Answer

7. Were you born in Canada?

Yes

No

Prefer Not to Answer

8. What is your household income?

Under \$35,000

\$35,001 - \$75,000

\$75,001 or over

Prefer Not to Answer

9. Would you be interested in meeting with the Committee to discuss your input?

Yes, I am interested in meeting with the Committee publicly.

Yes, I am interested in meeting with the Committee confidentially.

No, I am not interested in meeting with the Committee.

Thank you for providing your valuable input to the Special Committee on Reforming the Police Act.

# Appendix C: The Work of the Previous Committee

A Special Committee on Reforming the Police Act was first appointed on July 8, 2020, in the 5th Session of the 41st Parliament. This Committee met four times between July and September 2020, beginning with organizational and planning discussions. On August 10, 2020, and September 21, 2020, the Committee received briefings from the Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General providing an overview of the *Police Act* and opportunities for reforming and improving policing in BC.

On September 21, 2020, the Legislative Assembly was dissolved; at dissolution, all business before the Assembly is terminated and parliamentary committees cease to exist. Following the provincial general election in fall 2020, a new Special Committee was appointed at the beginning of the First Session of the 42nd Parliament with the same terms of reference.

