



VANCOUVER POLICE DEPARTMENT

REPORT TO THE VANCOUVER POLICE BOARD

REPORT DATE: April 12, 2023
BOARD MEETING DATE: April 20, 2023
BOARD REPORT # 2304H14

Regular

TO: **Vancouver Police Board**

FROM: Simon Demers, Director, Planning, Research & Audit Section

SUBJECT: Jury Recommendations from the Coroner's Inquest into the Death of Nicole Chan

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT the Vancouver Police Board receive this report for information.

SUMMARY:

Constable Nicole Chun Wai Chan (Nicole Chan) died by suicide on January 27, 2019. The Coroner's Inquest into her death was held from January 23 to February 1, 2023 resulting in 12 jury recommendations. The jury recommendations dated February 1, 2023 are summarized as follows:

- three addressed to the Vancouver General Hospital, Access and Assessment Centre;
- eight addressed to the Chief Constable, Vancouver Police Department (VPD); and
- one addressed to the Minister of Health.

More specifically, the eight recommendations addressed to the VPD focused on Training, Recruiting and Human Resource matters. The jury recommendations to the VPD are as follows (numbered as they were within the verdict):

4) Mandatory psychological clinical interviews should be a part of every potential police officers' recruitment process whereby the psychologist's recommendations are considered.

5) Ensure respectful workplace training is mandatory, rigorous, in-person, and on a regular basis for all ranks of police officers.

6) Training specific to promotions should include formal administrative and management training.

7) Have a human resource or peer support case representative in regular contact with all employees with mental health issues, and the family and/or support circle if permitted by the employee, to establish and build a relationship and provide continuity of care.

8) Annual psychological check-ins with a psychologist should be mandatory for all police officers.

9) The respectful workplace policy should recognize rumours and gossip as an example of unprofessional behaviour.

10) Police officers in the human resources department should receive specific training relative to the duties of a human resources professional.

11) Ensure each section within the human resources department works interdependently rather than independently of each other.

The VPD supports these recommendations and is committed to implementing them. This report provides the VPD's preliminary response to each recommendation.

BACKGROUND:

Constable Nicole Chun Wai CHAN began her career with VPD as an auxiliary VPD Jail Guard in 2008 and became a full-time jail guard in 2009 before being sworn-in as a VPD police constable in September 2011. Constable Chan graduated from the Police Academy in May 2012 and subsequently worked in the Operations Division. Constable Chan died tragically by suicide on January 27, 2019 shortly following her release from hospital.

The Coroner's Inquest into Constable Chan's death was held from January 23 to February 1, 2023 resulting in 12 jury recommendations. Of note, the presiding Coroner has yet to provide comments on the jury recommendations. Eight recommendations were directed to the Chief Constable of the Vancouver Police Department (jury recommendations #4 to #11).

DISCUSSION:

As noted, the jury provided eight recommendations (#4 to #11) to the Chief Constable of the VPD and the VPD supports these recommendations. The following is the VPD's response to the recommendations:

4) Mandatory psychological clinical interviews should be a part of every potential police officers' recruitment process whereby the psychologist's recommendations are considered.

Psychological testing in police organizations is a screening tool intended to aid in the assessment of psychological resilience of candidates and their suitability as police officers. The VPD Recruiting Unit utilizes psychological testing as part of the selection process for police recruits, which is an industry standard in Canadian policing. The psychological screening test presently in use is the Personality Assessment Inventory (PAI). Current practice has been that a psychological

interview will occur on a case-by-case basis as potential issues are identified, either during the screening test or during other steps of the recruiting process. The VPD has been assessing other tests and psychological practices, the training of recruiting staff, and resourcing of psychological services. Subject matter experts have been consulted and the VPD has decided to implement a two-test approach with a structured follow-up psychological interview for police recruit candidates. The two tests are the 16 Personality Factors Inventory Public Safety Report Plus (16PF PSR) and the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory Police Candidate Interpretative Report (MMPI-3 PCI). The 16PF PSR and MMPI-3 PCI are industry standards that assess psychological resilience as part of the occupational requirements.

The 16PF PSR, which is a police specific assessment tool, is used to summarize 16 personality factors that are believed to be correlated with a candidate's resiliency and positive personality traits. The 16PF PSR produces scores for four composite dimensions: emotional adjustment, integrity/control, intellectual efficiency, and interpersonal relations. In addition, this assessment tool provides an empirically derived interpretation of how the individual's personal work style impacts performance in areas such as safety, communication, teamwork, and use of force.

The MMPI-3 PCI is a test which provides information regarding a candidate's psychopathology (e.g. evidence or absence of depression, anxiety, PTSD, psychosis, alcohol or substance use) and negative personality traits (e.g. antisocial or narcissistic personalities, personality disorders, impulsivity). MMPI-3 PCI assesses deficits of judgement, decision-making skills and positive personality features (e.g. team player, honesty, reliability).

Both the 16PF PSR and the MMPI-3 PCI are on-line tests that can be administered in the VPD Recruiting Unit and automatically scored by the software. A psychologist reviews the test results and the background summary of the candidate. The psychologist then conducts a one-on-one interview with every candidate considered for hire and completes a report back to the VPD Recruiting Unit that summarizes the interview and the test results.

The VPD commits to the implementation of the 16PF PSR and MMPI-3 PCI with a structured psychological interview for recruit candidates.

5) Ensure respectful workplace training is mandatory, rigorous, in-person, and on a regular basis for all ranks of police officers.

The VPD follows the provincial learning strategy as outlined by the Policing Security and Solicitor General Guidelines for *Respectful Workplace* training. The VPD offers regular educational opportunities on *Respectful Workplaces* including mandatory training, refreshers, and updates. The audience has included all staff (sworn and civilian professionals) from recruits to senior leadership. The delivery mechanisms include e-learning, in-person and web-based educational materials. The VPD continually updates training modules to integrate best practices while ensuring ongoing educational opportunities.

The VPD Training and Recruiting Section:

- Creates and delivers a variety of learning opportunities that are current and relevant and which are developed in consultation with subject matter experts.
- Tracks learning opportunities to ensure employees can access courses.

- Works in collaboration with agencies and groups to build learning materials.

The *Respectful Workplace* e-learning will be delivered to all Patrol teams in the fall of 2023 and can be subsequently delivered to all staff at the VPD. This training includes highlighting rumours and gossip as an example of unprofessional behaviour. In addition, the VPD could expand in-person *Respectful Workplace* training to incoming recruits and experienced officers, and as part of the *Acting Supervisor Program*. This in-person training could be delivered by an external service provider and would result in associated costs.

In addition to the training delivered by the Training and Recruiting Section, the Human Resources (HR) Section has engaged external subject matter experts to deliver in person training to the entire Senior Leadership Team. Most recently, all sworn officers and civilian managers in the Senior Leadership Team are currently receiving 16 hours of training from January to April 2023.

The VPD commits to updated Respectful Workplace e-learning training to all VPD staff starting in the fall of 2023, which will include rumours and gossip as an example of unprofessional behaviour. In-person Respectful Workplace training will be delivered to incoming recruits, experienced officers, and as part of the Acting Supervisor Program.

6) Training specific to promotions should include formal administrative and management training.

The VPD offers an *Acting Supervisor Program* which is mandatory for all sworn officers who are acting sergeants. This program is also required prior to a sworn officer applying for promotion. The training includes e-learning, classroom, scenario-based training and a field deployment with a sergeant mentor. Prior to enrolling in this program, learners must pass the qualification exam covering essential VPD policies, legal and administrative information.

- The e-learning component covers position-specific processes, ethical leadership, professionalism, coaching, labour processes, performance management, and effective decision-making.
- The classroom component consists of an additional day of e-learning and four-days in-person. Within this course, there are specific modules that cover leadership and professionalism, inclusive workplace, labour and HR processes, and BC Human Rights Tribunals. This module includes a final exam.
- The practicum component of this program is a three-week (12 working shifts) mentorship-based training program where the learner is paired with a sergeant. Through this practicum, the learner conducts all activities pertaining to the acting sergeant's role including operational, administrative and HR-related matters. Ongoing debriefing occurs and a formal assessment report is submitted as part of this process.

Upon promotion, sergeants must complete the *Sergeant Education Program*. This is a four-day in-person course where learners receive operational, administrative, HR and legal modules including: leadership principles, HR processes, inclusive workplace, the Critical Incident Stress Management Team (CISM), impairment in the workplace, additional respectful workplace training, and BC Human Rights training. Subsequent leadership professional development within the

organization is less formally structured and includes: leadership conferences, increment courses, and other courses through academic institutions or specialty organizations.

VPD sworn managers receive ongoing training which includes training in critical incident management, conflict resolution, respectful, professional workplaces and financial management. Sworn managers also have opportunities to become trained as Team Commanders and Public Order Commanders. Other professional development opportunities are available through yearly academic course offerings, conference attendance and through the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police executive programs. Additional training for VPD managers delivered by external subject matter experts would benefit the VPD. Personnel Services is currently exploring the development of additional training modules for officers upon promotion to the Inspector rank.

The VPD commits to additional training for managers.

7) Have a human resource or peer support case representative in regular contact with all employees with mental health issues, and the family and/or support circle if permitted by the employee, to establish and build a relationship and provide continuity of care.

The mandate of Police Employee Relations and Advisory Services Unit (PERASU) is to coordinate the delivery of employee services for sworn officers with health-related matters. These services pertain to modified duties or accommodations, retirement, parental leave and the *Employee Assistance Program*. This unit also works closely with the WorkSafe Case Management Unit (WCMU) in relation to on-duty injuries and with the Employee Wellness Unit (EWU). The *Employee Assistance Program* includes family support services.

Similarly, the Civilian and Police Support Services Unit (CAPSSU) provides human resource services to all civilian professional employees, jail guards, traffic authority and community safety personnel. CAPSSU offers an *Employee and Family Assistance Plan* which includes family support services.

The EWU includes Peer Support and CISM. CISM is a robust program within a self-contained unit. The CISM Team is available 24/7 to employees and their families and services include one-to-one peer defusing, group debriefing, and stress education and referrals. The Peer Support Team provides confidential peer support to VPD employees. Their role is to provide mentorship and emotional support to sworn officers and their families. This is a confidential support system unless there is potential danger or physical harm to themselves or others. The confidential nature of this program is required for increased participation and trust.

Since 2019, the VPD has increased resources within HR to further enhance case management mechanisms and provide more support to employees and their families. There have been staffing increases to the Safety and Health and Career Development Units. Most importantly, PERASU has doubled in size to allow for smaller caseloads, enhanced support for the re-integration of officers who have been off duty due to illness or injury and intensive case management of employees in heightened need of care and for further family support. The VPD will continue to review staffing levels as the Department increases the number of sworn officers in order to continue to build capacity in this area.

The VPD commits to reviewing staffing levels and supplementing resources as required to further support the continuum of care.

8) Annual psychological check-ins with a psychologist should be mandatory for all police officers.

The HR Section has expanded psychological support mechanisms through the PERASU, CAPSSU and EWU. The *Employee Assistance Program* provides all VPD employees access to Homewood Health and Plan Smart Lifestyle and Specialty Counselling. Both PERASU and the EWU maintain a comprehensive list of psychologists that employees can access. The EWU also delivers specialized services around workplace wellness, peer support, critical incident stress management, and resiliency.

Within the VPD, annual psychological check-ins are provided through the *High-Stress Debrief Program* to sections and units in the Investigation Division, Operations Division and the Support Services Division that are identified as high stress areas. The check-ins are currently provided to approximately 540 sworn officers and civilian professionals as a required aspect of their position. The VPD supports providing annual psychological check-ins to all sworn officers and recognizes the associated budgetary considerations with each check-in costing approximately \$235. This cost would not include the on-duty time for each officer to attend this check-in. It is also important to note that in addition to the psychological check-ins that officers access through the high-stress debrief program, each officer and their family members can also access up to \$3000 annually in psychological services through workplace health benefits.

The VPD commits to seeking funding for annual psychological check-ins to all sworn officers.

9) The Respectful Workplace policy should recognize rumours and gossip as an example of unprofessional behaviour.

The HR EWU has general information posted on the Intranet that pertains to *Respectful Workplaces*. This includes a link to the *Respectful Workplace Policy* and a link to an anonymous reporting link that is also on the HR wellness website. In 2018, [an announcement](#) regarding the *Respectful Workplace Policy* was posted in the General Announcement on the Intranet. Within this announcement, there are examples of conduct that might constitute bullying and harassment – included in these examples was the *spreading of malicious gossip or rumours about a person*. Similar announcements have been posted every three months since November 2020.

Additionally, in 2013 and 2018 all VPD employees were required to review the *Respectful Workplace Policy* via PowerDMS and confirm this review through a digital signature. Since then, new recruits and experienced officers hired by the VPD are also required to review this policy as part of their on-boarding.

The existing *Respectful Workplace Policy* is currently undergoing a full review. The amended policy is expected to be implemented later this year and will include the inclusion of rumours and gossip as examples of unprofessional behavior.

Following this, the *Respectful Workplace* e-learning delivered in the fall of 2023 will cover disrespectful behaviour including gossiping or rumours. This training will also address the

consequences of these behaviours on the employee. Employees will also be required to review the updated *Respectful Workplace Policy*.

The VPD commits to including rumours and gossip in the Respectful Workplace Policy.

10) Police officers in the human resources department should receive specific training relative to the duties of a human resources professional.

Police officers within HR receive professional development opportunities through leadership-based conferences and specialized courses. Within HR, there are civilian professionals with specialized background in HR and they develop educational materials and training aids for the police officers within HR. Additional training specific to the role of sworn officers within HR is currently being explored within Personnel Services. This will supplement existing training and will have associated costs.

The VPD commits to enhanced HR training for police officers working in HR.

11) Ensure each section within the human resources department works interdependently rather than independently of each other.

The HR responsibilities of recruiting, training and employee services are consolidated under Personnel Services within the Support Services Division. The HR Section contains four units that can interface directly with employees who are experiencing mental health challenges. These units are the PERASU, CAPSSU, EWU and WCMU. These units have mechanisms in place to work together to provide enhanced support for the re-integration of officers who have been off duty due to illness or injury and for those that are in need of care and require intensive case management. Confidentiality requirements prevent the complete elimination of independent actions within some HR processes.

The current interdependent mechanisms between the HR Section and the Training and Recruiting Section are under review. Case management protocols that account for confidentiality could be further implemented to track activities within an HR enterprise content management system.

The VPD commits to a review of the continuum of care, including case management protocols and alert thresholds to ensure interdependent support mechanisms within HR teams and units.

BUDGETARY CONSIDERATIONS:

Implementing the jury's recommendations has a minimal known incremental cost of \$433,000 and the maximum of \$543,000. These costs do not include the other initiatives currently under review.

	Recommendations	Incremental Yearly Costs
#4	Mandatory psychological screening for new recruits	\$150,000 - \$200,000 yearly
#5	Respectful workplace in-person training	\$3,000 yearly \$500 per two-hour sessions x 6
#6	Training specific to promotion	<i>To be determined</i>
#7	HR representatives within a continuity of care	<i>To be determined</i>
#8	Annual psychological check-ins	\$280,000 - \$340,000 yearly* \$235 per check-in
#9	Respectful workplace policy to include rumours and gossip	No additional costs
#10	HR training for HR police officers	<i>To be determined</i>
#11	Interdependent HR sections	<i>To be determined</i>

* The lower amount includes police officers only and the higher amount includes all VPD employees. This estimate does not include staff already in the program.

CONCLUSION:

The VPD takes its responsibilities as an employer very seriously and will ensure that best practices are implemented for *Respectful Workplace* training and policies; that interdependent HR processes are within a continuum of care and within case management processes; that robust psychological screening be applied during the recruiting stage; and that access to annual psychological check-ins continue throughout the career of sworn officers.

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Submitting Executive Member:

Superintendent Shelley Horne Date: April 11, 2023