
NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release
2023AG0019-000501
April 12, 2023

Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General
Ministry of Attorney General

Dedicated hubs target repeat violent offending on Vancouver Island

VICTORIA – The Province is helping keep people safe by creating hubs of police, dedicated prosecutors and probation officers focused on tackling repeat violent offending in every region of the province.

Twelve hubs are part of the Repeat Violent Offending Intervention Initiative, which is focused on targeted enforcement as well as enhanced investigation and monitoring. Hubs will be located in four regions of British Columbia: the Lower Mainland, Vancouver Island, the Interior and the North. In the Vancouver Island region, hubs will be based in Victoria and Nanaimo.

The initiative is structured to meet the unique needs of each community. The hubs will work with local stakeholders and other existing programs, such as situation tables and Assertive Community Treatment teams, through collaborative information sharing.

“Everyone deserves to feel safe in their community, wherever they live,” said Mike Farnworth, Minister of Public Safety and Solicitor General. “The rise in repeat violent offending is top of mind for British Columbians and it's also a top priority for our government. We're taking action by standing up 12 hubs throughout B.C. to harness the expertise and experience that will disrupt repeat violent offending and make a real difference in B.C. neighbourhoods.”

The hubs will be based in Nanaimo, Victoria, Vancouver, Surrey, New Westminster, Abbotsford, Kamloops, Kelowna, Cranbrook, Prince George, Williams Lake and Terrace. Each hub will serve surrounding communities within its region, co-ordinating responses across the justice system and connecting offenders with the services they need to support better outcomes.

“Crimes committed by repeat violent offenders continue to be a concern across the country,” said Niki Sharma, Attorney General. “These are tough challenges that require a co-ordinated approach. That's why we're investing in dedicated Crown counsel to provide criminal law advice, and independent prosecutorial support and services to support the hubs and help build safer, more just communities.”

The Repeat Violent Offending Intervention Initiative will be supported by the new Special Investigation and Targeted Enforcement (SITE) program. The Province is investing \$16 million over three years so law enforcement can strengthen targeted investigations of repeat violent offending cases and improve information sharing between police agencies.

“The impacts and challenges of repeat violent offenders requires a multi-agency response,” said Deputy Commissioner Dwayne McDonald, commanding officer of the B.C. RCMP, Surrey. “The new Specialized Investigation and Targeted Enforcement program is a step in the right direction. SITE will enhance public safety by adding to the investigative options available to police in B.C. It will also strengthen co-ordination and information sharing between police

agencies, similar to the successes achieved with B.C.'s Provincial Tactical Enforcement Priority, which SITE is modelled after.”

SITE will expand police investigative resources and targeted enforcement capacity and allow police agencies to enhance co-ordination and share information quicker. This funding will make enforcement more effective, improving information gathered for prosecutors and boost police capacity for collaboration.

The Repeat Violent Offending Intervention Initiative and SITE will advance the Safer Communities Action Plan's goals of strengthening enforcement to hold individuals accountable, and leveraging services to create safe, healthy communities for everyone.

The Safer Communities Action Plan aligns with recommendations from several community safety reports, including the Special Committee on Reforming the Police Act and the BC First Nations Justice Strategy.

Quick Facts:

- The LePard-Butler investigation into repeat offending and violent stranger attacks' 28 recommendations were released on Sept. 21, 2022, and the full report was made public on Oct. 1, 2022.
- The Safer Communities Action Plan's initiatives include:
 - \$25 million over three years for a dedicated Repeat Violent Offending Intervention Initiative focused on addressing repeat violent offending in communities throughout British Columbia;
 - \$230 million over three years for provincial and specialized RCMP units;
 - expanding mental-health crisis response teams into more communities, so police can focus on crime and people in crisis are met early by health-care workers and community members; and
 - introducing "unexplained wealth order" legislation to go after the houses, cars and luxury goods of high-level organized criminals.

Learn More:

To learn more about the Safer Communities Plan, see: <https://strongerbc.gov.bc.ca/safer-communities>

To read the full rapid investigation into repeat offending report, as well as the BC First Nations Justice Council's submission to the investigation panel, visit: https://news.gov.bc.ca/files/Prolific_Offending_Report_BCFNJC_submission.pdf

For more information about the Repeat Violent Offending Intervention Initiative, see: <https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2023PSSG0019-000319>

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BACKGROUND

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What people are saying about the Province's plans to address repeat violent offending

Grace Lore, MLA for Victoria-Beacon Hill –

“Safety is on the minds of many in our community this year. This initiative works to tackle the complex challenges facing our community and ensure all people in Victoria feel safer in a resilient community.”

Sheila Malcomson, MLA for Nanaimo –

“We want everyone to feel safe in their community, but unintended impacts of COVID measures and new federal laws have made things worse. Today's new program will expand our work to keep violent repeat offending off our streets.”

Murray Rankin, MLA for Oak Bay-Gordon Head –

“People deserve to feel safe, no matter where in our region they live. This new program involves collaboration between government and policing partners that will help address repeat violent offending in Greater Victoria and communities across B.C.”

Adam Walker, MLA for Parksville-Qualicum –

“Keeping our communities safe requires co-ordination between multiple levels of government and our policing partners. This program will support a collaborative focus on breaking the cycle of repeat offending and ensure people in our communities feel safer.”

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