

Ministry of Community Safety  
and Correctional Services

Public Safety Training Division

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Ministère de la Sécurité communautaire et  
des Services correctionnels

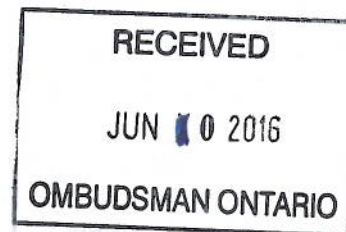
Division de la formation en matière  
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June 09, 2016

Mr. J. Paul Dubé  
Ombudsman  
Office of the Ombudsman of Ontario  
Bell Trinity Square  
483 Bay Street, 10th Floor, South Tower  
Toronto, ON M5G 2C9



Dear Mr. Dubé:

On behalf of Deputy Minister Torigian, I would like to thank you for providing the Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services with an updated version of your draft report on de-escalation, and for meeting with us on Friday, June 3, to discuss the Ministry's Strategy for a Safer Ontario (the Strategy). I am pleased to know that the work we are currently embarking upon dovetails with key recommendations from your police use of force review.

Since the Ministry's last correspondence with your office in April 2016, several province-wide public consultations regarding the Strategy have taken place. These included open public consultation sessions, as well as focussed sessions and an online survey. All feedback will be reviewed before tabling legislative reform. Specifically, as part of the consultations, the Ministry sought public input on how to improve interactions between police and vulnerable Ontarians, including enhancing front-line responses to those in crisis. Public sessions were held in London, Newmarket, Hamilton, Sault Ste. Marie, Thunder Bay, Cobourg, Ottawa and Toronto, and regional stakeholder sessions were held in St. Catharines, Thunder Bay, Timmins, Bancroft, Windsor, Stratford, Toronto, Brampton, Kenora, Sudbury and Cornwall. In addition, some MPPs organized local consultations in their communities to provide further input from constituents.

As you are aware, the Strategy represents the largest transformation of policing in Ontario in more than 25 years. This involves a review of the *Police Services Act (PSA)* and supporting regulations, standards and guidelines, which include the use of force and police response to persons in crisis.

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Furthermore, we have made some notable enhancements to the way we train our new recruits through the Basic Constable Training program. Commencing with the May 2016 intake, the Ontario Police College (OPC) added new sessions to introduce police recruits to behavioural influence concepts that are designed to enable officers to use the influence developed through a relationship with a person in crisis to achieve compliance rather, than an authority-based approach. This approach, combined with curriculum on assessing imminence and slowing events down, is to be used/demonstrated in practical exercises.

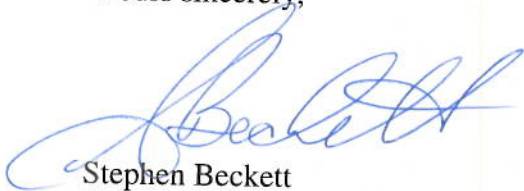
I am pleased that your office has agreed to visit the OPC in the coming months to witness the excellent training police officers and recruits receive. My staff will follow up with your office regarding possible dates and times.

The Ministry continues to review best practices across the country, and is currently conducting its own ongoing Use of Force Review as part of the Strategy, to examine officer training, equipment and how incidents are reported. We continue to work with our partners on further strengthening use of force training, de-escalation and assessment of relevant academic research.

Minister Naqvi has publicly stated that there must be a change to the model of policing, from one that is reactive and enforcement-driven to proactive and community-focused. We are committed to developing an integrated strategy that brings together various sectors, such as mental health, social services, education and police, to achieve safer communities for all Ontarians.

Please find enclosed all eight (8) copies of the draft report provided to the Ministry. As always, the Ministry is committed to reviewing all Ombudsman recommendations, and will formally respond with utmost due diligence once your final report has been made public.

Yours sincerely,



Stephen Beckett

Assistant Deputy Minister, Public Safety Division & Public Safety Training Division