



NIAGARA REGIONAL POLICE SERVICE

Police Services Board Report

PUBLIC AGENDA

Subject: Annual Report – Youth Crime
January 1 to December 31, 2020

Report To: Chair and Members, Niagara Police Services Board

Report Date: 2021-06-24

Recommendation(s)

That the Niagara Police Services Board receives this report for information.

Key Facts

- The purpose of this report is to advise the Board that the Service is in compliance with Board By-law 236-2000 - Youth Crime.
- By-law 236-2000 is in response to the Provincial Adequacy Standards regulation that requires the Board to have a policy in place with respect to investigations into Youth Crime.
- The Chief is required to make a written annual report to the Board with respect to Youth Crime.

Financial Considerations

Not applicable.

Analysis

Board By-law 236-2000 was enacted as a result of Provincial Adequacy Standard Regulations (LE-044). This report is submitted to provide specific reporting requirements as follows:

The Chief shall make a written report to the Board on or before August 30 of each year in respect of investigations into youth crime. The report shall include the following:

- a. a summary of the written procedures concerning youth crime investigations;
- b. the status of Service compliance with the said procedures;
- c. a summary of steps taken by the Service to monitor and evaluate youth crime; and
- d. Reference to the requirement in section 4.3.1.

(Section 4.3.1 reads: The Chief shall consider the need for a multi-agency strategy to prevent or counter the activities of youth gangs in the community in accordance with the Service's procedures on crime prevention and problem-oriented policing).

Summary of Written Procedures

General Order 085.06 - Young Persons, is the primary Order related to this portion of the By-law and focuses on three complementary areas for action: prevention, meaningful consequences and rehabilitation/re-integration. The Order emphasizes the responsibility of all officers to participate in and support crime prevention.

The Order ensures officers consider pre-charge (extrajudicial measures) and post-charge diversion (extrajudicial sanctions) options, interviewing considerations, detention, appropriate community collaborations, school related concerns, and specific legal requirements when responding to incidents involving youth.

Procedural Compliance

By-law 236-2000 directs that the Chief shall;

- Develop and maintain a school liaison program which includes establishing protocols for investigating school related occurrences (4.2.1).

In September 2012 School Resource Officers (SROs) were first deployed in an effort to align with Ministry directives and the Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police Mobilization and Engagement Model of Community Policing,

SROs report to the Sergeant in charge of the Community Engagement Unit and work closely with Secondary School staff and administration in the development of proactive and reactive programs for delivery in the school environment. Officers conduct investigations and enforcement of criminal or undesirable behavior within the school and immediate area. SROs are committed to community engagement, enforcement, and crime prevention at twenty-eight secondary schools across the Niagara Region. Annual events usually involve SROs representing the Service in an effort to impact at risk youth through community engagement.

In 2020, the program faced challenges with the current COVID-19 pandemic when school visit restrictions vastly curtailed proactive school engagement opportunities. An adaptation to “online presentations” assisted SROs in representing the Service’s efforts to impact at risk youth through engagement. Officers also continued their duties in a reactive fashion, responding to identified areas outside of the school to address community concerns.

In September 2020, the SRO program was paused by the District School Board of Niagara to allow for a review and community consultation. This pause remains in effect at the time of this report.

The Service has made a concerted effort to design and implement programming and strategies in response to youth crime and other youth related concerns. In keeping with the goals in the 2019-2021 Strategic Plan, the Service is committed to working collaboratively with community partners to deliver effective and efficient services to all residents and visitors in Niagara. Our Service continues to review existing and implement new policies, programs and initiatives relating to youth. Programs include the following:

- TAPP – C (The Arson Prevention Program for children)
- Niagara Violence Threat Risk Assessment Protocol
- Students Rock guitar competition
- Student Film Festival
- Project Impact

In 2016, a revised Police/School Board Protocol was signed between the NRPS, the District School Board of Niagara, Niagara Catholic District School Board, Conseil Scolaire Catholique Mon Avenir and Conseil Scolaire Viamonde. This protocol represents an agreement to co-operate and communicate in situations involving students and other police-related investigations. In 2019, the protocol was updated to include information and processes related to marijuana legislation.

Additionally, the Service remains engaged in a collaborative agreement known as the Niagara Community Protocol. This protocol serves to assist community partners in identifying the risk enhancers in a child/youth's life which may increase the threat of violence to self or others. This protocol also recognizes that early identification and collaborative intervention are essential components to a proactive and comprehensive systems response to meet the needs of high-risk children/youth in our community.

This protocol includes the following community partners:

- Contact Niagara
- Conseil Scolaire Catholique Mon Avenir
- Conseil Scolaire Viamonde
- District School Board of Niagara
- Family and Children Services Niagara
- Niagara Catholic District School Board
- Niagara Health System
- Pathstone Mental Health
- Niagara Region Public Health

Steps taken to monitor and evaluate Youth Crime.

Every report involving youth entered into the Records Management System is flagged to the Community Engagement Sergeant to ensure compliance with the YCJA. Where applicable, a notice is sent to the respective SRO of the school to which a youth is affiliated.

The success of our youth strategy relies heavily on officer referrals and the ability for officers to recognize the need for referrals against criminal charges. Contact Niagara controls the intake of Service referrals and diverts youth to appropriate programming, tracks progress, and provides a written report to the Service regarding outcomes. These reports include the number of youths referred, the programs that are utilized, and the success rate for completion. The better we become at identifying referral opportunities, the more likely youth will be successfully integrated back into society. With the integration of the SROs, we have increased referrals and decreased charges.

Referrals

Since the full-time implementation of the SRO program in 2012, the involvement of these officers in local high schools continues to have a positive impact. In 2020, 119 young persons were charged criminally with 334 charges laid. 35 young people were afforded Extrajudicial Measures, allowing them to complete the program in lieu of being processed through the criminal court system. The following table is provided for comparison purposes, detailing the statistical information from 2020, 2019 and 2018. It is highly probable that the current figures were impacted by both the COVID-19 pandemic as well as the DSBN decision to pause the SRO program during this period.

Year	2020	2019	2018
Young Persons Charged	119	292	311
Number of Charges	334	415	454
EJM Referrals	35	88	61

The SRO program continues to be successful in reducing youth crime, increasing crime prevention awareness among young persons, and developing engagement opportunities with youth across the Region.

Reference to the Requirement in Section 4.3.1

This section of the By-law directs that “The Chief shall consider the need for a multi-agency strategy to prevent or counter the activities of youth gangs in the community in accordance with the Service’s procedures on crime prevention and problem-oriented policing”.

The Service continues efforts to take a proactive approach toward addressing issues that arise with guns and gangs. These efforts include programs to educate the community, particularly school aged youth with regards to street gang activity. The Service has maintained an active presence in schools at the Secondary level, including the delivery of presentations by SROs and community partners about the downfalls of gang membership and engaging in other criminal activities.

General Order 085.06 meets the expectations set-out by the Adequacy Standard LE-044. The Service recognizes the significant impact officers have in dealing with youth.

Alternatives Reviewed

Not applicable.

Relationship to Police Service/Board Strategic Priorities

This report maintains compliance with By-law 236-2000.

Relevant Policy Considerations

Niagara Regional Police Services Board By-law 236-2000
General Order 085.06 Young Persons

Other Pertinent Reports

65.2020 – Annual Report – Youth Crime – January 1 to December 31, 2019

This report was prepared by Sergeant Erin Madill, Community Engagement Unit and reviewed by Inspector Pat McCauley, #3 District Commander and Marco Giannico, Superintendent, District Operations and recommended by Brett Flynn, Deputy Chief of Police, Operational Services.



Submitted by:

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Chief of Police

Appendices

Not Applicable.