



VANCOUVER POLICE DEPARTMENT

REPORT TO THE VANCOUVER POLICE BOARD

REPORT DATE:	October 4, 2021
BOARD MEETING DATE:	October 21, 2021
BOARD REPORT #:	2110C02
	<i>Regular</i>

TO: Vancouver Police Board Service and Policy Complaint Review Committee

FROM: Inspector Terry Yung, Diversity, Inclusion and Indigenous Relations Section

SUBJECT: Service or Policy Complaint #2021-011 re: Diversity Liaison

RECOMMENDATION:

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

SUMMARY:

This report relates to a Service or Policy Complaint, received on July 8th, 2021 from the Office of the Police Complaint Commissioner (OPCC). The complaint pertains to interactions the diversity liaison officer and other Vancouver Police Department (VPD) members had with people from the Black diaspora community at large. In particular, the complaint raises concerns regarding cultural sensitivity around victim support, hate crimes, cyber bullying and criminal harassment.

Prior to receiving this complaint, the VPD was developing anti-racism training to be delivered in the fall of 2021. This training exceeds provincial standards and is being developed in consultation with community and subject matter experts. In addition, the VPD continues to consult with members of the Black diaspora community to further advise the VPD on issues specific to this community. As well, the VPD has been actively reviewing departmental policies and procedures through an equity, diversity and inclusion lens, making amendments as necessary. Moving forward, insights gained from this complaint with regards to community education and victim or witness support will inform projects undertaken by the Diversity, Inclusion and Indigenous Relations Section (DIIRS). The VPD is committed to building community relations through various sections within the organization and through committee work such as the City of Vancouver Urban Indigenous Peoples' Advisory Committee and the Public Partner Anti-Racism Group.

The VPD recommends that the Committee conclude its review of the complaint based on the information outlined in this report including the initiatives that were already underway when the VPD received the complaint.

BACKGROUND:

In May of 2020, the complainant's adult son (the event organizer) was organizing public demonstrations to condemn racism in the name of George Floyd. At one demonstration, the event organizer liaised with a VPD member who was working at the event. Subsequently, the event organizer and the VPD member continued to communicate as they had previous interactions through the School Liaison Officer program (which was in effect at that time).

On June 19th, 2020, the event organizer requested that this VPD member speak to the complainant about a situation which had occurred overnight. This VPD member connected with the complainant and initiated a criminal investigation. That matter is currently the subject of a Police Act investigation regarding the conduct of VPD members.

During the criminal investigation, the complainant reported that the event organizer was receiving unwanted social media messaging from members of their own community. The DIIRS 2SLGBTQ+ Liaison officer, other members and the Domestic Violence and Criminal Harassment Unit (DVACH) assisted with the investigation.

The complainant sets out eleven issues arising from this investigation in their complaint. These issues can be summarized as follows:

1. Training for the diversity liaison officer and other VPD members should include:
 - cultural sensitivity with regards to racial discrimination;
 - understanding of the lived experience of diverse communities;
 - enhancing community relations with the Black community;
 - improving awareness of the different forms of racism; and
 - understanding of systemic issues and barriers within their organization.
2. Victim and witness support should include the following:
 - access to diversity liaison officers from diverse backgrounds;
 - trauma informed practices to mitigate further victimization; and
 - improved communication during the investigative process.
3. Improved information and processes for the following:
 - hate crimes against Black people;
 - assessment of criminal harassment files from a hate crime perspective; and
 - public awareness regarding cyber bullying and criminal harassment.

DISCUSSION:

The VPD is committed to community relations and has dedicated community engagement resources through programming as described in the *Community Matters* report (<https://vpd.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/community-matters.pdf>). The VPD has consistently delivered cultural sensitivity and safety training to their recruits and through specialized in-service training. The VPD has delivered trauma informed training since 2018. The VPD will

continue to integrate cultural sensitivity, safety and trauma informed practices throughout other training courses.

The VPD has been developing anti-racism training which addresses many of the concerns raised by the complainant. The training will be delivered to all front line VPD members in the fall of 2021. The major topics include:

- key terms, intersectionality and understanding different levels of racism;
- barriers to anti-racism and misconceptions;
- lived experience, cultural humility and safety;
- key aspects of Canada's history including anti-Black racism in Canada;
- hate crimes including anti-Black racism
- impact of racism and integrating culturally sensitive victim support
- inequalities in the criminal justice system; and
- procedural justice, human rights and equitable policing.

To serve Vancouver's diverse communities, DIIRS is staffed with liaison officers from different backgrounds and portfolios. These portfolios include Indigenous relations, 2SLGBTQ2+ relations, newcomer relations and community relations with Vancouver's diverse communities including the Black and Asian diaspora communities. The Victim Services Unit (VSU) is part of DIIRS and works closely with the diversity liaisons on victim and witness support. The diversity liaison officer who assisted in this case works with 2SLGBTQ+ communities and was called upon to provide specific assistance with regard to issues potentially connected to that community.

When necessary, DIIRS provides other resourcing with regards to lived experience and supplements the assigned DIIRS members with other VPD members with relevant lived experience. The VSU has access to various resources and referral for diverse communities. DIIRS is continuously reviewing practices to ensure that cultural sensitivity and safety is integrated into service delivery and that DIIRS members take part in training offered to front-line members and supplement this training with other opportunities including workshops, conferences and advanced training.

Within the VPD, matters pertaining to criminal harassment may be investigated by patrol officers or referred to DVACH depending on risk factors or complexity of the investigation. In either case, investigators have access to investigative support units such as the Cybercrime Unit. In instances where the criminal harassment is primarily motivated by hate, prejudice or bias, the hate crime investigator is notified and reviews the cases from a hate crimes perspective to assess whether the hate crime sentencing legislation applies.

In addition to the regular training provided to VPD members in the area of trauma informed practice, several DVACH members have completed advanced, specialized training in trauma-informed interviewing. DVACH investigators are also experienced in working with victims and witnesses from diverse communities in a trauma informed manner. Interview facilities utilized by DVACH investigators include a "soft room" with comfortable furnishings. Victims may also have a support person present during police interviews if they wish. Communication with a victim during an investigation will differ depending on the investigative strategies employed and the needs and wishes of the victim.

DIIRS is currently developing multi-lingual videos to explain police reporting mechanisms and hate crimes with a release expected in the fall of 2021. DIIRS is also aware that further videos would be useful specifically relating to cybercrime as these crimes do have a disproportionate impact on some communities. DIIRS has researched funding opportunities to develop culturally sensitive materials and programming in this area. DIIRS has an ongoing working relationship with the Immigrant Services Society of British Columbia and has been in discussion around the impact of cybercrime on newcomer youth and the development of suitable programming.

CONCLUSION:

As part of this Service or Policy Complaint, the VPD has reached out to the complainant to explain processes and outcomes. It is recommended that DIIRS continue community outreach with the Black community and further develop culturally sensitive materials on cybercrime in consultation with the Cybercrime Unit while keeping the Vancouver Police Board apprised of developments through the Section's quarterly report. The VPD recommends that the Committee conclude its review of the complaint based on the information outlined in this report including the initiatives that were already underway when the VPD received the complaint.

Author: Inspector Terry Yung

Date: October 4, 2021

Submitting Executive Member:

Deputy Chief Constable Howard Chow

Date: October 4, 2021