



WINNIPEG POLICE SERVICE

REPORT TO THE WINNIPEG POLICE BOARD

TO: Chair, Winnipeg Police Board

FROM: Chief Gene Bowers

SUBJECT: 2024 Bias Free Policing and Professional Standards Unit Report

DATE: May 23, 2025

RECOMMENDATION

That this report be received as information by the Winnipeg Police Board (WPB).

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications within this report.

BACKGROUND

The WPB's Bias-Free Policing policy outlines a commitment to ensuring bias-free police services are being delivered to all citizens of Winnipeg.

Both the WPB policy and the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies standards require that the Winnipeg Police Service establish and maintain written directives that promote and protect human rights and equitable treatment, to build trust with the community, and to reinforce positive and professional practices in law enforcement. The policy and standards also require training on the legal and ethical implications of bias policing, a process to thoroughly investigate and deal with complaints received by the Service, and an administrative review of activities to manage the Service in accordance with the policy and standards.

The WPB's Bias-Free Policing policy also requires that the Chief submit an annual report to the WPB that highlights measures and results of the administrative review.

DISCUSSION

The Service is committed to ensuring that training and procedures are in place to maintain integrity in conducting police activities in ways that are fair, equitable, and free of bias. The standards to which police members are held are required to be both clear and thorough to ensure police members maintain the continued trust of the citizens of Winnipeg.

The expectations for the behaviour of members are outlined in the [Winnipeg Police Service Regulation By-law 7610/2000](#), the *Criminal Code of Canada*, the *Law Enforcement Review Act*, the Service's procedure manual, the Police Officer's Code of Ethics and the City of Winnipeg Code of Conduct. Topics covered in these documents forbid discrimination, harassment, conflicts of interest, corrupt practice, discreditable conduct, abuse of authority, improper use or mishandling of a firearm, neglect of

duty, the unauthorized release of information and unlawful conduct. In addition, the Regulation By-law details how investigations into service defaults will proceed as well as the potential penalties for breaching conduct regulations.

To ensure the conduct of all members is representative of the standards, a thorough system is in place to address all complaints that come from the public and from within the organization.

All complaints (internal/external) are received and acknowledged by the Professional Standards Unit (PSU). Every complaint is examined to determine whether a formal investigation is warranted. Formal investigations stemming from complaints and allegations take an average of four to six months to conclude. The PSU members are committed to ensuring all investigations occur fairly and impartially.

While citizens have the option to report complaints directly to the PSU, a written complaint can be submitted to the Law Enforcement Review Agency (LERA). LERA investigates independently of the Service, and therefore their results are released independently.

RESULTS

In 2024, there were 772,452 total calls to the Communications Centre, leading to 239,903 dispatched events, of which 162,926 were citizen generated and 76,977 were proactive policing events.

The PSU received a total of 93 complaints, exceeding the 5-year average. Of these, 74% came from external sources, while 26% were internal. Four complaints involved allegations of improper bias – consistent with the prior year but above the 5-year average. Investigations found that in two cases, the members acted appropriately. The remaining two complaints were closed after the complainants chose not to proceed with a formal complaint filing with the PSU.

5-Year Number of Complaints and Biased Based Complaints

Year	Complaints Received by PSU	Biased Based Policing Complaints
2019	49	0
2020	92	0
2021	78	2
2022	99	3
2023	68	4
5-year average	77.2	1.8
2024	93	4

The process of engaging in confidential and private dialogue with citizens is an important service provided by the PSU. Early assessment of complaints is essential in determining how the complaint should be addressed and what the next steps are. In 2024, there were 54 complaints received where a formal investigation was not required. These complaints were resolved under three primary categories:

1. Clarification of policy and procedure;
2. Explanation of laws and exemptions; and
3. Complaints or incidents that may appear to involve officers but, when reviewed, do not actually involve officers.

As detailed in the table below, formal investigations for the current year and previous five years are categorized by allegation type. Allegations may include more than one element from the list below.

In 2024, the PSU conducted 39 investigations based on 51 allegations. Compared to the 5-year average, the number of investigations remained the same, but the number of allegations was higher.

5-Year Number of Investigations and Allegation Type as Received by PSU

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	5-year average	2024
Total Investigations	29	51	33	43	38	38.8	39
Allegation Type							
Abuse of Authority	0	1	0	7	3		0
Abuse of Conduct	1	1	2	2	3		9
Assault	2	3	1	1	0		0
Breach of any Other Order	2	3	3	0	3		7
Corrupt Practice	0	0	2	1	1		2
Criminal Association/Activity	0	0	0	0	0		0
Discreditable Conduct	8	16	14	11	8		12
Harassment	0	2	0	0	0		0
Impaired	1	0	2	0	1		0
Miscellaneous *	11	10	10	3	2		5
Neglect of Duty	2	8	2	7	8		6
Sexual Assault	1	3	1	2	0		3
Theft	1	2	0	4	2		2
Threats	0	0	0	3	1		0
Unauthorized Release of Info	0	9	4	5	8		5
Total Allegations (note a)	29	58	41	46	40	42.8	51

Review of reports and classifications is an on-going process which may result in minor variations over time

Note a: The allegations total may not add up to the 'Total Investigations' because there can be multiple allegations associated with a single investigation.

*Miscellaneous includes:

Breach of Trust	Fabricating Evidence	Excessive Use of Force	Misuse of Computer Access
Criminal Negligence	Fraud	Insubordination	Rude & Condescending Behaviour
Conflict of interest	Improper Use of Firearm	Obstruction	

Bias-Free Policing Directives and Training

The Service is committed to bias-free policing and aligning with the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action. The Service has several directives that address the various standards, laws, code of conducts and regulations relating to bias, ethics, and cultural awareness. Every year, all members, both sworn and civilian, receive organizational communications detailing expectations and responsibilities of the membership.

The Service also demonstrates its commitment by providing extensive training to Recruits, Central Processing Officers (CPO) and Cadets. Officers receive over one week of bias-free policing training, while CPOs and Cadets receive less, the time allocated is proportionate to the entire syllabus training program. Core to the training are bias-free approaches and human rights issues, including science-based methods to prevent implicit or unconscious bias. The training is designed to help members understand the legal and ethical implications of bias in policing, to promote an openness and an appreciation for all cultures and communities, and to reinforce the importance of fair and equitable service delivery. A portion of the training is facilitated by external experts, community members or agencies to ensure the lived experiences and history are shared from their perspective.

Additional training is also made available to all sworn and civilian members through the Training Division Course Calendar and the partnerships with the Canadian Police Knowledge Network, the City of Winnipeg's Corporate Training Division and various community members and external agencies. For example, *Anti-Racism and Unconscious Bias for Workplaces*, *Ethical Decision Making*, *Managing Unconscious Bias*, *Cultural Awareness and Humility*, *Indigenous Awareness 101: Promoting Culturally Safe Practices*, *Using a Trauma-Informed Approach*, *Trends in Diversity*, and the *Anti-Racism, Anti-Oppression & Cultural Competency Journey of Inclusion training series*.

The 2024 administrative review resulted in no recommendations for changes to the Service's directives or training as it relates to bias-free policing.

Gene Bowers
Chief of Police