



# VANCOUVER POLICE DEPARTMENT

## REPORT TO THE VANCOUVER POLICE BOARD

REPORT DATE: November 5, 2020  
COMMITTEE MEETING DATE: November 30, 2020  
BOARD REPORT # 2011C01

*Regular*

TO: **Vancouver Police Board Service and Policy Complaint Review Committee**  
FROM: Drazen Manojlovic, Director, Planning, Research and Audit Section  
SUBJECT: Service or Policy Complaint #2020-17 Visits to Youth

### RECOMMENDATION:

**THAT the Vancouver Police Board (VPB) Service and Policy Complaint Review Committee (Committee) concludes its review of the complaint based on information outlined in this report.**

### SUMMARY:

On July 4, 2020, a third party complaint was filed with the Office of the Police Complaint Commissioner (OPCC) alleging that Vancouver Police Department (VPD) officers were constantly checking a youth's home and that their presence caused "trauma and fear" to the youth's grandmother, who is a residential school survivor. Upon receiving the complaint, the OPCC contacted the complainant and ascertained additional concerns that officers were inexperienced with the youth's Fetal Alcohol Syndrome Disorder (FASD). Moreover, the OPCC stated that the complainant also had general concerns regarding a lack of officer training about *Intergenerational Trauma, Culturally Sensitive Responses and Residential School Survivors*.

This report describes the VPD's training in FASD including a collaborative effort between the VPD and Government of Canada. Also, the VPD has trained its officers in courses such as *Aboriginal Cultural Competency Training, Aboriginal First Nations Awareness Course, The Spirit has no Colours Video, Circle of Understanding Workshop, Fair and Impartial Training, Trauma Informed Practices Online Course, and the Reconciliation Dialogue Workshop*.

This report will not describe the circumstances of when officers attended the youth's home as there is currently an active Professional Standards Section (PSS) investigation. However, the VPD is aware that the youth was involved in incidents of violence and there were also safety concerns for another youth involved. One of the incidents is currently before the Youth Justice Court.

The VPD recommends that the Committee conclude its review of the complaint based on the information outlined in this report.

## **BACKGROUND:**

On July 4, 2020, the complainant filed a complaint with the OPCC. The complaint, in its entirety, stated:

*“The constant checking of a home on Alexander St. to see if a young 16 year old is the home. Police coming to a young man’s home with his grandmother. Walking in without permission. Causing trauma + fear for the youth and his grandmother” (sic)*

Upon receiving the complaint, the OPCC contacted the complainant. The OPCC obtained additional information from the complainant that included the following (as stated in the OPCC letter to the VPB dated September 3, 2020):

- The youth has FASD and the complainant’s concern that officers are not knowledgeable or know how to deal effectively with that condition.
- The grandmother is a residential school survivor and the complainant’s concern that there is a lack of training for officers about “intergenerational trauma” and “culturally sensitive responses”.

As a result of the additional information obtained by the OPCC, the complainant proceeded with a Service or Policy Complaint; along with the original registered complaint against the involved officers. Therefore, there are currently two active processes:

1. Registered Complaint against officers involved being investigated by the VPD’s PSS; and
2. This Service or Policy Complaint.

## **DISCUSSION:**

The complainant in this matter is a third party. Due to the protection of privacy and personal information, the information within this report does not include details from police reports that may infringe on the privacy of the parties that were directly involved in the incidents.

Also, as there is an active registered complaint against the involved officers, this report will not comment on any officer’s actions as it would be inappropriate to do so pending the PSS investigation and the subsequent OPCC decision on that investigation. However, the VPD is aware that the youth was involved in incidents of violence and there were also safety concerns for another youth involved. One of the incidents is currently before the Youth Justice Court. Therefore, this report will only respond to the VPD’s training in FASD, residential schools, intergenerational trauma and culturally sensitive responses.

### Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (FASD)

The VPD has been involved in FASD training since 2005. As stated in the Government of Canada’s website titled “A Collaborative, Holistic Response to Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders” (<https://www.justice.gc.ca/eng/fund-fina/cj-jp/yj-ij/fp-ps/articles/alco.html>):

*“With funding provided by the Department of Justice’s Youth Justice Fund, in 2005 the Vancouver Police Department and Pacific Community Resources developed a two-day, skills-based course. More than 300 police officers in British Columbia have since completed the course and it has become a widely shared resource throughout Canada for providing similar training to police.”*

Additionally since 2009, the VPD has delivered FASD training to officers in the Operations Division.

It is important to note that many FASD related programs are focused on the use of extrajudicial measures, intensive supervision, and/or rehabilitative custody – all measures utilized after an arrest has occurred and the prosecution (Crown Counsel) has been involved. Conversely, many FASD programs are focused on crime prevention such as at-risk youth strategies/services and specialized community resources. Whereas, in situations after a crime has occurred, the police may have no choice but to make an arrest and recommend charges in a Report to Crown Counsel. Crown Counsel will then decide if charges are approved and laid against an accused. If an individual has FASD, it may be considered a mitigating factor for bail conditions or sentencing upon conviction.

### Residential School Survivors, Intergenerational Trauma, and Culturally Sensitive Responses

Currently, all VPD recruits received training at the Justice Institute of British Columbia. Recruit training include:

- *Circle of Understanding Workshop*
  - o VPD recruits learn about Indigenous history including the residential school system. This is further underscored with participation in a Circle of Understanding, a day spent with members of the Indigenous community, including elders, to learn about the history of the Indigenous peoples and hear the experiences of residential school survivors. This session is held in partnership with the Vancouver Aboriginal Community Policing Centre Society and is facilitated by a police academy instructor who is Indigenous and is also a retired Vancouver Police Department officer.
- *The Spirit has no Colour video*
  - o The history of Indigenous peoples (First Nations, Inuit and Métis Peoples) particularly in B.C.
  - o The role of police in the enforcement of laws of Canada that today are deemed to have been damaging to the Indigenous peoples, destructive of their culture, language and spiritual values and practices, and based on a belief of cultural inferiority.
  - o The experience of the Indigenous peoples through that lens, showing what police will see on the streets and in the communities today, both the powerfully positive and the profoundly negative.
  - o The consequences of generations of children being taken from families and entered into the residential schools of this country, which systematically destroyed family systems, and any possible learning of family practices and parenting skills.
  - o Connecting issues of drug and alcohol abuse, family disintegration and loss of identity to the sexual, psychological, physical and other abuses common in the schools.

During recruit training, an assignment includes a *Diversity Project*. The goal of this project is to develop understanding of some of the unique experiences, needs, and concerns for the communities the recruit will serve in their home department. Presentation topics include, but are not limited to: restorative justice, homeless communities, living in community reserves, sex trade workers advocacy (mandatory for 1 group each class), sex trade workers, youth at risk, FASD, ethnic communities, Indigenous peoples, LGBTQ, Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women (MMIW), and religious groups.

The training the JIBC Police Academy provides to municipal police recruits in B.C. includes anti-racism and bias-free training and elements designed to promote understanding of diverse groups, whether based on cultural and ethnic backgrounds, faiths, sexual orientation or gender.

Since 2010, the VPD has trained its officers in-house on the topics of residential school survivors, intergenerational trauma, and cultural sensitive responses. Training has included:

- *Aboriginal Cultural Competency Training*
  - o Aboriginal Cultural Competency training was designed to increase knowledge, enhance self-awareness, and strengthen the skills of those who work directly and indirectly with Indigenous peoples. The goal of the training was to further develop individual competencies and promote positive partnerships. Participants learned about aspects of colonial history such as Residential Schools, a timeline of historical event, and contexts for understanding social disparities and inequities. Through interactive activities, participants examined culture, stereotyping, and the consequences and legacies of colonization. Officers were also introduced to tools for developing more effective communication and relationship building skills.
- *Aboriginal First Nations Awareness Course*
  - o The course explored the Indigenous peoples of Canada's distinct cultural and social characteristics.
  - o For officers to understand the unique history and culture of Aboriginal populations as an important part of effective communication and interaction with the communities they serve.
  - o Awareness of the history and geography of Aboriginal peoples as the foundation of the contemporary issues pertaining to Aboriginal lands, cultures and communities.

Also since 2018, the VPD has developed and trained all its officers on *Fair and Impartial Policing*. This course was developed as part of the provincial response to the police training related recommendations of the BC Missing Women's Commission of Inquiry. Officers explore the science of implicit bias and how it applies to their everyday decision-making. By the end of the training, they will be able to use a set of fair and impartial policing skills in order to enhance their ability to police more effectively, justly and safely.

In 2020, the VPD provided all VPD officers the *Trauma-Informed Practice Foundations Online Course for Justice, Public Safety, and Anti-Violence Community Sectors in British Columbia*. One of the course modules includes intergenerational trauma of Indigenous Peoples.

Also in 2020, all front line patrol officers have registered for an e-learning course titled *Indigenous Awareness 101: Promoting Culturally Safe Practices*. The course was created by the VPD Training and Recruiting section, in collaboration with the VPD Diversity, Inclusion and Indigenous Relations Section, Ske'lep Reconciliation, Kairos Canada and the Indigenous Advisory Committee. The course provides an overview of recent legislative frameworks and rulings that were created to improve the relationships between state (including police) and Indigenous peoples such as:

- United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples;
- Final Report on the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada;
- Reclaiming Power and Place: Final Report of the Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls;
- BC Human Rights Commission ruling in the case of Deborah Campbell vs. the Vancouver Police Board;

- British Columbia Provincial Policing Standards on Community Partnerships and Equitable Policing.

Other course topics include Colonization, Impacts of Colonization, Decolonization, Cultural Humility and Allyship that examine:

- The relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in Canada.
- How federal policies and programs impact the lives of Indigenous peoples in Canada.
- The impact of residential schools, the 60's scoop, loss of status and missing and murdered Indigenous women.
- The negative impacts (abuse, violence, trauma, neglect, poverty) of colonization.
- The actions taken by Indigenous communities and police partnerships in developing cultural humility and promoting allyship in the process of reconciliation.
- The aspects of cultural humility and self-reflection to understand personal and systemic biases and how they can develop and maintain respectful processes and mutual trust in relationships.

Lastly, there is an upcoming course for VPD officers in 2021 - the *Reconciliation Dialogue Workshop* - developed with Reconciliation Canada, which explores the shared history of Indigenous peoples and all Canadians, to build a deeper understanding of our individual and collective roles in overcoming negative history and finding a new way forward. Through storytelling and dialogue, officers of diverse backgrounds become aware of their personal outlooks and internal lenses that influence their perception of daily events and circumstances. They gain insight into how they own past experiences relate to the society we live in today. Officers further develop ideas on what they can do on an individual and organization level to further reconciliation.

The training described in this report is indicative of the VPD's initiatives with Indigenous People, as described in this report: <https://vancouver.ca/police/assets/pdf/reports-policies/breaking-barriers-and-building-bridges.pdf>.

**CONCLUSION:**

The VPD has made significant efforts to train officers in areas that include FASD, residential school survivors, intergenerational trauma, and culturally sensitive responses. The VPD acknowledges that these are exceptionally important issues and will continue to educate its officers in these critical areas.

It is recommended that the Committee conclude its review of the complaint based on the information outlined in the report.

Author: Sergeant Alvin Shum Telephone: 604-717-2688 Date: Nov.5, 2020

Submitting Executive Member:

Deputy Steve Rai Date: November 10, 2020