



April 18th 2017

Sexual Assault review process and update:

The Stratford Police Service has committed to a review of sexual occurrences both internally, externally and with involvement from our community stakeholders. The Stratford Police Service will remain transparent and ensure the community of Stratford and in particular victims of sexual assault receive the proper care through the courts and victim assistance. The review will include but is not limited to:

- a. Why does the Stratford Police Service charge ratio appear lower than other services and the national average?
- b. Do the current case management review processes work?
- c. What are the concerns of the community?
- d. Is the service's current practice in categorizing sexual assault cases in Niche consistent with other police services?
- e. Does the service's training program support sexual assault investigations?

Background

On the weekend of 4-5 February, the Globe and Mail published a report titled "Will the police believe you?" The article is the culmination of a 20 month investigation of incidents of sexual assaults reported to police. The Globe and Mail secured statistics relating to sexual assault complaints from services across Canada. The Globe and Mail have concluded that there exists a significant problem with the rate at which police deem a sexual assault complaint as "unfounded." The article defines "unfounded" as:

When Canadian police officers complete an investigation, they give it a closure code to show the outcome. One of those codes is "unfounded." "Unfounded" indicates the investigating officer does not believe a crime was attempted or occurred. Once an allegation is categorized that way, it effectively disappears from public record. Considered baseless, the case isn't reported to Statistics Canada, which has implications for police and victim services funding.

The Globe and Mail has concluded that the national average of cases being labelled by police as "unfounded" is 19%. Stratford Police Service has an unfounded rate of 48%.

Process

Phase 1/ Data will be compiled and reviewed internally. A report will be presented to the Chief and further to the Police Services Board

Phase 2/ The Data and report will be forwarded to an outside agency, reviewed and a report prepared for the Chief and the Police Services Board.

Phase 3/ The evolving report will be presented to the Directors of the Emily Murphy Center and Optimism Place for review and suggestions to ensure full circle reporting, investigations and victim care. Operationalization of suggestions will be the focus of input. The report will be presented to the Police Services Board by the Chief.

Phase 4/ The evolving report will be presented to the Community working group for review and suggestions to ensure full circle reporting, investigations and victim care. Operationalization of suggestions will be the focus of input. The report will be presented to the Police Services Board by the Chief.

Phase 5/ the Chief will prepare a final report relating to next steps moving forward to ensure the investigations, victimology and clearing of sexual assault cases are done in accordance with all applicable legislation and Unified Crime Reporting parameters. This report will be based on all suggestions at all four phases and presented to the Police Service Board.

Phase 6/ A press release will be done for the public relating to the Review, methodology, findings, community input and how the Stratford Police Service will move forward in all aspects of sexual assault investigations.

Mike Bellai

Chief of Police

Update:

Phase one has been completed.

Phase two has been completed.

Phase three is underway.