

# Niagara Regional Police Service

Child Abuse Unit (CAU)

Police Services Board Meeting

April 2024

# CAU Overview

The Child Abuse Unit is comprised of the following:

- 6 Detective Constables
- 1 Detective Sergeant
- 3 Violent Crime Analysts

# CAU Overview Continued

- The CAU currently occupies joint space with the Sex Assault, Domestic Violence, Human Trafficking, and Fraud units at the NRPS Headquarters.
- This area is separated and secured so that only the members of these specialized Units have access to the workspace to protect against any unintentional exposure of Child Abuse Material to other members of the Service.

# CAU Overview Continued - 3

The CAU is responsible for investigating the following:

- Incidents of child abuse by a caregiver that have occurred in Niagara Region;
- Incidents of child sexual abuse that have occurred in Niagara Region;
- Cases of neglect where serious injuries have resulted, a life has been endangered or where there has been a failure to provide the necessities of life; and
- Attempted murder of a child by a person having charge, care, or authority over a child.

# Specialized Training

- Members must attend advanced training at the Ontario Police College to conduct these types of investigations.
- Ongoing training is also provided through National Child Advocacy centers in Canada and the USA.
- It takes several years for an investigator to become proficient with these investigations and develop the required skill set.
- Members must constantly update themselves with changing caselaw, investigative techniques, and the protocols of partner agencies.

# CAU Workload

Year	Incidents Investigated	Child Interviews	Criminal Charges	Cleared by Charge
2021	272	234	227	37
2022	291	270	151	57
2023	245	219	88	26

# CAU Sources of Calls

- School Administrators
- Uniform referrals, calls for service
- Crime Stoppers – Anonymous information
- FACS Referrals and Consultations
- Referrals from other Police Services

# Child Abuse Protocol

- A procedural document that has been adopted by Family and Children Services (FACS), Ministry of the Attorney General for Niagara North and Niagara South, Victim-Witness Assistance Program and the Office of the Regional Coroner for Niagara.
- Serves as a strategy for the coordination of a multidisciplinary response to issues of child abuse and neglect and is included as an attachment to the Child Abuse and Neglect General Order.
- The protocol has been updated and is currently under final review by our community partners before it is presented to the board for approval.

# Kristen French Child Advocacy Centre of Niagara

- Continues to support a multi-disciplinary team approach to investigations, and a child-friendly environment to conduct forensic interviews with child victims and witnesses.
- CAU investigators attend the Centre on an as-needed basis during joint investigations with a team of FACS Niagara child protection workers.
- The Service provides partial funding on an annual basis toward the operating costs of the KFCACN.

# Member Wellness

- Child Abuse detectives are constantly exposed to disturbing incidents of child physical and sexual abuse.
- These incidents include victims as young as infants and toddlers.
- Prior to appointment members are subjected to a psychological assessment and then participate in yearly check-ins.
- Wellness breaks, team support and constant monitoring help to prolong the “effective” time of these highly trained and specialized investigators.

# Questions?

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