



RESOLUTION 2019-02

Response an Investigative Standards in Elder and Vulnerable Persons Abuse

Preamble:

With Canada's aging population on the rise, police services across the province are faced with complex challenges in dealing with the increasing number of elder and vulnerable persons abuse cases. There is a need for a provincial strategy that would provide guidelines and best practices for responding to and investigating these types of incidents.

WHEREAS according to Statistics Canada, it is estimated that the elder population will continue to rise for several decades with the sharpest increase between 2020 and 2030; and:

WHEREAS seniors fall within the category of vulnerable persons. Cases reported to police often require immediate intervention involving a collaborative effort between police and community partners to protect the victims and prevent further victimization; and:

WHEREAS new trends involving Thefts by Power of Attorney, predatory relationships and financial crimes targeting seniors have increased significantly (99% increase over 5 years). A marked increase in reported assaults (62 % increase over 5 years), sexual assaults (37% increase over 5 years) and domestic incidents involving seniors (59% increase over 5 years) has been recorded by DRPS. Medical issues of dementia and other cognitive illnesses often add further complexities to police responses; and:

WHEREAS the Canadian Anti-Fraud Centre identified seniors to be most likely to be the target of financial crimes and suffer the greatest losses in terms of dollar amount; and:

WHEREAS recent Court proceedings highlighted the need for specialized knowledge when interviewing seniors to address cognitive ability and counter Court challenges; and:

WHEREAS the province has recognized the need for specialized investigative skills which resulted in the Ontario Police College developing the Elder Abuse Investigation course which ran as a pilot in February 2019; and:

WHEREAS the Government of Canada is currently studying the issue of financial crimes and harm targeting seniors with the intent to develop a national strategy to combat these offences; and:

WHEREAS independent models and guidelines on elder and vulnerable persons abuse have been developed by different police services across Ontario with varying levels of success; and

WHEREAS a provincial working group called Law Enforcement Agencies Protecting Seniors (LEAPS) comprised of police investigators and community partners across the province is looking for the OACP to assist in addressing some of the current gaps.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the OACP supports the creation of a LEAPS subcommittee to study guidelines and best practices in response to incidents of elder and vulnerable persons abuse; and:

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the OACP calls on the Government of Ontario and/or Ministry of the Solicitor General to create a provincial working group to identify and develop clear guidelines and best practices; and: