



Council Member Motion
For the Committee of the Whole Meeting of December 14, 2023

To: Committee of the Whole **Date:** December 8, 2023
From: Councillor Krista Loughton and Mayor Marianne Alto
Subject: Ongoing Support for the Mobile Youth Services Team (MYST)

BACKGROUND

Every year, the Mobile Youth Services Team (MYST) falls short of funding for their Crime Reduction and Exploitation Diversion (CRED) component. Last year, the province provided one-time funding, but the investment needs to be ongoing for this imperative service which supports vulnerable youth and their families.

Mia Golden is a family and youth counsellor and the CRED coordinator, which is run by the Pacific Centre Family Services Association. Ms. Golden coordinates MYST with Victoria Police Const. Gord Magee. Together they manage an ongoing load of more than two hundred case files involving young people in crisis through drug addiction, homelessness, sexual exploitation, and gang entanglements in Greater Victoria.

Many causes fuel the exploitation of children. The overdose crisis, sexual predators grooming youth online, and a spike in gang recruitment has led to a rise in the number of kids being impacted. Younger children are experimenting with drugs and coming into harm's way via social media, which makes it much easier for predators to lure and target youth.

Const. Magee and Ms. Golden have both stated that four MYST teams are required to fill the demand for this service in our region.

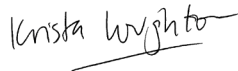
This matter falls under the "Safer Communities" component of mandate letters issued earlier this year by Premier David Eby, who notably requests that ministers "address concerns about public safety, both for people struggling with mental health and addiction on our streets, as well as the feeling that downtown centres are not as safe as they were before the pandemic."

The Victoria Family Court and Youth Justice Committee, and the Council for the District of Metchosin, have urged for continued funding for the vital work of Ms. Golden and Const. Magee. The CRED component of MYST is what is at risk to support Greater Victoria's most vulnerable young people and their parents, and it is time for the City of Victoria to join the call for ongoing funding of this vital work.

RECOMMENDATION

1. That Council request Mayor Alto write to Mitzi Dean, Minister of Children and Family Development, Mike Farnworth, Minister of Public Safety and Solicitor General, and Niki Sharma, Attorney General, to express support and ongoing funding, resources, and expansion for the Pacific Centre Family Services Association's Mobile Youth Services Team (MYST) and its Crime Reduction and Exploitation Diversion (CRED) program.
2. That this motion be forwarded to the daytime Council meeting on December 14, 2023, for Council consideration.

Respectfully submitted,



Coun. Krista Loughton



Mayor Marianne Alto