

**PUBLIC SAFETY STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION  
MOBILE CRISIS RESPONSE  
SERVICE MODEL**

**COMMUNITY SAFETY**

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## BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT PUBLIC SAFETY STRATEGY

In 2023, Regional Council unanimously approved the municipality’s 2023-2026 Public Safety Strategy

The strategy aims to build a broader, more holistic and robust ecosystem to promote community safety and wellbeing in HRM

A key priority is to **broaden the spectrum of responses to crises** by building community-based solutions

HRM is in the process of building a model for a community-based mobile crisis response team that can provide a viable alternative for non-emergency crises



# BACKGROUND

## PUBLIC SAFETY STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION STATUS

The Public Safety Advisor reports annually to Regional Council on Public Safety Strategy implementation. These annual reports can be found on the [Public Safety Strategy](#) website



**COMMUNITY-LED PUBLIC SAFETY LEADERSHIP**

Continue to work closely with community groups and municipal business units to support and champion public safety initiatives



**BROADER SPECTRUM OF RESPONSES TO SOCIAL ISSUES AND HARMS**

Establish a continuum of responders and responses to social harms, to ensure the most appropriate responder and reduce pressures on emergency services



**A CENTRE OF RESPONSIBILITY FOR COLLECTIVE IMPACT**

Establish an appropriate structure to advance public safety initiatives, which has the capacity and authority to lead initiatives and convene partner organizations and experts

### Implementation: Broader Spectrum of Response Action Area

**Stabilization Centre** –pilot launch in 2025 (pending procurement of space)

**Mobile outreach and transportation service**- AIM team service provider contract signed; operational Q3

**Youth outreach and crisis and response services** (POSSE at Alderney landing and bridge terminal), MYST team with HRM youth Division; Youth Response table in development

**Drug Policy working group**- Nova Scotia Criminal Justice Association leading development

**Mobile Crisis Response Service**- under development (pilot soft launch Q1 2025)

## WHAT IS A MOBILE CRISIS SERVICE?

- A mobile crisis service responds to mental health and/or substance use, and other non-violent situations or crises from a trauma-informed and culturally relevant care perspective.
- An intake line will receive, evaluate calls for service and, where appropriate, dispatch mobile crisis teams
- Dedicated mobile crisis teams will support individuals experiencing a variety of complex health/social needs, where emergency responder interventions may not be appropriate or beneficial.

**NOTE: The service is not intended to respond to situations where threats of violence or use of weapons are present or likely to occur.**

## WHY DEVELOP A MOBILE CRISIS SERVICE FOR HALIFAX REGION?

- Increasing evidence-base that a community crisis service can reduce demand on emergency services and provide better outcomes for residents
- Regional Council direction through the Policing Transformation Study Roadmap (April 2023) and Public Safety Strategy (March 2023)

**“ Police and PSAPs have no control over what types of calls for service they receive. Police are being asked to provide response to an extremely broad range of calls for service which are becoming increasingly complex and require different skills to manage. ”** Police Transformation Study, PWC 2023

## WHAT TYPES OF CALLS WILL THE MOBILE CRISIS TEAM RESPOND TO?

The team will respond to non-violent calls where someone is experiencing distress, a dispute, perceived threats to safety, and/or a mental health or substance use-related crisis.

A variety of situations might fall into this category. Some examples include threats of suicide, erratic behaviour, well-being checks, disputes.

**The service will NOT respond to situations where threats of violence or use of weapons are present or likely to occur.**

**WHAT TYPE OF CRISIS  
SUPPORT WILL BE  
PROVIDED?**

The mobile crisis teams will provide:

- Crisis de-escalation
- Safety planning
- Transportation to a safe place
- Basic needs (clothing, food, harm reduction supplies)
- Client advocacy
- Connecting/referrals to services to meet persons immediate needs

## DESIGN PRINCIPLES

- 1. Person centric** - The wellbeing and effectiveness of users and responders are at the centre of the model. A 'no wrong door' approach to service access.
- 2. Scalable and Sustainable:** Capable of meeting rising demand while maintaining both quality and efficiency. Able to accommodate current and future access points, without significant alterations to its core operations and service delivery.
- 3. Enables Public Safety Strategy Priorities:** A model that aligns with Public Safety Strategy priorities and key commitments of equity, intersectionality, sustainability. *This service model will also build capacity to effectively identify and respond to the specific ways that women and gender people experience crises.*



## DESIGN PRINCIPLES

- 5. Provides Accountability and Partner Collaboration:**  
Model promotes collective impact, clarity, transparency, and efficient operations. Roles and outcomes are clearly defined. Backbone organization and partnerships are aligned on objectives and outcomes, ways to manage risk, resolve conflict.
- 6. Effective, Efficient and Responsive:** The model should prioritize high-value change and appropriately leverage existing capabilities.

**CRISIS  
SERVICE  
COMPONENTS**

**Components (under development)**

Service system oversight + coordination

Intake service line for callers

Call evaluation

Crisis dispatch

Mobile crisis team

Referral pathways and placement options

Records management

## SKILLS AND TRAINING

# HALIFAX

Non-medical model with crisis service staff trained respond to a variety of non-emergency crises

Required trainings include

- Trauma-Informed Non-Violent Crisis Intervention Training
- Mental Health First Aid
- ASIST and Safe Talk
- Training to respond to women and gender diverse people's crisis experiences
- Cultural competency trainings

## COMMUNITY AND PARTNER ENGAGEMENT

Over the past year, we have:

- Dialogued and worked with other jurisdictions who are running community crisis response services across Canada (e.g., Ottawa, Toronto, Edmonton)
- Worked with Pier Labs and YWCA Halifax to engage with ~20 local service providers and with people with lived experience of accessing IPV related services
- Dialogued with various internal partners and stakeholders, including Diversity & Inclusion, HRP, RCMP, Halifax Regional Fire and Emergency, Integrated Emergency Services/911, Victim Services
- Aligning with relevant provincial projects and priorities

## INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE & GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

**The service will not respond to IPV or GBV calls where there is immediate threat to life.**

Examples of ways the service may respond:

- Supporting callers with safety planning
- Meeting with callers in a safe public space to discuss resources and how to connect with service providers
- Offering transportation to a shelter or safe place

During the pilot, we will aim to monitor and evaluate how the service is responding to IPV and GBV to learn and adapt.

## INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE & GENDER- BASED VIOLENCE

Developing policies, practices and procedures that equip staff (both intake and response) to recognize IPV and GBV and understand how they can support service users with gender responsive, culturally responsive and trauma-informed approaches.

Ensuring connection and integration with local service providers who offer specialized IPV and GBV support and resources.

Research and engagement suggest that the crisis response service can contribute to supporting people experiencing IPV and GBV as part of a broader ecosystem of responses.

## WHERE WE ARE IN THE PROCESS & NEXT STEPS

- Advance model development to implementation
- Reviewing data from HRP, RCMP, MMHCT, 211 to identify call types that can be diverted to new service and define geographic service area for pilot
- Incorporating insights from internal/external stakeholders on proposed model
- Developing evaluation framework and plan
- Advisory to oversee implementation of pilot
- Developing training, policies and procedures with service providers