

Youth Justice, Department of Health and Social Services

Response to the Review of Yukon's Police Force

1. What concerns do you have with the policing service you receive?

Youth Achievement Centre (YAC)

YAC work with young persons involved in the Youth Justice system and yet rarely meets with the youth constable about problems they are seeing or what supports they can offer YAC or what we can offer them.

Restorative Community Conference Program (RCCP)

It is appreciated that the RCMP participate in restorative community conferences when they are able.

Youth High Risk Treatment Program (YHRTP)

Youth Justice operates an established treatment program for sexually abusive / violent youth and their families – 12 to 17 years of age – who have committed sexual or other violent offences. Approximately 5 years ago the RCMP "M" Division had a couple dedicated members to a special unit called, "Crimes Against Persons". The police officers of this unit were specially trained and dedicated in the investigation of sexual offences (and other violent crimes) and they worked closely with YHRTP.

Dealing with adolescent sex offenders and victims, requires specialized training; without dedicated resources with police officers who have been properly trained and who are available to work with collateral agencies, potentially reduces public safety. The YHRTP does not have communication or dialogue with members from the RCMP on this topic; with shift rotation and members carrying specific files, it is difficult to communicate in a timely fashion about shared cases.

YHRTP is willing and able to do awareness sessions on the topic of sexually abusive youth. When the Crimes Against Person's Unit was operating the members of the unit had put on a conference on the topic of sexual abuse and had invited other trained professionals to present on their area of expertise. Working with violent youth is difficult but should be a priority for all involved with communication and collaboration being a priority.

Youth Probation

We work with the same clients, but there are two different perspectives. Although Probation Officers and RCMP work within the same act (YCJA), PO's are required to focus on the rehabilitative and re-integrative aspect, where the police focus on upholding the law. Police could be more community focused.

RCMP civilian members need to improve on their public relations (customer service). For example, the front receptionists at various detachments seem to be unreceptive, thus making an uncomfortable environment when going to a detachment. This is from an allied professional perspective.

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Young Offenders Facility (YOF)

RCMP admits young persons to YOF when ordered to Pre-trial Detention or sentenced to Custody and Supervision.

RCMP transport young persons to and from Youth Justice Court in a timely, effective and efficient manner.

2. How has the RCMP contributed to public safety in your community?

RCCP

Pre-charge YCJA S. 6 referrals to RCCP and attending training (3 day Restorative Justice Principles, Practices and Implementation & 3 day Facilitating Restorative Community Conferences) when possible, so that they are better able to respond to inquiries about RCCP services. RCMP also contribute by participating on the Yukon YCJA Conference Advisory Committee.

Youth Probation

Their overall presence in the community contributes to public safety. Patrolling through neighborhoods, responding to calls, and issuing alerts to the public regarding dangerous offenders - prioritizing high profile offenders.

The RCMP are valued participants on the Youth Justice Panel - weekly basis.

The Youth and Aboriginal Policing Unit Corporal attends unit meetings on a regular basis. These meetings consist of open dialogue and information sharing regarding Youth Probation clients.

The RCMP also conduct curfew checks on a regular basis to young persons that are subject to court ordered curfews.

The RCMP continuously encourages YP Officers to contact them when needed for any assistance involving the young persons they are supervising.

YOF

The RCMP are notified when a young person Escapes Lawful Custody. They respond quickly to all notifications.

3. What is the community's role in interacting with the police to improve public safety?

YAC

If members' of the community witness an incident that they feel put themselves or other's in danger it is their responsibility to interact with the police to ensure community safety.

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The community needs to call when something is amiss. However, for this to work, they need to know who to call and when, and to feel like they will get a quick response when they voice their concerns.

RCCP

Reporting to RCMP on outcomes of restorative conferences and encouraging youth to successfully complete their agreements.

Youth Probation

The public needs to be more pro-active with assisting the RCMP by providing information during investigations. The public needs to alert the RCMP when they see suspicious behavior. Get away from the "us vs. them" attitude.

The YP Supervisor continues to attend briefing meetings with Watches at the Whitehorse detachment to update and share information.

YOF

When required Custody Services staff are able to educate the RCMP on the technicalities of legislation – *Youth Criminal Justice Act* e.g. Provincial Director Remand.

4. What is the RCMP's role in interacting with the community to provide public safety?

YAC

The RCMP should continue to respond to calls in a timely fashion no matter the circumstance in order to ensure all members of the community feel that their safety is valued and they are treated equally.

The RCMP should treat all citizens with respect. They are in a position of enforcing laws and sometimes need to use force.

RCCP

Continue to refer young persons under YCJA S.6

Youth Probation

They are community based and service oriented.

With respect to the *Youth Criminal Justice Act*, it is thought that the RCMP could use S.6 (pre-charge) more often. When it comes to restorative conferences involving young persons under YCJA, it would be beneficial for an RCMP member to participate. It is believed that the RCMP could have a positive influence (role modeling) towards young person's rehabilitation.

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YOF

The RCMP provides immediate response to requests for apprehension.

5. What changes would you recommend to improve public safety?

YAC

When possible, a more visible police presence.

RCCP

Better understanding of Yukon Restorative Justice practices in regard to YCJA S.19 conferences.

YHRTP

Young persons in conflict with the law often complain about excessive use of force by police officers. Police who are responding to youth crime/disturbance need to refrain from being verbally and physically reactive to the young persons they deal with. When a youth is asked if they want to make a complaint they always say, "no", feeling hopeless for any resultant change and or afraid of retaliation. Police training should include a thorough understanding of developmental psychology and non-violent crisis intervention training. Youth need to be respected by the police and in turn they will respect the police.

Youth Probation

The community needs to take responsibility to provide more of a role and involvement when dealing with social issues.

YOF

Youth Justice would like to propose that the RCMP hold young persons in custody at the Young Offenders Facility, prior to Show Cause or release, as opposed to holding them in Whitehorse RCMP cells. This would require policy development and a legal review towards implementation.