



# LONDON POLICE SERVICE BOARD

“Deeds Not Words”

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**To:** Chair and Members of the London Police Service Board  
**Date:** September 19, 2024  
**Subject:** **LPS Strategy Pertaining to Intimate Partner Violence and Femicide**  
**Report:** 2409EA04

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## Board Action:

- Update / Information Purposes Only
- Seeking Input
- Seeking Decision
- Evaluation

## Summary:

This report summarizes London Police Service community safety strategy with respect to intimate partner violence and femicide. Our strategy consists of actionable steps we can take now to improve our response to the problem, in the areas of:

- Service delivery and operating procedures
- Community engagement, education, and advocacy
- Data collection and reporting
- Training
- Collaboration with government and stakeholders

## Background:

Intimate partner violence – directed primarily at women and girls, by men – persists as a threat to the safety and wellbeing of our community. Ninety-five municipalities across Ontario, including the City of London, have responded with declarations recognizing intimate partner violence (IPV) as an epidemic.<sup>1</sup>

Recommendations issued by coroner’s juries and commissions of inquiry in response to multiple murders highlight the need for change in a wide range of areas including training, public education, intervention, and data collection. Several of these are directed at police services throughout Canada.

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<sup>1</sup> Building a Bigger Wave Provincial Network for Violence Against Women Coordinating Committees.

**Next Steps:**

*Service Delivery and Procedure Implementation*

The London Police Service currently uses an auditing and support model in relation to the investigation of intimate partner violence occurrences by frontline officers. First implemented in 2009, this model is staffed with one Sergeant and five Constables in an Intimate Partner Violence Unit attached to the Community Mobilization and Support Branch. Officers assigned to the unit review reports for all cases flagged as involving an element of intimate partner violence to ensure compliance with investigation and reporting standards.<sup>2</sup> Any shortcomings identified during an audit are actioned for follow up investigation by the officer who initially responded to the call. Intimate Partner Violence Unit officers are also available to provide guidance to frontline officers and supervisors during the investigation of intimate partner violence occurrences however this is not their primary role, and they are only available Monday to Friday during regular business hours.

A new service delivery model will attach teams of officers with the skills and enhanced training needed to effectively investigate and support the prosecution of incidents of intimate partner violence directly to frontline patrol units. Alignment with patrol sections will provide for 24-hour coverage year-round, and the proximity of specialized investigation teams to the front line will enhance service and outcomes by ensuring investigations are thorough and complete at the outset.

The implementation of the new service delivery model will require amendments to London Police Service operating procedures. We will undertake a comprehensive review of all procedures relevant to the investigation of intimate partner violence to ensure efficiency and effectiveness in operations, having regard to leading practice, recommendations<sup>3</sup>, local needs, and relevant legislation.

Finally, the 2024-2027 London Police Service multi-year budget allocates significant investment in modernization initiatives, many of which will improve our ability to respond effectively to calls involving intimate partner violence (e.g. connected officer program, evidence-based policing strategies, research, and technology).

*Community Engagement, Education, and Advocacy*

As a leader in community safety, the London Police Service will leverage its capacity to bring stakeholders together in advocating for change in relation to intimate partner violence and femicide.

We will advocate for change surrounding the use of the term *femicide*, whether as generally understood to involve the intentional murder of women *because they are women*, or more broadly in reference to *any killings of women or girls*.<sup>4</sup> Using the term *femicide* within the London Police Service and externally will necessarily require a clear understanding of the intended meaning. Use of the term to raise awareness and to give agency to victims of femicide is relatively straightforward however, at law, it is more complex.

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<sup>2</sup> LPS Procedure LE-017.01 Intimate Partner Violence, Policing Standards LE 23 – Bail and Violent Crime, LE 24 – Domestic Violence Occurrences, LE 28 – Criminal Harassment, LE 47 – Police Response to High-Risk Individuals

<sup>3</sup> Coroner’s Inquest into the deaths of Carol Culleton, Anastasia Kuzyk, and Nathalie Warmerdam; Nova Scotia Mass Casualty Commission

<sup>4</sup> “Understanding and addressing violence against women”, World Health Organization 2012

## RE: LPS Strategy Pertaining to Intimate Partner Violence and Femicide

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Homicide provisions in the Criminal Code define *culpable homicide* (causing the death of a human being through an unlawful act, negligence, etc.)<sup>5</sup>, and other provisions determine whether culpable homicide is murder.<sup>6</sup> To prove murder, the Crown must prove the act and intent, but not motive. On the surface, the generally understood definition of femicide is challenging for police services to use outright because it incorporates an element of *motivation* that the Crown would have to prove to establish guilt at trial. Irrespective of the issue's complexity, the London Police Service will remain engaged in the pursuit of change in this area.

### *Data Collection and Reporting*

We will continue to improve data collection on femicide and incidents of intimate partner violence, ensuring demographic information pertaining to victims and offenders is accurately captured, tracked, and reported. Data on these indices has already been included in the May 2024 Criminal Investigation Services Report to the LPSB and will be incorporated into other future reports where relevant, including the London Police Service Annual Report.

### *Training*

We will implement a program of regular training tailored to the needs of members throughout the organization based on their assignment. This will include training in trauma-informed approaches for first responders, investigators, and supervisors; risk assessment; and other unique aspects of intimate partner violence.

### *Collaboration with Government and Stakeholders*

We will work with our partners at the provincial and federal levels to implement change, carefully consider recommendations made at inquests, commissions, and other sources (e.g. research findings). We will collaborate with other police services in sharing information and improving responses to intimate partner violence across jurisdictions.

We will continue to engage with local service providers and advocates to build and strengthen trusting relationships at executive and senior leadership levels and optimize coordination in our responses to intimate partner violence. We will achieve this through regular meetings with senior leaders from individual partner agencies and in group meetings.

### **Recommendation:**

It is recommended that the London Police Service Board receive this report as an update for information purposes.

SUBMITTED BY: Paul Bastien, Deputy Chief - Community Safety & Specialized Investigations

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<sup>5</sup> Criminal Code of Canada, Sec. 222

<sup>6</sup> Criminal Code of Canada, Sec. 229