

## Inspectorate of Policing Monitoring Summary: OCPC Investigation into the Durham Regional Police Service and Board

### About the Inspector General of Policing and the Inspectorate of Policing

The Inspector General of Policing drives improved performance and accountability in policing and police governance by overseeing the delivery of adequate and effective policing across Ontario. The Inspector General ensures compliance with the province's policing legislation and standards, and has the authority to issue progressive, risk-based and binding directions and measures to protect public safety. Ontario's *Community Safety and Policing Act* (CSPA) embeds protections to ensure the Inspector General's statutory duty is delivered independently from government.

The Inspector General ensures that policing in Ontario remains adequate and effective through monitoring, inspections, investigations, and data-driven oversight. This modernized framework emphasizes transparency, accountability, and continuous improvement throughout the province's policing sector.

The Ontario Civilian Police Commission (OCPC) was dissolved on September 1, 2025, with its mandate and responsibilities transferred to newly established and oversight entities, including the establishment of Inspector General of Policing under Part VII CSPA. The Inspector General has assumed much of the OCPC's former oversight role.

### Introduction

#### *The initial complaint*

In November 2018, the Deputy Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services (now Ministry of the Solicitor General) received a letter from legal counsel representing several members of the Durham Regional Police Service (DRPS), requesting a formal investigation into the DRPS. The correspondence contained serious allegations against members of the Senior Command and the Durham Regional Police Service Board (Board), including claims of misconduct, misuse of authority, and failures in oversight.

#### *OCPC's review and investigation*

In January 2019, the OCPC was asked by the Minister to conduct a preliminary review and an investigation under section 25 of the Police Services Act (PSA) to assess these concerns. The purpose of the review was to determine whether senior officials or the Board had engaged in improper conduct or governance failures, and whether systemic issues within the administration of the DRPS warranted further investigation.

Following this review, the OCPC decided to proceed with a formal section 25 investigation under sections 25(1)(a) and (b) of the PSA, examining multiple areas of concern related to the leadership, governance, and oversight of the DRPS and Board. The OCPC provided its Section 25 Investigation Report to the DRPS and Board on July 25<sup>th</sup>, 2025, although the report was not made public at that time. A redacted version of the report was later released by the Ministry of the Solicitor General through a Freedom of Information Request.

### *The Inspector General of Policing's role*

The OCPC provided its investigation report to the Inspector General for consideration of CSPA compliance issues arising from the findings. The compliance-related findings and recommendations are best dealt with through the Inspector General's CSPA s.102(4)(a) duty to monitor police service boards, chiefs of police and police services. In supporting the Inspector General's monitoring mandate, the Inspectorate of Policing will work closely and collaboratively with both the Board and the DRPS to ensure the full and effective implementation of all 33 recommendations. Specifically, a Police Services Advisors within the Inspectorate of Policing will review information and provide analysis to assist the Inspector General in independently determining whether the 33 OCPC recommendations have been effectively addressed.

### **Findings and recommendations**

The OCPC Report into the DPRS and Board includes 33 recommendations.

This summary organizes the Report findings into six key themes, with the corresponding recommendations presented under each. The six themes are as follows:

1. Workplace Culture and Employee Well-Being
2. Problematic Promotions and Discipline Processes and Undue Influence
3. Respect in the Workplace Processes and Investigations
4. Oversight, Accountability, and Governance Issues
5. Issues with the Use of External Investigators and Legal Services
6. Preferential Treatment and Conflicts of Interest

#### **1. Workplace Culture and Employee Well-Being**

The Report highlights a poisoned and divisive workplace culture at the time, marked by fear, reprisal, and a lack of psychological safety. Leadership behaviour was described as intimidating, dismissive of mental health concerns, and indifferent to the well-being of members suffering from PTSD and other job-related stress injuries. The mishandling of harassment complaints and failure to enforce corrective measures reinforced perceptions that the organization tolerated misconduct at senior levels. The environment was further characterized by a "with us or against us" mentality, creating deep mistrust between management and front-line members.

**Recommendation #1: FULLY REDACTED<sup>1</sup>**

**Recommendation #3:** The Chief and the Board each draft a Directive designed to comply with Part XI of the CSPA, and ensure all members are aware of their right to report misconduct without fear of reprisal.

**Recommendation #9: FULLY REDACTED**

## **2. Problematic Promotions and Discipline Processes and Undue Influence**

A recurring theme in the Report is the concentration and misuse of authority by senior administrators, particularly in relation to promotions, disciplinary decisions, and personnel management. Evidence suggested that internal processes were influenced by favoritism, intimidation, and personal relationships, leading to a perception that decisions were made based on loyalty rather than merit.

Allegations of interference in the promotional process, selective enforcement of discipline, and inappropriate influence over internal disciplinary investigations contributed to a pervasive belief that integrity and fairness had been compromised. The OCPC concluded that this imbalance of power and erosion of trust warranted leadership changes to restore confidence within the organization.

**Recommendation #2:** The Chief make it clear that his office, and only his office, is ultimately responsible for promotions up to and including the Superintendent rank among sworn officers and for all civilian members of the DRPS.

**Recommendation #4:** The Chief, in consultation with the DRP Association, place a cap on the length of time members are placed in acting positions.

**Recommendation #8:** The DRPS immediately provide the Board with any disciplinary reports it requests.

**Recommendation #17:** All Professional Standards Unit files be closed by way of a memorandum to file copied to the Chief explaining the reason for closure.

**Recommendation #18:** Information in all Professional Standards Unit files have access restricted to those in that Unit and those officers in the appropriate chain of command up to the Chief. Any breach must be treated as misconduct under either the Code of Conduct to the CSPA for sworn members or a disciplinary issue under the Collective Bargaining Agreement for civilian members.

**Recommendation #21:** The DRPS shall provide the Board at every regularly scheduled Board meeting a written report of all disciplinary matters involving members of the DRPS

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<sup>1</sup> All redactions in this document reflect the Ministry of the Solicitor General's redactions in the version of the report released through the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* request.

and its administrative staff and the Board shall proactively make inquiries regarding such disciplinary matters, even if they do not involve senior administration.

### **3. Respect in the Workplace Processes and Investigations**

The DRPS has a “Respect in the Workplace” Directive which addresses anti-harassment and violence and aims to ensure a safe and respectful work environment. The Directive defines key forms of misconduct and establishes a Respect in the Workplace Committee comprised of members of senior management, which must investigate all complaints with the assistance of internal or external investigators.

The OCPC’s findings revealed significant deficiencies in the handling of Respect in the Workplace investigations and related processes within the DPRS. Investigations were often characterized by inconsistent practices, inadequate procedural fairness, and a lack of independence.

These investigations and reports frequently failed to demonstrate a trauma-informed approach, contained questionable credibility assessments, and, in some cases, omitted or lost key investigative records.

These shortcomings undermined the intent of the Respect in the Workplace Directive, which is designed to promote a safe, respectful, and dignified working environment. The OCPC emphasized the urgent need for standardized protocols, transparent retention processes, and proper training to ensure all workplace investigations are conducted thoroughly, professionally, and free from bias or influence.

**Recommendation #10:** The Respect in the Workplace Committee exercise due diligence in the review of any reports it receives from investigators, and ensure that they were conducted in a thorough, professional and independent manner that complies with the purpose of the Service’s Respect in the Workplace Directive, that being to maintain a working environment that is based upon the dignity and rights of everyone in the organization.

**Recommendation #11:** The DRPS consider reviewing the investigative reports **PARTIAL REDACTION** to determine whether they were conducted in a thorough, professional, and independent manner that complied with the stated purpose of the Service’s Respect in the Workplace Directive, that being to maintain a working environment that is based upon the dignity and rights of everyone in the organization.

**Recommendation #12:** All interviews by Respect in the Workplace investigators whether conducted by internal or external investigators be recorded, and copies of the recordings be considered work product, copies of which are retained in the investigation file.

**Recommendation #15:** All supervisors receive further instruction and training regarding their responsibilities under the Respect In The Workplace Directive HR-02-011, and in

particular, the duty under s. 5 of the Directive to “immediately contact the Respect in the Workplace Committee upon receiving a complaint of workplace harassment or violence ... or being made aware of harassing or violent behaviour.”

#### **4. Oversight, Accountability, and Governance Issues**

Both the DRPS and the Board in place at the time were criticized for failing to exercise adequate oversight. The Board lacked awareness of significant relationships and internal issues, and it supported or ignored decisions that obstructed accountability.

The previous DRPS leadership’s adversarial response to the OCPC investigation—refusing to provide documents, engaging in multiple court actions, and incurring substantial legal costs—was viewed as a deliberate attempt to frustrate oversight. This approach reflected a broader governance failure marked by weak transparency, insufficient policy controls, and disregard for legislative intent.

**Recommendation #5:** The Board develop a policy ensuring adequate safeguards for questions used during the interviewing process to protect the integrity of the promotional process.

**Recommendation #6:** The Board receive copies of any written decisions of the courts, arbitrators, or hearing officers regarding members of the DRPS which may be relevant to the performance of the member’s duties or the reputation of the DRPS.

**Recommendation #7:** Candidates provide copies of any written decisions of the courts, arbitrators, or hearing officers in which they either gave evidence or were a party as part of the screening process for a deputy chief or chief position.

**Recommendation #16:** The Board establish a policy that a copy of the investigative report referred to in either ss. 76(9) of the former PSA or ss. 198(6) and 201(a) of the current CSPA be memorialized and included as part of the Board’s responsibilities under ss. 37(1)(i) of the CSPA to “monitor the chief of police’s handling of discipline within the police service.”

**Recommendation #23:** The Chief provide any reports he receives related to disciplinary matters to the Board (as noted in Recommendation #21), and their receipt be noted in the minutes.

**Recommendation #24:** The Board receive ongoing training with respect to its role in the supervision and governance of the DRPS and the role of provincial bodies responsible for oversight of Police Services and Boards.

**Recommendation #25:** The Board carefully monitor any litigation by the DRPS against provincial bodies responsible for oversight over Boards and chiefs such as the Inspector General of Policing and the Law Enforcement Complaints Agency.

**Recommendation #32:** The Chief report his response to the OCPC’s recommendations involving the Chief every six months after the release of this Report to the Board and the Executive Chair of Tribunals Ontario or his successor.<sup>2</sup>

**Recommendation #33:** The Board report its response to the OCPC’s recommendations involving the Board every six months after the release of this Report to the Executive Chair of Tribunals Ontario or his successor,<sup>3</sup> and its response to the Chief’s Report referred to in Recommendation #32 one year after the release of this Report to the Executive Chair of Tribunals Ontario or his successor.

## **5. Issues with the Use of External Investigators and Legal Services**

The DRPS and Board at the time demonstrated a history of aggressive litigation, with limited regard for costs and the impact that their approach had on internal employee relationships. The effective use of legal counsel is essential to ensuring both the DRPS and Board receive timely, sound legal advice that supports lawful decision-making, governance, and operational oversight.

The engagement of, and lack of oversight over, external legal counsel and investigators raised significant concerns regarding professionalism, accountability, and procedural fairness. Some of the counsel and investigators retained were alleged to be biased and, in some instances, engaged in aggressive and inappropriate conduct, undermining confidence in the integrity of the process.

Investigative materials and documentation were reportedly lost or incomplete, reflecting serious deficiencies in record management and professional standards. The procurement of these services, at times through intermediaries, rather than under a clear and direct legal retainer, created uncertainty regarding independence, control, and ownership of investigative records and the mandate itself. These issues underscore the need for stronger governance, clearer legal oversight, and meaningful involvement of legal services to ensure investigative processes comply with accepted legal and professional standards.

**Recommendation #13:** All retainers for external workplace investigations be made between either the DRPS on the one hand and the investigator or the investigator’s firm on the other, and not by legal counsel acting for the DRPS. Further, the retainer agreement should clearly state that the external investigator is being retained in the capacity of an independent workplace investigator and not as counsel, and must provide copies of all work product to the DRPS upon completion of its Report. Finally, the retainer agreement should stipulate that the Report and all work product are the property of the DRPS.

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<sup>2</sup> The Inspector General of Policing, established under Part VII of the CSPA, now assumes much of the OCPC’s former oversight role.

<sup>3</sup> Same as above.

**Recommendation #14:** The DRPS include a clause in its external Workplace Investigations contracts that all reports and work product may be shared with oversight agencies such as the Inspector General of Policing and the Law Enforcement Complaints Agency.

**Recommendation #19: PARTIAL REDACTION** Further, the Board shall direct the DRPS to require in all of its retainer agreements with external legal counsel that external counsel must inform the Chief in a timely manner of any conflict of interest or potential conflict of interest.

**Recommendation #26: FULLY REDACTED**

**Recommendation #27:** The Board direct the DRPS to consider employing internal legal counsel as a cost-reducing measure.

**Recommendation #28:** The Board direct the DRPS to retain a primary law firm and a secondary law firm in order to provide the DRPS with a choice of alternate counsel when appropriate, through a Request for Proposal process. All external counsel must be subject to a written retainer agreement that specifies, among other usual terms, what is the appropriate level of interaction between the law firm and members of senior command (including for example, attending social events, meals, gifts, sporting events, joint vacations, etc.), all of which is to be reported to the Board at least annually.

**Recommendation #29:** Retainer letters referred to in Recommendation #28 should require external counsel to provide a reasonable estimate of legal fees and expenses for services upon request.

**Recommendation #30:** Going forward, the Board direct the DRPS to conduct an annual audit of legal billings supervised by someone with appropriate legal training and experience.

**Recommendation #31:** Each of the Board and DRPS provide a written report to the Regional Municipality of Durham itemizing the legal costs each has incurred in connection with the OCPC's investigation since its inception in 2019.

## **6. Preferential Treatment and Conflicts of Interest**

OCPC documented numerous examples that illustrated inappropriate personal and professional relationships that raised concerns about conflicts of interest and favoritism, including in decisions around which members of the DRPS would be provided with additional development and educational opportunities.

Senior leaders were also found to have maintained close associations with select subordinate officers and external stakeholders during ongoing investigations or disciplinary proceedings. These relationships, coupled with questionable decision-making around secondary activity approvals, as defined within section 89 of the CSPA, and disciplinary discretion, undermined confidence in the impartiality of leadership and

in the decisions ultimately made. The OCPC determined that such behaviour demonstrated poor judgment and reinforced the need for stronger ethical safeguards.

**Recommendation #20:** Section 12 of the Secondary Activities Directive HR-02-001 be amended to ensure that any application for secondary employment include copies of relevant licences or other required approvals.

**Recommendation #22:** The Chief table annually with the Board as part of the public record an educational fund report containing available funding, the names, amounts of funding, what educational opportunity the recipients are pursuing, and whether the recipients completed the funded educational programme.

### **The Inspector General's Approach to Monitoring**

Under the direction of the Inspector General of Policing, the Inspectorate of Policing will employ its evaluation and monitoring tool to coordinate responses, maintain comprehensive documentation, and verify that each OCPC recommendation has been effectively addressed. This monitoring tool will be made publicly accessible to ensure clear, transparent, and easily trackable progress.

The Durham Regional Police Association and the Durham Regional Police Senior Officer's Association will be engaged throughout the process to ensure meaningful input flowing from a shared commitment to improvement. While the work will take time, all parties remain dedicated to completing it with diligence, integrity, and transparency.

Updates will be provided as progress continues.