



WINNIPEG POLICE SERVICE

REPORT TO THE WINNIPEG POLICE BOARD

TO: Chair, Winnipeg Police Board

FROM: Chief Gene Bowers

SUBJECT: 2025 Bias Free Policing and Professional Standards Unit Report

DATE: May 22, 2026

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 equitable treatment and protect human rights, build trust with the community, and reinforce positive and professional practices in law enforcement. The policy and standards also require training in the legal and ethical implications of bias in 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. Standards for police members must be clear and comprehensive to maintain the 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, whether internally or externally sourced, 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) or the Manitoba Ombudsman. LERA and the Ombudsman investigate independently of the Service, and therefore their results are released independently.

RESULTS

In 2025, there were 757,159 total calls to the Communications Centre, leading to 254,183 dispatched events, of which 167,527 were citizen-generated and 86,656 were police-initiated.

The PSU received a total of 127 complaints, exceeding both the prior year (93) and the 5-year average (86). Of the 127 complaints, 82% came from external sources, while 18% were internal. Two complaints involved allegations of improper bias – lower than the prior year and the 5-year average. In both cases, investigations found the members acted appropriately.

5-Year Number of Complaints and Biased Based Complaints

Year	Complaints Received by PSU	Biased Based Policing Complaints
2020	92	0
2021	78	2
2022	99	3
2023	68	4
2024	93	4
5-year average	86	2.6
2025	127	2

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 2025, there were 89 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. The allegations total may not add up to the 'Total Investigations' because there can be multiple allegations associated with a single investigation.

In 2025, the PSU conducted 38 investigations based on 40 allegations. Compared to the 5-year average, both the number of investigations and allegations were lower.

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

	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	5-year average	2025
Total Investigations	51	33	43	38	39	40.8	38
Allegation Type							
Abuse of Authority	1	0	7	3	0		0
Abuse of Conduct	1	2	2	3	9		3
Assault	3	1	1	0	0		3
Breach of any Other Order	3	3	0	3	7		3
Corrupt Practice	0	2	1	1	2		2
Criminal Association/Activity	0	0	0	0	0		1
Discreditable Conduct	16	14	11	8	12		9
Harassment	2	0	0	0	0		0
Impaired	0	2	0	1	0		0
Miscellaneous *	10	10	3	2	5		4
Neglect of Duty	8	2	7	8	6		1
Sexual Assault	3	1	2	0	3		3
Theft	2	0	4	2	2		5
Threats	0	0	3	1	0		1
Unauthorized Release of Info	9	4	5	8	5		5
Total Allegations	58	41	46	40	51	47.2	40

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

***Miscellaneous includes:**

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|----------------------|-------------------------|------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 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 conduct and regulation relating to bias, ethics, and cultural awareness. Every year, all members, both sworn and professional staff, 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 as the time allocated is proportionate to the length of the training programs. Core to the training is 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 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 professional 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, *Understanding and Developing Cultural Competence*, *Beyond Bias, Cultural Competence*, *Delivering Exceptional Customer Service Across Cultures*, *Using Racially and Ethnically Inclusive Language*, *Sweat Lodge Ceremony*, and *Trends in Diversity*.

The 2025 administrative review examined WPS directives, training programs, and complaint processes related to bias-free policing and professional standards. The review found that existing frameworks remain consistent with policy requirements and accreditation standards. To strengthen investigative capacity, three additional investigators have been assigned to the PSU. Ongoing evaluation and continuous improvement remain essential to ensure these measures stay effective, responsive, and align with the community expectations.

Gene Bowers
Chief of Police