COMMUNITY PERCEPTIONS

IMPACT OF COMMUNICATIONS AND TRANSPARENCY ON TRUST IN THE CALGARY POLICE SERVICE

JUNE 2023
Thank-you to the Calgarians who contributed their time and shared their perspectives on communications and its impact on trust in the Calgary Police Service so that this report could be prepared.

Your voices have been heard and will make a difference.

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June 2023

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June 2023
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Project Background

Context

The Commission’s community perception research has evolved over the past five years from annual quantitative surveys to quantitative and qualitative methods alternating annually.

The research is customized and updated annually to provide insights that are relevant for CPS and the Commission each year.

In 2023, we conducted qualitative research focused on the impact of communications and transparency on trust in CPS.

The research was designed to focus on two specific groups to understand potential differences in communication needs:

1. Calgarians who trust CPS
2. Calgarians who do not trust CPS

This research will help inform actions to improve communications and trust in the Calgary Police Service (CPS).

Topic Rationale

Trust is critical to policing and is the foundation for police legitimacy.

The 2022 Citizen Satisfaction research found trust in CPS is declining and Calgarians mentioned communications as a top area for improvement.

In the 2022 quantitative research, trust in CPS significantly declined.
To explore how communications and transparency impact community trust in the Calgary Police Service.

Research Objectives

Gather an in-depth understanding of **what Calgarians want to hear** from CPS and the **best channels** to communicate with them.

Explore Calgarian perspectives of CPS communication in four areas:

- **Addressing crime**
- **Crime prevention**
- **Handling calls involving people in crisis due to mental health or addictions**
- **Transparency and accountability of police actions**

Outcome

Provide actionable insights for the Commission and CPS.
Twenty-six citizens of Calgary participated in online focus groups to discuss how communications and transparency impact their trust in the Calgary Police Service.

**RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

Who we talked to

A mix of gender and ages

A mix of Calgary communities

Some new immigrants to Canada within the past five years

A mix of self-identified ethnicities/cultural backgrounds including African, Arab, Canadian/North American, Caribbean, Chinese, English/Irish/Scottish, Filipino, French, Indigenous, and South Asian

Some LGBTQA+ citizens

Calgarians who have had contact with a Calgary Police officer in the past 12 months and those who have not

April 12 and 13: two groups with Calgarians who trust CPS

April 19 and 20: two groups with Calgarians who do not trust CPS

About Qualitative Research

- Discussions are moderator-led, monitored, informal interactions
- Permit in-depth probing to understand different perspectives
- Thoughts and feelings are expressed in the participants’ own words and at their own levels of passion
- Qualitative research is valuable as a means of capturing a range of opinions, rather than as a means for counting opinions
- Results of qualitative research are not statistically projectable to the population at large

See appendix for detailed methodology.

Photo by Lisa on Adobe
**EXTERNAL CONTEXT – CPS NEWS RELEASES AND MEDIA COVERAGE**

Snapshot of media coverage and environment around the time of the community perceptions focus groups.

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**Sources:**
- City of Calgary Newsroom: https://newsroom.calgary.ca/?h=1&t=Police
- Online google search including CalgaryHerald.com, Globalnews.ca, Calgarysun.com, Newsroom.calgary.ca, Cbc.ca, and CNN.com
Trust has two components: capability and character. It is impacted by citizen experiences, collaboration, and communications.

Trust is the foundation for police legitimacy. It is **core to policing**.

Trust has two components:

1. Capability trust which is the **ability of CPS to meet citizen needs**. It is “what you do.”
2. Character trust is the **perceived motivation to be good, honest, and do no harm**. It is perceptions of “how you do it.”

Trust in CPS is impacted by:

- **Experience** with CPS (e.g., interactions)
- **Communications** (e.g., TV, social media)
- **Collaboration** (e.g., working with citizens and community agencies)

Source: © ESOMAR CONGRESS 2022, Don’t Trust Your Brand Trust Score, Lyndall Spooner CEO of Fifth Dimension Research and Consulting

Photo by Lisa on Adobe
Communication needs are similar.

Communication needs were similar across participants. What participants want to know from CPS and advice on how to communicate to them is the same and doesn’t change based on the participant’s level of trust in CPS.

The difference is that participants who distrust CPS had an interest in more communication more frequently than participants who trust CPS.

There is a willingness to trust CPS again.

Participants who do not trust CPS expressed an openness to trusting CPS again, but it will take a consistent, long-term effort by CPS in their interactions, communications, and community collaboration.
Five things impact trust in CPS.

**Personal Experiences**
Participants talked about how positive personal experiences build trust in CPS when officers are approachable, easy to work with, reassuring, a rapport is built, and they are confident CPS will be there to help them when needed.

Negative experiences make participants feel unsafe and do not instill trust and confidence in CPS. Some participants talked about how their trust remains low, even many years after a negative experience.

**Witnessing Police Interactions (In Person)**
Participants shared that witnessing CPS effectively deal with a situation strengthens their trust in CPS, makes them feel safe, and improves their perceptions that CPS is doing a good job.

Witnessing interactions where CPS is perceived to be disrespectful, not listening, or exhibiting poor treatment of certain racial/cultural groups or marginalized individuals diminishes trust and confidence in CPS.

**Communications**
What is seen or heard through various types of communications (e.g., TV, radio, social media) influences trust in CPS.

For the most part, participants believe what they hear about policing, crime, and safety on the news via channels like TV, radio or newspapers.

Social media sources of information are perceived to be less trustworthy and more likely to need verification through other news sources.

**Community Collaboration**
Participants had low awareness of current CPS initiatives to collaborate with the community.

They believed that communications about CPS efforts to collaborate with the community builds trust in CPS because it shows they are listening to the community and trying to improve.

**Perceptions of Safety**
Participants talked about the need for CPS to maintain and improve safety in Calgary. A visible presence is considered important for preventing crime, particularly in high crime areas.

Five safety concerns were voiced:
1. CPS is inadequately staffed for a city the size of Calgary.
2. Calgary downtown and transit/c-train are unsafe areas.
3. Drugs, gangs, violent crimes, youth crimes, and crime at night are safety concerns.
4. Slow response times to calls may mean not getting help when needed.
5. Racial misperceptions and stereotypes by some officers may result in a poor experiences.
Participants reported an interest in hearing about major crimes or big safety issues, overall crime statistics for Calgary, dangerous offenders, missing persons, and CPS’ role in the judicial system. Participants felt these communications build transparency, accountability, trust and confidence.

Participants perceived crime prevention information to be lacking (e.g., practical tips to prevent crime, proactive measures by CPS to make Calgary safe).

Participants desire a more balanced mix of communications about reactive policing to address crimes that happen in the city and crime prevention. Information on crime prevention builds trust in CPS because it helps citizens prevent crime and demonstrates CPS is being proactive.

Participants want to be informed about crime or safety issues that could affect them, their family, and their community (e.g., top 10 crimes in my community and practical tips to help prevent these crimes from happening to me). They want more targeted, personally relevant communications.

Participants voiced that they want to be part of the solution and work together with CPS to keep the community safe. They would like CPS to be more accessible in the community and engage with citizens to build relationships and trust. A few suggested that community liaison officers may be able to play this role.

Participants also shared they don’t know how to contact CPS for different crimes and crises (e.g., mental health crisis, transit crime, property crime). They felt this information should be better communicated.

Participants lacked awareness of CPS initiatives involving community collaboration. Once informed, participant response was very positive about the two pilot programs for handling mental health and addictions calls. They felt the pilots should be widely communicated as it demonstrates CPS is listening to the community and is making an active effort to improve.

That being said, participants do not believe CPS should be responsible for handling calls for people in crisis due to mental health or addictions. Social agencies are felt to be better suited for these calls.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Five topics of information participants want to hear about.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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Photo by Natalia Kvitovsk on Unsplash
Advice from participants on how to communicate to them.

1. Make the message quick and easy to understand

Participants shared the following advice for CPS when communicating with Calgary’s diverse population.

1. **Use plain language** at no higher than a grade 8 readability level and avoid police jargon so that Calgarians can easily understand the message.
2. **Visualize content** so that Calgarians can “see” what you are saying.
3. **Make it authentic and believable** with pictures, stories, and proof points.
4. **Boil content down to its essence** and chunk it so that it is fast and easy to understand the message.

Participants suggested CPS build a human face and personality for the Service to make it appear more “human”, approachable, personable and genuine.

It was suggested CPS partner with a reputable third-party citizen in a long-term relationship (e.g., duo of a citizen and CPS officer) to be the bridge between the community and the Service so that Calgarians know where to go to get trustworthy information on crime, safety and policing in Calgary.

Participants suggested that communication through a wider variety of channels is needed to reach the diverse segments of Calgary’s population. News via TV, radio, newspaper, and social media are the primary channels currently used.

Suggestions to extend reach included:

- Posters or infographics at public places (e.g., c-train stations, libraries, recreation centres, gyms)
- Paper flyers
- Weekly or bi-weekly podcasts
- Increased accessibility of community liaison officers including through townhall meetings to reach older Calgarians and/or those who don’t use social media

Trust Building Guidelines

- Balance communications between reactive policing and crime prevention
- Communicate in ways that will reach the different segments of Calgary’s diverse population
- Collaborate with the community to improve safety and deliver services
- Be “human” and relatable
WHAT IMPACTS TRUST IN CPS
Descriptions of CPS are very different between participants who trust the Service and those who do not trust the Service.

Participants who trust CPS typically use positive language to describe CPS.

- Respectful
- Grateful for service provided
- Thoughtful
- Visible in community
- Kind
- Critical of CPS actions
- Visible in the community
- Make me feel safe
- Skeptical of intentions
- Reassuring
- Need more officers on patrol
- Helpful
- Not enough collaboration
- Friendly
- Stuck in bureaucracy
- Diligent
- Not enough training
- Resourceful
- Good and bad officers
- Appreciate service provided
- Do a good job
- Uncomfortable around police
- Demonstrate compassion
- Not believe what CPS says
- Approach: “how can we help?”
- Critical of CPS actions
- Do not listen to citizens
- Expected to do too much
- Heavy handed
- Don’t get back to you
- Avoid police at all costs
- Scary
- Fear of police and for my safety
- Terrifying

Participants who do not trust CPS typically use negative descriptors.

- I really appreciate them. I think they have a tough job. – Trust CPS
- They’ve been pretty kind and very thoughtful about whatever situation is going on, and they’ve really tried to come at it from an approach of like, how can we help the situation? – Trust CPS
- I feel like I see them a lot. I don’t ever feel like if something went terribly wrong that they’re far away, and I think that makes me feel safe. – Trust CPS
- For me, the Calgary police is somewhat scary. They’re big, usually tall guy. – Trust CPS
- I try and avoid the police at all costs, unless absolutely needed. – Distrust CPS
- But no matter what, how I’ve seen the police act here in this city, just in the last, like 2 or 3 years, is really horrible. – Distrust CPS
- And yeah, I guess that fear has sort of still lingered. Even if I just have a Calgary police car behind me, I’m like sweating bullets. – Distrust CPS
- I would question their schooling or mentoring, or what they’ve been taught to do in certain situations. – Distrust CPS
- I don’t get back to you
- A avoid police at all costs
- Horrible
- Fear of police and for my safety
- Terrifying
Trust in CPS is impacted by personal experiences, witnessing police interactions, communications, collaboration, and perceptions of safety in Calgary.
Personal experiences build trust in CPS when officers are approachable, easy to work with, reassuring, and a rapport is built. Participants want to feel confident that CPS will be there to help them when needed.

**Positive Experience**

This positive experience strengthened trust in CPS. The participant feels safe with CPS and believes they do a good job.

“There was a couple of different meetings that I had to have with police, but it was with the same officer. So, they kept that consistent which I thought was very kind and helpful for me in that regard, because it didn’t feel like I was having to repeat the same information. It was the singular officer that I became familiar with so yeah, in that regard, it definitely improved my perception about the Calgary Police Service. I almost felt like this officer kind of took me under her wing a little bit.” – Trust CPS

**Negative Experience**

This negative experience did not instill trust and confidence in CPS. This participant now avoids the police.

“I had an incident with two guys. I was by myself in the Kensington area, and you know, some racial slurs and some derogatory, like sexual slurs were made, and there actually was a police car nearby. So, I approached the car, and just kind of like explained that I was feeling unsafe and what had happened. The cop was just like ‘what do you expect me to do about this?’ The cop didn’t even go respond and check in on the complaints.” – Distrust CPS
Witnessing police interactions impacts perceptions of trust in CPS.

**Positive Experience**

Witnessing the police effectively deal with a situation strengthened this participant’s trust in CPS. This participant feels safe around CPS.

“In the evening, I was in McDonald’s not that long ago, and there was some stuff going on. A lot of homeless and people who would be around that train station were in there, and the police had to come in and take care of it. I felt very safe, you know, despite whatever was going on - certain there was probably some drugs and other things happening on that side of the restaurant, but I felt very safe.”

– Trust CPS

**Negative Experience**

Witnessing how the police dealt with people during the pandemic lowered this participant’s trust and confidence in CPS.

“It was actually at the beginning of the pandemic, and I did see a lot of interactions with the police downtown. That was some of the times where I’ve seen the most dehumanizing acts from police.”

– Distrust CPS
**IMPACT OF COMMUNICATIONS ON TRUST**

What is seen or heard through various types of communications (e.g., TV, radio, social media) influences trust in CPS.

**Positive Experience**

Hearing from the Calgary Police Service about a violent crime that recently occurred instilled confidence and trust that CPS is addressing crime.

“They talked about somebody being shot this afternoon on Calgary Transit and the Calgary Police service had come on and said, ‘This is not typical for our city. We still feel the city’s overall safe. This is not something that we need to be worried about all the time.’ And I feel like that’s still accurate. It was kind of a random act of violence, but it still worries them.” – Trust CPS

**Negative Experience**

Hearing about slow response to emergency calls gave this participant the impression that these calls aren’t important to the police. This diminished trust in CPS and the participant isn’t confident that CPS will be there to help when needed.

“I would describe the Calgary police, from what I’ve read, they’re kind of slow to respond to some emergencies. So, for instance, I think last year there was a girl in downtown that was being followed by a car. And she tried to call the police, but they said something along the lines that gave the impression that it wasn’t important to them. No response was given immediately. The girl had to wait for like over an hour, and it wasn’t even the police that came to help her.” – Distrust CPS
Communication about CPS efforts to collaborate with the community builds trust in CPS.

**Positive Experience**

Being informed during the focus groups about the two pilot programs that are underway by CPS to handle calls for mental health and addictions improved perceptions of CPS for participants.

“In Calgary, definitely, they need to shed more light about it [how they are handling calls for mental health and addictions]. They need to educate people about it.” – Trust CPS

“I think it’s amazing that this [alternate call response pilots for mental health and addictions] has come out, and it should be broadcast and widely known by the general public.” – Distrust CPS

**Negative Experience**

This participant’s trust was diminished due to a perceived lack of communication by CPS on progress and collaborative efforts.

“In terms of my experience, I’m Indigenous. And so, my community has a long and turbulent relationship with systems of authority. When I look at it, I noticed that last year, they appointed one new job for a lady that would be designated as an investigator for missing and murdered Indigenous woman. One person, and that’s a great start. But I feel that in a sense, maybe not. There’s not a lot of transparency in communications on that. Been over a year, and what is she doing? What’s happened? What are some of the projects that she’s given the control, the power to enact things that need to be enacted now that she’s had some time of observation in the role. Where’s the collaboration?” – Distrust CPS
SAFETY IN CALGARY

Participants talked about the need for CPS to maintain and improve safety in Calgary. A visible presence is considered important for preventing crime, particularly in high crime areas.

SAFETY CONCERNS

- **Inadequately Staffed**
- **Unsafe Areas**
- **Addressing Some Crimes**
- **Slow Response Times**
- **Racial Misperceptions & Stereotypes**

Participants felt there are not enough officers to police a city the size of Calgary. Funding has not kept up with city growth.

There are two key areas in Calgary that are perceived to be unsafe:
- **Downtown** generally, but also at key public locations like the library and Superstore
- **C-train**, transit, and at bus/c-train stations

There are some types of crimes where participants feel CPS could do better to improve safety in Calgary:
- **Violent crimes**
- **Gangs**
- **Drugs**
- **Youth crime**
- **Crime at night**

**Slow response times** reduce participant confidence that CPS will be there for them when needed. For a couple participants, it also left the impression that some emergency situations aren’t important to CPS. Slow response times make participants feel unsafe, unprotected, and diminishes trust in CPS.

Some participants shared that some CPS officers allows misperceptions and stereotypes to guide their interactions with some racial/cultural groups. These participants don’t trust CPS to display ethical behaviour and follow the rules.
WHAT PARTICIPANTS WANT TO KNOW
You want to be protected by the people you trust, and we want to trust the Calgary Police Service, and that if we're not getting information that we need, if we're not getting the information as a whole, I think that definitely lowers the trust.

- Participant that trusts CPS
Participants identified five key topics they want to hear about from CPS.

1. **WHAT CPS IS DOING TO ADDRESS CRIME**
   Information about how CPS is addressing crime in Calgary to keep citizens safe builds transparency, accountability, trust and confidence.

2. **CRIME PREVENTION**
   Crime prevention information is perceived to be lacking. It builds trust in CPS because it helps Calgarians prevent crime and demonstrates CPS is being proactive.

3. **PERSONALLY RELEVANT COMMUNITY-BASED INFORMATION**
   Participants want to be informed about what is happening that could affect them, their family, and their community.

4. **HOW CAN I HELP**
   Participants voiced that they want to be part of the solution and work together with CPS to keep the community safe.

5. **COMMUNITY COLLABORATION**
   CPS initiatives involving community collaboration (e.g., alternate call response pilots) build trust in CPS and participants felt it should be widely communicated.
**ADDRESSING CRIME**

Participants want to be informed about how CPS is addressing crime. These communications build transparency, accountability, trust and confidence.

The focus of communications should be on major crimes or big safety issues. Participants want to be made aware of major crimes and big safety issues and understand how CPS is responding to them. These communications build knowledge and make participants feel safer knowing CPS is working on it.

Participants want CPS to:

- Acknowledge the crime occurred.
- State the action being taken; does not need to be really specific.
- Give briefings to keep Calgarians up-to-date on the progress of solving major crimes.
- Tell the success stories of arrests so that Calgarians know criminals are off the street.

“I think that even if a whole lot of action hasn’t been taken yet on a crime, it is important that the public are made aware of it by them. So maybe they don’t have a lot to tell us yet about it, and maybe they could never tell us a lot. But just acknowledging that it occurred, and that the police are taking some form of action.” – Trust CPS

“I would like to hear more about general crime reports all over the city. I feel like District 5 or the Northeast tends to be overrepresented in the media for anything rough happening, and I do think, just knowing the city pretty well, I’ve lived here since I was born, I know that crime happens everywhere.” – Trust CPS

Participants are also interested in information about:

- Overall crime statistics for Calgary
- Missing persons
- Dangerous offenders
- Process for arrests in a simple step by step infographic format
Participants perceive that the justice system is failing CPS.

Participants generally feel that CPS does a good job of arresting and charging people for crimes. They are concerned that the justice system often releases criminals too quickly – many of whom are repeat offenders and just end up being arrested again.

Some participants want CPS to communicate the arrest process and roles of CPS vs. the justice system (e.g., the justice system sentences and determines when offenders are released) in a simple infographic format. Participants felt that increasing citizen knowledge about this process and the different roles can help build trust and confidence in CPS. They also felt that greater understanding can help citizens take action to advocate for changes to the justice system.

“The police can do a good job. They can arrest the people, but it is the justice system that is so flawed and doesn’t keep people in jail long enough...What more can the police do?” – Distrust CPS

“The court systems need to do a better job, because I think that the police get really frustrated because frequently it’s like a catch and release game for them.” – Trust CPS

“Even if it was a poster, like a simple graphic that was like when you got arrested, you are here, and then you’ll be there. You’re at step one, you know, and there’s step 2, step 3, and then you’re out – like whatever that process is. If that kind of communication was broadly communicated, because if people were aware of how our judicial system worked, it would be a lot easier to enforce something, and there’ll be a lot less argument about what our rights are.” – Distrust CPS
CPS communication about crime prevention is felt to be important but participants perceived it to be lacking.

Participants noted that they rarely hear about crime prevention and almost all news is about addressing crime (reactive policing).

Crime prevention information by CPS is not easy to find. Participants mentioned that CPS has made only four posts about crime prevention tips on Instagram since October 2022.

Participants felt that information on crime prevention would build their trust in CPS and demonstrate that CPS is being proactive by thinking ahead to keep Calgary safe and avoid crime situations.

Crime prevention information that participants want to hear includes:

- Practical safety tips to prevent crime
- Youth education
- Proactive measures being taken by CPS to make Calgary safe (e.g., gangs, drugs, downtown or public transit safety)

“I think one thing that I’d like to hear from them is actually what are they doing? What are the steps that they are doing to make Calgary transit safer? What are they doing to make parts of downtown safer? What are they doing about gangs? What are they doing about the drugs and things like that? Actually, what steps they are taking? How they’re going to achieve it? What they’re going to be doing?” – Distrust CPS

“I went to the CPS Instagram to see what kind of crime prevention tips they’ve given out recently and since October 2022 they’ve made 4 posts which I don’t think is sufficient.” – Trust CPS

“If they’re actually addressing issues that I thought are important, for example, like reaching out to troubled youth or different at-risk populations. That would be definitely something that would change my perception of them.” – Distrust CPS

“Practical safety tips to prevent crime
- Youth education
- Proactive measures being taken by CPS to make Calgary safe (e.g., gangs, drugs, downtown or public transit safety)
Participants want to be kept informed but desire a more balanced mix of communications about reactive policing versus crime prevention.

**Balanced Communications**

**Reactive Policing Communications**

Too much focus on communicating reactive policing stories (e.g., murders, shootings, stabbings) makes people feel unsafe and diminishes confidence in CPS.

**Crime Prevention Communications**

Increasing communication about crime prevention (e.g., awareness, safety tips, youth education, community collaboration) will help build trust and improve perceptions CPS is proactive.

"I need a break from news, because it’s affecting my mental health. I’m having more anxiety, sometimes I’m somewhere and kind of feel like panicky.” – Distrust CPS

So, if they post these resources [safety tips] more often, and they make them more clear to the public and more accessible, I feel like it’ll help so many people prevent crimes from happening to them. Definitely builds my trust in them.” – Trust CPS
Participants would like CPS to provide them with more targeted, personally relevant information. They want to be informed about crime or safety issues that could affect “me”, “my family”, or “my community.”

Some examples of personally relevant information mentioned:

- **Major crimes or big safety issues** in my community, including when the criminals are caught
- **Top 10 crimes** in my community
- **Crime prevention tips to reduce the likelihood of becoming a victim** of one of the top 10 crimes in my community
- **Missing persons or dangerous offenders** in my community

“So, if they are to put out some sort of flyers and show people: here are the top 10 most common crimes in your area and here’s what you could be doing to prevent it.” – Trust CPS

“So, if anything happened in my area, and let’s say there was a robber on the loose. They caught him. I would love to know that. Hey! The robber in your community was caught. So, more things that directly affect me.” – Distrust CPS

The closer to the centre of the target, the more relevant information will be to me.
Participants want to be part of the solution to keep communities safe. They felt this collaboration with CPS would build community relationships and trust.

**Be Accessible in the Community**

Many participants talked about how they would like CPS to be more accessible in the community. Engaging with citizens in person builds community relationships and trust. A few participants suggested the community liaison officer was an opportunity to build trust through in-person townhall meetings, being easily accessible in the community, and providing crime and safety information relevant to the community.

“They need to engage with the community. How can they get the citizens more proactive? Yes, they get lots of complaints constantly, but what can they do to bring in the communities because we do want to help.” – Distrust CPS

**Community as Part of the Solution**

Participants want to be part of the solution. They want a collaborative relationship with CPS. How can they help?

- What can they do to help keep the community safe?
- What practical crime prevention tips can they do to prevent becoming a victim of crime?

“So instead of just coming on and telling us, okay, crime is up, this is what’s happening, this many people were shot. What can the citizens do?” – Distrust CPS

**How to Contact CPS**

Participants want to know how to contact CPS for different crimes and crises so that it is addressed in the most effective and efficient manner.

- Should they call, text, report it online, or report it in-person at a police station?
- What are the numbers to call or text for different types of crime or crises besides 911 (e.g., a mental health crisis, transit crime, drugs, property crime)?

“CPS could do a better job of promoting the alternatives to contacting them for different crimes.” – Trust CPS
Participants do not believe CPS should be responsible for handling calls for people in crisis due to mental health or addictions.

Participants do not feel CPS should be handling calls for people in crisis due to mental health and addictions. They felt CPS does not have the training needed to deal with social issues or the required manpower. It is felt that their job and training is to address and prevent crime.

Participants feel trained mental health and addictions professionals are best suited for these calls to ensure these citizens get the help they need. Many felt that this is best done through collaboration with a community social agency.

That being said, a few recognized that CPS has improved in its ability to handle these calls over time. Participants perceive that some officers have had some training to deal with mental health situations. One participant spoke of witnessing CPS’ hands off approach to talk the person in crisis down and get the person to a safe spot. Another participant spoke positively about his personal experiences with CPS when he has had mental health crises.

“I suffer from mental health issues. I was having a panic attack, and there’s an issue where I guess people were like in fear for my life, right? So, the police were called, and the guy that came in. It was only one guy, and it took forever. It was actually an ambulance that was supposed to come for me…the way he dealt with me was awesome. He was amazing. He also brought me to the hospital. He had to stay with me for probably about 3 hours… It was amazing, you know.” – Distrust CPS

“I think it’s a tough scenario again. I think that overall, I’ve seen improvement over the years, but they still need more training. Without disclosing too much information, you know that I work in a school. Sometimes children have mental health issues also, and unfortunately, police are called because it gets to a situation where physically it is not safe for the individual or people around them. I’ve witnessed the police officers really taking a hands-off approach and doing their best to kind of talk that person into a safe spot, but I think more training is always better with that.” – Trust CPS

Some kind of mental health, depending on if we are aware of what the person is on, so circumstances can be different. It could be a partner calling, or it could be a stranger, and then you wouldn’t know. But depending on the circumstance, I just don’t think that the police are even the right answer. Because they just do a really bad job. They just aggravate everything.” – Distrust CPS

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CPS PILOT PROGRAMS FOR MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTIONS CALLS

Participants feel the two pilot programs for handling mental health and addictions calls demonstrate CPS is listening to the community and are making an active effort to improve. This builds trust in CPS.

There is a **lack of awareness** about the two alternate call response pilot programs by CPS to handle calls for people in crisis due to mental health and addictions.

Once informed of the pilots, participant **response was very positive**. Learning about these programs improved perceptions of CPS because it shows they listened to community feedback and are actively trying to do better when working with marginalized populations.

Among those who trust CPS, views **were mixed on how much communication** of the pilot programs is needed. Because many feel CPS should not handle these calls, there was uncertainty about whether it is their responsibility to communicate the pilot programs.

Among those who distrust CPS, the consensus was that CPS should **widely communicate** these pilot programs to **build public perceptions and trust in CPS**.

Participants felt it is important for Calgarians to **understand where the police fit in** on these calls (if at all) and what number to call in these situations. Many hadn’t previously heard of 211 and wondered if this is the number they should be calling.

Alternative Call Response Pilot Programs for Mental Health and Addictions Calls

CPS has two pilot programs in progress:

1. 911 and 211 are co-located so calls that would be better handled by social supports instead of police are immediately diverted.

2. A team of crisis workers are sent to people in crisis instead of police officers.

“And that they’re recognizing that it’s important for them to figure out how to deal with people with mental health more effectively and efficiently than doing what they have done in the past. So, I think for them saying that they’re doing that (pilot programs), I think that that’s a really, really great step forward.”

– Distrust CPS
Perceptions of CPS

Consistent with the findings from the 2021 Citizen Consultations, we heard some Indigenous participants fear CPS, don’t feel safe, avoid the police, and that encounters with CPS trigger physical and mental responses associated with trauma.

“Even if I just have a Calgary police car behind me, I’m sweating bullets... I have this little card. It’s like a little business card-sized card, and it’s folded over, and it’s from the Native Counselling Association of Alberta. And it’s kind of like a primer or a tip on how to deal with police, what you’re supposed to say, and what they can or cannot do legally in theory, but I don’t know. It’s terrifying to me that I have to carry this card with me to try to defend myself, or so that I won’t become another statistic.” – Distrust CPS

“There’s deep rooted racism towards minority groups. And that’s just my experience. And I just believe that is the case. There’s a lot of slang on the street that the police have their own street justice as well... I think that it’s not safe, because we can’t trust them to follow their own rules. And that needs to be addressed... And it links to not keeping Calgarians safe.” – Distrust CPS

Perceived Lack of Communication, Transparency, and Collaboration

Indigenous participants spoke about their turbulent relationship with systems of authority and steps CPS has taken towards Indigenous truth and reconciliation. However, concerns were voiced by participants about a perceived lack of transparency, communication, and collaboration.

“In terms of my experience, I’m Indigenous. And so, my community has a long and turbulent relationship with systems of authority. When I look at it, I noticed that last year, they appointed one new job for a lady that would be designated as an investigator for missing and murdered, indigenous woman. One person, and that’s a great start. But I feel that in a sense, maybe not. There’s not a lot of transparency in communications on that. Been over a year, and what is she doing? What’s happened? What are some of the projects that she’s given the control, the power to enact things that need to be enacted now that she’s had some time of observation in the role. Where’s the collaboration?” – Distrust CPS

“We do have outreach groups that are prominent and have been prominent for decades, but they have never been approached in terms of collaboration.” – Distrust CPS
ACCOUNTABILITY OF POLICE ACTIONS

Participants want CPS to improve its communication and transparency about police misconduct.

Communication of police misconduct gets a failing grade from many participants.

Most participants feel CPS is not transparent about police misconduct and accountability is lacking.

CPS is perceived to close ranks to protect the officer. When CPS closes rank, participants feel it alludes to that CPS is hiding information - that there is more going on they don’t want citizens to know about.

To ramp up trust, citizens would like more visibility into the process and better communication of the outcomes including disciplinary actions taken.

“Another person who had been a CPS member who was sending women inappropriate photographs on social media. He just got reassigned to Youth link, which is the CPS division for people under 18. So, I think they like to hide those kind of blemishes.” – Trust CPS

“I would just like to speak about misuse, because we have the organization called ASIRT that investigates police action and police shootings. But I watched a program not too long ago where there might have been 50 or 60 cases presented and that maybe only 3 officers got charged. So, it’s kind of like the police do something that they shouldn’t have done and it’s like a cover-up.” – Distrust CPS

“There’s big corruption in the justice system. They have laws in place, or I guess, friends in high places that protect them from these scandals because they definitely want to protect their reputation. And I would like more transparency, because I think if they are letting these things go unnoticed, or if they’re letting corruption happen in the Calgary Police Service, there’s a lot more going on that we don’t know about and they’re just pushing it under the rug.” – Trust CPS

Communication of the CPS budget and policing priorities is less of a priority for participants.

Availability of information on budgets and police priorities demonstrates accountability and transparency by CPS.

- Communicating these topics via media sources like TV, radio and social media 1-2X a year would meet participant needs.

- Participants felt this information should always be accessible online for citizens if they want to look at it.
ADVICE FROM PARTICIPANTS
**HOW TO COMMUNICATE**

Participants mentioned repeatedly that CPS communications need to use citizen friendly language and be quick and easy to understand.

**USE PLAIN LANGUAGE**
- **Use plain language** at no higher than a grade 8 readability level, the recommended readability level for content for the general public\(^1\).
- **Avoid policing jargon**, which may not be readily understood by Calgarians.

**VISUALIZE CONTENT**
- Visualize ideas to help Calgarians “**see**” what you are saying.
- Use **diagrams** and/or data to quickly convey what is important.
- Participants like one-pagers such as **posters** and **infographics** that make it quick and easy to understand key messages. These can be posted both online and in public places such as transit stations, recreational centres, and libraries to extend the reach of the communications.

**BE AUTHENTIC AND BELIEVABLE**
- **Build in the human element** into communications (e.g., pictures, stories).
- Perception is reality so **make it believable** (e.g., show proof, acknowledge differences between Calgary overall and by community).

**COMMUNICATE MESSAGES QUICKLY**
- **Boil content down to its essence** to make it fast and easy for Calgarians to understand the message.
- **Keep it simple and concise**.
- **Chunk content** in a logical way so it is easy to follow (e.g., steps, key facts).
- **Avoid lengthy written reports** and articles. Participants talked about how life is busy, and they don’t have time to consume a large amount of content.

“Maybe in a public library. When passing by, there could be infographics about what the police are doing. So, I guess, like, just how they convey the message would have a huge impact.” – Distrust CPS

“Put out more posters that are easy to understand, because nobody really has the time to read that much.” – Distrust CPS

“It’s just a really good idea to make it feel a little more personal, because some people will respond to that better than a CTV news report.” – Trust CPS

**Source:** 1 https://www.canada.ca/en/treasury-board-secretariat/services/government-communications/canada-content-style-guide.html

Photo by Lisa on Adobe
**THE HUMAN ELEMENT**

Building in a “human” element to how CPS is perceived is an opportunity to help build trust in the community.

Participants talked about CPS building a human face and personality for the Service. They believe this would improve perceptions of CPS character and help make CPS appear more “human,” personable, approachable, and genuine.

The “face” would need to be a reputable person(s). Partnering with a third party (civilian who is not a CPS employee) was an idea to be the bridge between the police and the community (e.g., weekly or bi-weekly podcasts or press conferences with the same two faces: CPS member and third-party civilian). This “duo” could become the source for trustworthy information on crime, safety, and policing in Calgary. City Councillors were not perceived to be a good partner.

Participants also would like CPS to acknowledge when they make mistakes. Admitting mistakes in a timely manner can improve perceptions of CPS and help show the human element.

1. **Acknowledge the mistake** as soon as possible.
2. Explain how you are going to address it.
3. Describe what you will do differently in the future.

“It’s like this is what’s happening. These are the things that we’re working on. These are our goals. This is what we’ve heard from the people. Like a name and a face that you can just always go to and trust that they’re giving you the real information. And I think an update every couple of weeks would probably be great, especially when things aren’t going so well in the city, and things are happening.” – Distrust CPS

“There’s this one police officer that I know that has a social media account. I think they’re based out of the United States. But they do like quick little video-based content. And it makes this particular police force seem a lot more personable because you get the perspective of individual police officers. So, I feel like, I don’t know. Maybe that is an option to kind of just bring a face and a personality to the organization.” – Trust CPS

“I think if they were to produce a podcast, it’d be nice to have somebody that’s unbiased doing the podcast. So, I don’t know how that would work, but maybe, like a third party that could be the bridge between the police and the community.” – Distrust CPS

“Mistakes happen, you know. So, when that happens, I would also want to know, and I want to see the human element of all that as well you know. Just like okay, we tried to do this, and it wasn’t successful. What we did is the wrong way, and you know, resulted in this. So, we’re sorry, apologies, all that. We’ll take better actions and the next steps to ensure this doesn’t happen again.” – Trust CPS

Photo by Igor Krylov on Unsplash
COMMUNICATION CHANNELS

Communication through a wider variety of channels is needed to reach the diverse segments of Calgary’s population.

Participants feel CPS needs to use a wider variety of channels to reach more Calgarians with its communications. News via TV, radio, newspaper, and social media are the primary channels through which participants currently learn about crime and safety in Calgary. Very few mentioned using CPS online sources.

For participants who use social media, it was felt that social media sources of information are more likely to need verification through other sources (e.g., google it, check other news sources). Younger participants felt social media was the best method to reach them and that Facebook is felt to be more multi-generational than other social media sites.

To maximize reach, participants suggested that some information about crime and safety could be communicated through posters or infographics at public places (e.g., c-train stations, libraries, recreation centres). Posters and infographics may be useful for information such as crime prevention tips and how to communicate different crimes to the police.

More traditional methods like paper flyers and in-person townhall meetings with the community liaison officer were suggested as opportunities to reach older citizens and/or those who don’t use social media.
We would like to thank the participants and the moderator for participating in this research.

This report will be used by the Calgary Police Commission and CPS to help inform actions to improve communications and trust in the Calgary Police Service.
For any further inquiries about CRIC and our research practices, please contact Illumina’s President & CEO, Yvonne Brouwers, at ybrouwers@illuminaresearch.com.

Research Sponsor

The 2023 Community Perceptions research was sponsored and funded by the Calgary Police Commission.

The research was conducted by Illumina Research Partners with the support of Gagan Sharma who moderated the online focus groups and Decision Point research who recruited the participants.

Questions Asked

The screener and discussion guide are in the appendix.

Research Method

Qualitative research was conducted to gather in-depth perspectives from a small number (26) of Calgarians.

Four online focus groups via Zoom were conducted over a two-week period in April 2023.

Citizens were recruited and screened to represent a diverse group of citizens (see next page for detailed screening criteria) that included a mix of age, gender, and cultural backgrounds.

Topics covered in the focus groups included:
- Trust in Calgary Police Service (CPS)
- Recall of communications about CPS (e.g., top of mind recall, sources of recall, best ways for CPS to communicate with citizens)
- Four CPS communications topic areas to understand what participants want to hear from CPS, are they getting the information they want to hear, and the impact of these communications on trust and perceptions of CPS.
  1. Addressing crime
  2. Crime prevention
  3. Handling calls involving people in crisis due to mental health or addictions
  4. Transparency and accountability of police actions

About Qualitative Research

Qualitative research gathers in-depth insights from participants to give decision-makers a more complete understanding of their perceptions and the reasons behind their assessments. Participants are able to express viewpoints and experiences without being constrained to a pre-set scale.

Discussions are moderator-led, monitored, informal interactions that permit in-depth probing of participants to understand different perspectives and why people feel or behave a certain way. Thoughts and feelings are expressed in the participants’ own words and at their own levels of passion.

Success is measured by the quality of responses and depth of information obtained, not by the number of participants. Qualitative research is valuable as a means of capturing a range of opinions, rather than as a means for counting opinions.

Results of qualitative research are not statistically projectable to the population at large.
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The Participants

Participants for the four online focus groups were recruited via an online screener survey (see next page) from a professional market research online general population panel. Participants represented a diverse group of Calgary citizens that included:

- A mix of gender and ages
- Visible minorities
- LGBTQIA+ citizens
- A mix of communities in Calgary
- Individuals who have had contact with CPS in past 12 months and those who have not
- New immigrants to Canada within the past 5 years
- A mix of self-identified ethnic/cultural backgrounds
  - African
  - Arab
  - Canadian/North American
  - Caribbean
  - Chinese
  - English/Irish/Scottish
  - Filipino
  - French
  - Indigenous
  - South Asian

Participant Screening Criteria

Respondents had to meet the following criteria to qualify for the online community perceptions focus groups.

- Live within the City of Calgary
- Adult (18+, mix of ages)
- Not work for the Calgary Police Service
- Not a member of the Calgary Police Commission, CPS Advisory Board, or CPS Anti-Racism Action Committee

Additional criteria were used to ensure a diverse mix of Calgarians participated including:

- Different genders
- Visible minority representation
- New immigrants to Canada (past 5 years)
- People who have had contact with a CPS in the past 12 months and those who have not; contact could include in-person, email, telephone, following CPS on social media

Along with demographic screening criteria, participants rated how much they agree or disagree with the following statement using a 10-point scale:

“The Calgary Police Service is a police service I trust”

Participants who gave a rating between 7-10 were part of the two ‘Trust CPS’ focus groups held on April 12 and 13, 2023.

Participants who gave a rating between 1-6 were part of the two ‘Do not Trust CPS’ focus groups held on April 19 and 20, 2023.
RECRUITMENT GUIDE

2023 Community Perceptions Recruitment Guide

**Project Name:** 2023 Calgary Community Perceptions Focus Groups

**Sample Sources:** Illumina will work with a partner who specializes in research with diverse ethnic populations. They will target potential participants, screen them to identify their eligibility, gather participant information, and schedule them into focus groups.

**Duration:** 2-hour online focus group discussion

**Online Focus Group Dates & Time:** A total of four (4) focus groups will be conducted online, two (2) with citizens who trust the Calgary Police Service and two (2) with citizens who do not trust the Calgary Police Service.

**Language:** English

**Recruit:** Recruit 7 for “do participate per focus group

**Incentive:** $20 per hour. Recruitment partner to coordinate payment of incentives.

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**Criteria**

To be eligible, participants must:

- Be 18 years of age or older
- Be resident within the City of Calgary
- Be able to attend an online focus group via smartphone, tablet, or computer using Zoom or video conference
- Cannot work for the Calgary Police Service
- Cannot be a member of the Calgary Police Commission, Police Advisory Board, or police Anti-Racism Action Committee

**GROUPS 1 & 2:**

- **Trust the policing service (rate 7-10)** and represent a mix of ages, gender, cultural groups, and contact/contact with CPS.

**GROUPS 1 & 2:**

- **Trust the policing service (rate 5-6)** and represent a mix of ages, gender, cultural groups, and contact/contact with CPS.

For each group, record participant information:

- Age
- Gender
- Whether identifiable as a visible minority
- Cultural group
- Level of interaction with the Calgary Police Service
- Calgary community ties
- How long living in Calgary and Canada
- Sources of information about the Calgary Police Service
- Level of engagement in research

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**INTRODUCTION**

Hello, my name is [RECRUITER NAME]. I’m calling from [RECRUITER ORG] and we are currently recruiting for an online focus group discussion on behalf of the Calgary Police Commission. The Calgary Police Commission has a group of 24 citizen volunteers and two city councillors who provide oversight and governance around the Calgary Police Service’s community safety initiatives.

The topic of the focus group discussion will be the impact of communications and transparency on trust in the police. We are conducting these online focus groups because the 2022 Citizen Satisfaction Survey showed that trust in the Calgary Police Service has significantly declined. Furthermore, citizens’ increased communication with the police is one of the top areas for improvement.

Your participation is completely voluntary. This is a live, real-time, online discussion group where you will login and participate through video. It will last two hours.

A thank you letter from CPPD will be issued at the end of the session to thank you for your time and participation in the group discussion. We will be recording the video for research purposes. All personal information collected including your name, contact information, and the discussion recording are confidential and will not be shared publicly or with the Calgary Police Service or the Calgary Police Commission. Results will only be reported aggregate form.

A representative from the Calgary Police Commission may attend and listen to the group discussion. We want to ensure that you that the Calgary Police Commission representative is a citizen of Calgary and is not a police officer or an employee of the Calgary Police Service.

We have a few questions to confirm that you are eligible for this study.

A. Are you or anyone in your household currently employed...
   - [ ] By the Calgary Police Service [TAKE & TERMINATE]
   - [ ] In market research [TAKE & TERMINATE]
   - [ ] In any media or advertising [TAKE & TERMINATE]

B. Are you or anyone in your household currently a member of the Calgary Police Commission?
   - [ ] Yes [TAKE & TERMINATE]
   - [ ] No [CONTINUE]

C. Are you currently a member of a...
   - [ ] Calgary Police Service’s Advisory Board [TAKE & TERMINATE]
   - [ ] Calgary Police Services Anti-Racism Action Committee [TAKE & TERMINATE]

[TERMINATE: Thank you for your interest in participating in these focus groups. We would like to talk to community members that we would not normally hear from.]

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ILLUMINA RESEARCH PARTNERS

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RECRUITMENT GUIDE

D. Do you currently reside within the City of Calgary?
[ ] Yes
[ ] No

E. What is the name of the community where you live?
[ ] [LOCATION] COMMUNITY

F. Are you...?
[ ] AM FOR A GOOD MIX PER GROUP — NO MORE THAN 4 OR 7 RECRUITED PER GROUP OF THE SAME GENDER.
[ ] Male
[ ] Female
[ ] Prefer not to specify
[ ] Prefer self-labeling

G. May I have your exact age?
[ ] Under 18
[ ] 18–34
[ ] 35–54
[ ] 55+

H. How long have you lived in the City of Calgary?
[ ] Less than one year
[ ] 1–5 years
[ ] 6–10 years
[ ] More than 10 years

I. How long have you lived in Canada?
[ ] Less than 5 years
[ ] 5 years or less than 10 years
[ ] 5 years or more than 10 years
[ ] More than 10 years

J. Are you currently in Canada?
[ ] Yes
[ ] No

K. Do you consider yourself to be a member of a visible minority group?
[ ] Yes
[ ] No

L. Based on your experiences or just your general impressions, how much do you think that "the Calgary Police Service is a police service that I trust?" Please use a scale where 1 is "Strongly Disagree" and 5 is "Strongly Agree."

The Calgary Police Service is a police service trust.

[ ] 1 – Strongly Disagree
[ ] 2
[ ] 3
[ ] 4
[ ] 5

M. Next, we would like to know if you have had any contact with the Calgary Police Service in the past 24 months. You could be contacted as an officer or as an officer in disguise. This does not include the RCMP, parking control, bylaw officers, or transit officers. Have you...

[ ] Had a personal contact with the Calgary Police Service?
[ ] Had a telephone contact with the Calgary Police Service?
[ ] Had an email contact with the Calgary Police Service?
[ ] Used online police services through the website (e.g., report a crime, request a rental check)
[ ] Followed the Calgary Police Service on social media (e.g., Facebook, Instagram, Twitter)
[ ] No contact at all

N. When was the last time you were in contact with the Calgary Police Service? You would have been in person, telephone, and/or online contact. This does not include contact with the RCMP, parking control, bylaw officers, transit officers, or calling 911.

[ ] 1 to 2 years ago
[ ] [ ] 2 to 3 years ago
[ ] [ ] 3 to 4 years ago
[ ] [ ] 4 to 5 years ago
[ ] [ ] 5 years or more
RECRUITMENT GUIDE

1. Are you available to attend (INSERT GROUP DATE AND TIME)?

   - Group: 1 April 12 from 6pm - 8pm
   - Group 2: 13 April 9pm - 11pm

   [CONTINUE TO CONTACT INFO]

2. Do you trust CPS?

   - Group: 1 April 12 from 6pm - 8pm
   - Group 2: 13 April 9pm - 11pm

   [CONTINUE TO CONTACT INFO]

3. Are you available to attend (INSERT GROUP DATE AND TIME)?

   - Group: 1 April 12 from 6pm - 8pm
   - Group 2: 13 April 9pm - 11pm

   [CONTINUE TO CONTACT INFO]

4. Do NOT trust CPS?

   - Group: 1 April 12 from 6pm - 8pm
   - Group 2: 13 April 9pm - 11pm

   [CONTINUE TO CONTACT INFO]

5. Are you available to attend (INSERT GROUP DATE AND TIME)?

   - Group: 1 April 12 from 6pm - 8pm
   - Group 2: 13 April 9pm - 11pm

   [CONTINUE TO CONTACT INFO]

6. Do NOT trust CPS?

   - Group: 1 April 12 from 6pm - 8pm
   - Group 2: 13 April 9pm - 11pm

   [CONTINUE TO CONTACT INFO]

7. Are you available to attend (INSERT GROUP DATE AND TIME)?

   - Group: 1 April 12 from 6pm - 8pm
   - Group 2: 13 April 9pm - 11pm

   [CONTINUE TO CONTACT INFO]

8. Are you available to attend (INSERT GROUP DATE AND TIME)?

   - Group: 1 April 12 from 6pm - 8pm
   - Group 2: 13 April 9pm - 11pm

   [CONTINUE TO CONTACT INFO]

9. Are you available to attend (INSERT GROUP DATE AND TIME)?

   - Group: 1 April 12 from 6pm - 8pm
   - Group 2: 13 April 9pm - 11pm

   [CONTINUE TO CONTACT INFO]

10. Are you available to attend (INSERT GROUP DATE AND TIME)?

    - Group: 1 April 12 from 6pm - 8pm
    - Group 2: 13 April 9pm - 11pm

    [CONTINUE TO CONTACT INFO]

11. Are you available to attend (INSERT GROUP DATE AND TIME)?

    - Group: 1 April 12 from 6pm - 8pm
    - Group 2: 13 April 9pm - 11pm

    [CONTINUE TO CONTACT INFO]

12. Are you available to attend (INSERT GROUP DATE AND TIME)?

    - Group: 1 April 12 from 6pm - 8pm
    - Group 2: 13 April 9pm - 11pm

    [CONTINUE TO CONTACT INFO]

13. Are you available to attend (INSERT GROUP DATE AND TIME)?

    - Group: 1 April 12 from 6pm - 8pm
    - Group 2: 13 April 9pm - 11pm

    [CONTINUE TO CONTACT INFO]

14. Are you available to attend (INSERT GROUP DATE AND TIME)?

    - Group: 1 April 12 from 6pm - 8pm
    - Group 2: 13 April 9pm - 11pm

    [CONTINUE TO CONTACT INFO]

15. Are you available to attend (INSERT GROUP DATE AND TIME)?

    - Group: 1 April 12 from 6pm - 8pm
    - Group 2: 13 April 9pm - 11pm

    [CONTINUE TO CONTACT INFO]

16. Are you available to attend (INSERT GROUP DATE AND TIME)?

    - Group: 1 April 12 from 6pm - 8pm
    - Group 2: 13 April 9pm - 11pm

    [CONTINUE TO CONTACT INFO]

17. Are you available to attend (INSERT GROUP DATE AND TIME)?

    - Group: 1 April 12 from 6pm - 8pm
    - Group 2: 13 April 9pm - 11pm

    [CONTINUE TO CONTACT INFO]

18. Are you available to attend (INSERT GROUP DATE AND TIME)?

    - Group: 1 April 12 from 6pm - 8pm
    - Group 2: 13 April 9pm - 11pm

    [CONTINUE TO CONTACT INFO]

19. Are you available to attend (INSERT GROUP DATE AND TIME)?

    - Group: 1 April 12 from 6pm - 8pm
    - Group 2: 13 April 9pm - 11pm

    [CONTINUE TO CONTACT INFO]

20. Are you available to attend (INSERT GROUP DATE AND TIME)?

    - Group: 1 April 12 from 6pm - 8pm
    - Group 2: 13 April 9pm - 11pm

    [CONTINUE TO CONTACT INFO]
Calgary Police Commission - 2023 Community Perceptions Online Focus Groups
Moderator’s Discussion Guide

Overview of Focus Group Discussion

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<td>a. Open-ended questions</td>
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<td>b. What is the impact of these communications?</td>
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6. Wrap-up and Check-out
- Any additional thoughts or feedback?
- Thank you and overview of next steps

- What citizens want to hear, are they hearing what they want, what is missing, and impact on feelings about CPS
- Do you feel CPS is transparent in its communications to the community about police actions? How does that affect you?
- Do you want to hear from CPS about police actions? What is missing? How might CPS improve?
- Do you feel CPS is accessible to the community in its communications? How might CPS improve?
I L L U M I N A  R E S E A R C H  P A R T N E R S

DISCUSSION GUIDE

1. PREAMBLE / INTRODUCTION / WARM-UP

Moderator introduction: thank you for participating in this study, rules and roles: we vested interest; confidentiality (no names, voices, or images will be released publicly or to CPS or the Commission), no right or wrong answers, sharing and recognizing differences in opinion, observers from Illumina Research Partners and the Calgary Police Commission, video recorded.

Online focus group questions: no background noise, turn off phone and notifications on computers, moderator will help make sure everyone takes turns talking.

Goal today is to better understand your perspective - who you are, what you think and how you feel about the topics we will be discussing. We want to hear from everyone today.

The Calgary Police Commission would like your in-depth feedback on the topics of trust in the Calgary Police Service and the impact of communications and transparency on trust in the police.

I would like you to answer the questions based on your own impressions. It could be based on something you’ve seen, heard, something you’ve experienced, or it might just be based on your gut feeling. Any of these types of answers are okay.

INTRODUCTION OF OBSERVERS

Illumina Research Partners, an independent third-party research company, who will be listening to the discussion and writing the final report for the Calgary Police Commission. Angela may jump in occasionally to ask a question for clarification.

To begin with, we would like to hear a little bit about whom you are. Could you introduce yourself and tell me a little about yourself and share something that you’ve done or experienced that you’re proud of?

2. TRUST IN CALGARY POLICE SERVICE

The first few minutes of our discussion today is going to be on understanding how you feel about the Calgary Police Service (CPS).

To begin, I would like you to give me a few words or a phrase you would use to describe how you feel about CPS. Again, this may be based on something you’ve seen, heard, experienced or just an gut feeling.

What words/phrase? Tell me who you chose that?

PROBES IF A PERSONAL EXPERIENCE:
- Can you tell me a little more about your experience?
- How long ago was this experience?
- Have you had any experiences with CPS since then?
  - If YES: Have these experiences changed your impression of them? How so?

PROBES FROM WHAT MAKES US SEE MEDIA OR FAMILY/FRIENDS:
- Tell me about what you recall.
- What was it that made you feel this way about CPS?
- Where did you hear/see this? (e.g., TV, radio, social media, from a friend or family member)
  - If TV OR RADIO: Who was speaking (e.g., Police Chief, a police officer, a newspaper, etc.)?
  - If SOCIAL MEDIA: What social media site did you see it on? Was it a CPS social media site? Which one?

Was your trust in the Calgary Police Service changed over the past year, if at all?
- What has changed? Would you say it’s better, worse or the same?
- And what if I asked you a bit further back? Maybe three years ago? Same or different impression? What caused the change?

3. AWARENESS AND RECALL OF COMMUNICATIONS ABOUT CPS

[Moderator Note: The following topics are NOT to be a focus of discussion in the group. Please steer conversation away from these topics as they are not within CPS control]
- Release of body-worn camera data to the public - there are court standards around confidentiality (court issue)
- Police public relations strategy (not a focus)

- The length of time for police misconduct investigations, court rulings against officers charged with a criminal offence, and not bringing officers are all things outside of the Services’ control as they are dictated by the courts and province.

Thank you for sharing your experiences about the Calgary Police Service. For the rest of our discussion today, we are going to focus on CPS communications and transparency.

Dry run recall testing, asking, or hearing about policing, crime, or safety in Calgary? What comes to mind?

[Moderator Note: Ideal is to hear different topics that rise to the top of citizen minds as these topics likely are influencing their perceptions of trust in CPS. It doesn’t mean how long ago they heard it. We also want to get a sense where they get their information about CPS and how trustworthy they feel those sources are.]
- From where do you hear/read this information about the Calgary Police Service?
  - E.g., TV, radio, Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, etc.
- Do you trust the information you hear from this source? Why or why not?
- Do you trust the information you hear from this source? Why or why not?

What’s the best way for the Calgary Police Service to communicate with you?

We just talked about what you recall hearing about policing, crime, and safety in Calgary.

Now, I’d like to know the top three things you WANT to hear about from Calgary Police Service?

Thank you for sharing that information. For this discussion we are going to focus on 3 topics. The first topic is about addressing and preventing crime.
4. ADDRESSING AND PREVENTING CRIME

[MODERATOR NOTE: WHAT THE COMMISSION WANTS TO KNOW: Do participants trust that the service is competent at arresting and charging people who have committed an offence, and preventing future criminal behaviour? Do participants feel that the service does a good job of making the community feel safer?]

PROBES:
- Tell me more about that.
- Let’s focus on... (a particular aspect of the service).
- What areas would you say that the service does well in making the community feel safer?
- What areas do you think could be improved?
- [ADRESSING CRIME]
  - How important is it to you that the service provides timely and effective responses to calls for service?
  - How well do you think the service is doing in terms of... (e.g., responding to calls, investigating crimes, etc.)?

5. MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTIONS

[MODERATOR NOTE: WHAT THE COMMISSION WANTS TO KNOW: Do participants feel that the service is competent in handling calls involving people in crisis due to mental health or addiction, and do they feel that the service is doing a good job of making the community feel safer?]
DISCUSSION GUIDE

7. WRAP-UP AND CHECK-OUT

Do you have any additional thoughts or feedback that you haven’t had a chance to share yet?

CHECK IN WITH ANY OBSERVER FOR QUESTIONS.

THANK AND CLOSE
- Thank participants for participation
- Incentives will be sent to you via transfer or by mail based on your answers when you agreed to participate in these discussions.

6. ACCOUNTABILITY OF POLICE ACTIONS TO THE COMMUNITY

We have one last topic we would like to discuss today.

[MODERATOR NOTE ABOUT WHAT THE COMMISSION WANTS TO KNOW: Do participants believe that the police are transparent and accountable to the community? Why or why not? How does the service’s communication on various topics (budgets, misconduct, use of force, street checks, policing priorities, etc.) impact their trust levels?

NOTE: Misconduct and use of force will likely come up organically earlier in the focus group discussions.]

○ Do you feel CPS communicates well about police actions that includes budgets, policing priorities, and street checks? How so? What makes you feel this way?
○ Is there any information you aren’t getting about police actions that you would want to know?
○ How could the CPS improve the transparency of their communication?
○ Thinking about everything that we’ve talked about today, how might CPS improve its communication to be more accountable to the community?
○ How might that change your impression of them? You would go from feeling ________ about them to ________? What would cause that shift?
ILLUMINA IS AN ACCREDITED RESEARCH AGENCY WITH THE RESPECTED CANADIAN RESEARCH INSIGHTS COUNCIL (CRIC).

THE SEAL RECOGNIZES MEMBERS WHO HAVE MADE THE HIGHEST COMMITMENT TO FOLLOW BEST PRACTICES AND ADHERE TO WORLD-LEADING STANDARDS AND ETHICS IN MARKET RESEARCH, ANALYTICS AND INSIGHTS.

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