



# Stanton Report Fall Update 2025 - British Columbia legal system's treatment of intimate partner and sexual violence

In May 2024 the Attorney General appointed Dr. Kim Stanton to conduct an independent review of the Province's treatment of victims and survivors of intimate partner and sexual violence in the legal system, and to propose improvements. Dr. Stanton released her [Final Report](#) (the Report) in June 2025. The Report confirms what we've been hearing from survivors and frontline advocates for years—intimate partner and sexual violence remain pervasive, drastically underreported, and often met with systemic barriers in the legal system. In short, intimate partner and sexual violence are a systemic crisis.

Since the release of the Report, numerous individuals and service providers have reached out to government expressing gratitude to Dr. Stanton and her work, providing feedback, identifying priorities, and offering to lend their support and resources to ensure this Report leads to action.

In addition to providing a powerful roadmap for change, the Report has had a profound effect in bringing together government, the anti-violence sector, and others with a renewed spirit to collaborate and take meaningful action.

The Attorney General asked Dr. Stanton how to break through the barriers that stood in the way of change, and she answered with a clear roadmap containing 21 recommendations to address systemic and legal barriers. The Province has advanced work related to 13 of those recommendations, including three key priority actions:

- 1) the establishment of a new comprehensive and coherent provincial policy framework that offers clear guidance to all actors within the legal system—including those who support survivors—while upholding the necessary independence of each role and promoting coordination and collaboration.

- 94% of sexual assaults are not reported to police.
- 80% of intimate partner violence is not reported to police.
- In British Columbia, more than one third (37%) of women have been sexually assaulted since the age of 15.
- Nearly half (48%) of women in British Columbia have experienced intimate partner violence since the age of 15.

These and more statistics are referenced in the Report at page 13 and Appendix 1.



- 2) As called for by Dr. Stanton and advocates, a key focus will be on implementing timely, appropriate, and standardized screening, risks assessment, and safety planning in both criminal and family court processes. These assessments will centre survivor safety across all actors in B.C.'s legal system.
- 3) The creation of an ongoing internal government mechanism to ensure that the persistent and pervasive issues of intimate partner and sexual violence are addressed in the short, medium, and long term.

Government has also responded to all four steps the Report recommended be taken in the immediate term to move forward implementation of the Report's recommendations.

Improving how B.C.'s legal systems respond to sexual and intimate partner violence is at the core of the Province's work and we have made progress acting on many of Dr. Stanton's recommendations across government. We know there is still more to be done. We look forward to continuing to work alongside our partners to address many of the remaining recommendations to realize our shared vision of a B.C. legal system that supports and protects survivors.

See the end of this update for a breakdown of the current and planned actions against the Implementation Plan and a Progress Report on the steps taken mapped to the recommendations.

Going forward, public facing Annual Reports will be released and regular updates will be provided on the progress of implementing the recommendations contained in the Report, as well as ongoing efforts to address intimate partner and sexual violence.



## Approach

The Attorney General asked Dr. Stanton how to break through the barriers that stood in the way of change, and she answered with a clear roadmap containing 21 recommendations to address systemic and legal barriers. In addition to those 21 recommendations, the report includes several more observations and insights on where to make improvements. Furthermore, the Report includes distinct steps to implement the Report.

Sexual violence and intimate partner violence (IPV) are forms of gender-based violence (GBV). This Update contains the terms sexual violence, intimate partner violence, and gender-based violence. When gender-based violence is used, it is intended to specifically mean sexual and intimate partner violence.

Government is committed to following through on the work started by the Attorney General when she commissioned the Review. The steps toward implementation are set out on pages 158 and 159 of the Report. A table at the end of this Update sets out the actions that have been taken or are in progress against those steps toward implementation. Aspects of the Report may require a modified approach or take longer than Dr. Stanton envisioned. To address the issues raised in the Report, and in consideration of fiscal constraints, immediate work will focus on actions that revive cross-sector collaboration and reinforce a shared commitment to addressing intimate partner and sexual violence. These efforts will focus on establishing a robust foundation built on shared vision, new and updated policy, coordinated action, and clear accountability, while continuing to support existing programs and initiatives and remaining responsive to emerging opportunities.

The work of responding to the Report is being led by Justice Services Branch in the Ministry of Attorney General. Justice Services Branch is working with lead ministries to link up new and existing initiatives in response to the Report. Two groups have been established to provide cross-government and cross-sector leadership, both led by Justice Services Branch: an Action Committee of senior leadership within the ministries of Attorney General, Public Safety and Solicitor General, Finance, Children and Family Development, and Health, as well as a Reference Group of leaders of provincial organizations supporting front line services to survivors, or providing province wide supports. Together, these groups will work to address the systemic barriers identified in the Report and advance the recommendations and observations, as well as identify other opportunities for positive change. There will be regular opportunities to bring the Action Committee and the Reference Group together beginning in the new year.

- Action Committee  
Cross-Government Leadership**
- AG – Justice Services Branch
  - AG – BC Prosecution Services
  - AG – Indigenous Justice Secretariat
  - PSSG – Community Safety and Victim Services
  - PSSG – Policing and Security Branch
  - PSSG – BC Corrections
  - PSSG – BC Coroners Service
  - FIN – Gender Equity Office
  - MCFD – Policy, Legislation and Litigation
  - HLTH - Population and Public Health

- Reference Group  
Anti-Violence Sector Leadership**
- Ending Violence Association of BC (EVA BC)
  - BC Society of Transition Houses (BCSTH)
  - Rise Women’s Legal Centre
  - Police-Based Victim Services (PBVS)
  - Indigenous Justice Centres (IJs)
  - BC Association of Aboriginal Friendship Centres
  - BC Network of Child and Youth Advocacy Centres Society

In addition to these formal governance structures, the special project team will regularly report to and seek advice and guidance from existing advisory groups and councils. This includes the Parliamentary Secretary for Gender Equity’s Gender-based Violence Action Plan Advisory Committee (GBV Advisory Committee), the Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation’s Minister’s Council on Indigenous Women (MACIW), and the Community Coordination for Survivor Safety (CCSS) Provincial Working Group (hosted by EVA BC). Further, there will be ongoing opportunities for dialogue and engagement with subject matter experts, service providers, and individuals with lived experience on specific themes and initiatives as the work progresses.

The Attorney General has engaged with her colleagues across government and stressed her commitment to action and the need for a whole-of-government response. Public facing Annual Reports will be released. Regular updates will be provided to the GBV Advisory Committee, MACIW, and CCSS on the progress of implementing the recommendations contained in the Report, as well as ongoing efforts to address intimate partner and sexual violence.

“It is fundamental to accountability that people understand their roles and responsibilities in addressing a complex challenge such as gender-based violence.” —The Report, Page 95



## Priority actions

The Action Committee’s review of the Report highlighted three recurring themes across both systemic challenges and legal system issues. First, the urgent need for clear, up-to-date policy guidance to support those responding to intimate partner and sexual violence. Second, the need for timely, appropriate, and standardized screening, risks assessment, and safety planning in both criminal and family court processes. And third, the importance of strong accountability and leadership to ensure the Report’s recommendations are implemented and to drive coordinated efforts to prevent and address such violence. The Action Committee has identified these as the three priority actions moving forward.

### Provincial policy framework

Dr. Stanton concluded that, although British Columbia has strong laws and policies in place, they are not always applied or followed consistently. The Report also highlights several areas for improvement and emphasizes the need for clear, up-to-date, and comprehensive policies that are effectively implemented and routinely monitored. Among its key recommendations are the development of an updated Violence Against Women in Relationships (VAWR) policy the establishment of a provincial sexual assault policy, and, as may be needed, revisions to various policy components—including Crown Counsel guidelines and police standards and protocols.

Advancing this priority will involve updating existing policies, identifying gaps, and developing new policies where necessary. The goal is to establish a comprehensive and coherent policy framework that offers clear guidance to all actors within the legal system—including those who support survivors—while upholding the necessary independence of each role and promoting coordination and collaboration.

“It is critical to ensure that institutional actors follow the policy. If those covered by a well grounded policy do their work in accordance with that policy, the situation of survivors can be immediately improved. Many of the barriers that survivors face are created not by policies but by the failure of institutional actors to act according to the spirit of those policies.”  
—The Report, page 98

Several policy areas require collaboration across sectors to be effectively addressed.

A series of topic-specific roundtable sessions are being planned to take a closer look at what is working well and where improvements are needed. These sessions will bring together government and key community partners to review current policies, assess how they align with



real-world experiences and research, and collaboratively identify opportunities for meaningful change that will benefit both survivors and service providers. Insights gathered from these discussions will help shape the development of the policy framework. The first roundtable session will address calls of standardized risk assessment and will explore violence screening, risk identification, and safety planning processes within different points in the system. The policy and design work for this roundtable has begun and the session is anticipated in the new year.

The Report emphasizes that strong policy alone is not sufficient—it must be supported by consistent monitoring and evaluation to assess if policy is being followed and working well. The very terms “monitoring”, “evaluation” and “accountability” mean very different things to different people and sectors. As policies are updated and developed, work will also focus on identifying effective approaches to monitoring and evaluation, and ensuring accountability is embedded throughout each stage of implementation. Monitoring, evaluation, and accountability of systemic issues is a complex endeavour. This will require working closely within the processes specific to each area of the system and with leaders within specific areas of the system – such as prosecution, police, victim services – as they consider what specific monitoring and evaluation will work within their areas of expertise, independence, and authority. It will also mean assessing how government can continue to ensure that changes made in response to the Report result in positive change and that any unintended consequences are identified and addressed.

### Risk Assessment

The Province has heard calls from advocates about the need for consistent risk assessments across the B.C. legal system to help prevent repeat violence, hold systems accountable, and protect victims before harm occurs.

In response, key focus of the Action Committee will be on exploring how to implement timely, appropriate, and standardized screening, risks assessment, and safety planning in both criminal and family court processes. These assessments will centre survivor safety across all actors in B.C.’s legal system.

The first roundtable session will explore different processes to identify and manage risks, including

“...there is a plethora of services, programs, and initiatives underway across multiple ministries and government agencies in the province, but no one has a grasp of the whole picture. British Columbia lacks a body with the requisite authority to address siloing in government, increase accountability across ministries and their component parts, effectively allocate resources, and ensure an intersectional analysis in programs and budgeting.”

—The Report, page 57



standardized approaches and how best to implement within different points across the legal system. An update on this work will be shared in 2026.

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### Internal government accountability

Another key theme in the Report is accountability. The Report also calls for a “strong internal government accountability mechanism with the authority to lead the efforts to prevent and address gender-based violence in B.C. and to champion implementation of the recommendations” (p.158). It stresses that implementation of changes and recommendations, like those found in the Report, must be monitored and tracked.

This has been identified as the third priority action—to identify the appropriate structure for an ongoing internal government mechanism to ensure that the persistent and pervasive issues of intimate partner and sexual violence are addressed in the short, medium, and long term.

The Report emphasizes that a lack of sustained accountability has been a major obstacle to meaningful system change. It notes that “it is common for recommendations such as those made in this Report to be initially accepted but to have their implementation overtaken by pressing new political priorities” (p.158). In response, this priority action focuses on identifying the most effective structure for an internal government accountability mechanism—one that ensures this work remains a priority over time and supports consistent implementation, monitoring, and evaluation.

Currently, this function is being carried out by Justice Services Branch serving as the central connecting point for the Action Committee and Reference Group. The outcome of this priority action will be a more formalized and enduring approach to this work.

The Report also calls for the establishment of an external GBV Commissioner. The focus at this time is on internal government accountability.

Overcoming the systemic barriers to dealing with intimate partner and sexual violence and the legal barriers to comprehensive support and meaningful justice for survivors will take time. It will also take coordination and commitment to collective action. Government is dedicated to doing this work alongside the anti-violence sector, Indigenous partners, justice system partners, and the broader community.

Feedback and input can be shared by email to [JusticeResponseGBV@gov.bc.ca](mailto:JusticeResponseGBV@gov.bc.ca).



Going forward, public facing Annual Reports will be released and regular updates will be provided on the progress of implementing the recommendations contained in the Report, as well as ongoing efforts to address intimate partner and sexual violence.

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## Implementation path

See pages 158–159 of the Report.

### 1. Step identified in the Final Report:

The government should introduce a motion in the legislature to declare that gender-based violence is an epidemic in British Columbia. This will raise awareness and support public education about the scope and challenge of eradicating gender-based violence (Recommendation 4A).

**Current and planned actions:**

In his July 17, 2025, mandate letter to Finance Minister Brenda Bailey, Premier David Eby called gender-based violence a national epidemic. The Province acknowledges that intimate-partner and gender-based violence are more than an epidemic. They are a systemic crisis. They are persistent and pervasive.

We will work on multiple fronts to raise awareness and support public education about the scope and challenge of eradicating gender-based violence. This work will be based in tangible actions that drive lasting change.

### 2. Step identified in the Final Report:

The government should create a strong internal government accountability mechanism with the authority to lead the efforts to prevent and address gender-based violence in B.C. and to champion implementation of the recommendations (Recommendation 2).

**Current and planned actions:**

The creation of an internal accountability mechanism has been identified as one of three priority actions. Work has begun to explore what form this should take to ensure accountability and authority, not only for the implementation of the recommendations in the Final Report, but also for the ongoing and sustained response necessary to address the underlying issues.



### **3. Step identified in the Final Report:**

Within three months of the Report's release, the government should establish an implementation committee to examine the Review's recommendations and determine steps for implementation. The implementation committee should:

- a. include senior members of the ministries connected to the Review's mandate, one of whom should be the co-chair;
- b. include anti-violence sector experts, one of whom should be the co-chair;
- c. given the overlapping issues and the need for a whole-of-government response to the epidemic of gender-based violence, coordinate with the deputy minister portfolio table that is responding to the 2024 RCY report;
- d. be prepared to address the systemic barriers identified in the Report so as to reduce siloing, increase accountability, factor in the cost of inaction, and apply an intersectional lens;
  - i. make a timeline and plan for investing in prevention and for rebalancing the allocation of funding among various parts of the public safety ecosystem, including nonprofit and community-based services;
- e. seek guidance from the B.C. GBV Advisory Committee and MACIW in determining steps to implement the Review's recommendations;
- f. monitor progress on implementation by posting quarterly updates on a publicly accessible tracking webpage; and
- g. provide an annual report on implementation progress to the legislature, for three years.

#### **Current and planned actions:**

Government has established two groups that will be brought together at regular intervals to support the implementation of the Report:

- An Action Committee with membership from senior government leadership from across related legal system sectors. This group includes representatives from the Ministry of Child and Family Development and others working on the child and youth wellbeing portfolio.



- A Reference Group with membership from provincial organizations providing anti-violence support and support those service providers.

The Attorney General has, at the invitation of the Parliamentary Secretary for Gender Equity, provided an update to her GBV Advisory Committee and has committed to continuing to stay engaged with that group.

The special project lead is attending the December meeting of MACIW and is committed to continued engagement.

Work is underway to establish online progress tracking. The project will provide regular updates and annual reports.

#### **4. Step identified in the Final Report:**

In order to further explore the areas described in the various Next Steps sections of the Report, the Attorney General should create a series of cross-sectoral working groups with the expertise to consider how best to implement the steps identified in the Legal System Recommendations.

- a. These working groups should include experts from inside and outside the government and institutions implicated in this Review.
- b. The working groups should be established within six months of the Report's release.

#### **Current and planned actions:**

Work is underway to build upon existing protection order working group(s) to address the Legal System Recommendations identified in the Report.

The Province recognizes that the system is not working as intended – most survivors do not report their experience at all, and those that do engage with the legal system are met with barriers that prevent access to justice. For many, this experience can be re-traumatizing.

Along with improvements to the current system, it's clear that a new restorative approach is needed to better respond to sexual and intimate partner violence. The Province will work to establish a working group to explore ways to better incorporate restorative approaches into existing systems. This includes looking for ways to connect in with ongoing work in B.C. and beyond.



## Work underway to address gender-based violence crisis:

There have been elevated levels of gender-based violence in B.C. and across Canada since the pandemic and the Province agrees this systemic crisis needs to be treated with the seriousness and sustained attention it deserves.

While work is now underway on the Review's recommendations, addressing this crisis has been a government priority for years. Government has been acting on the [Safe and Supported: B.C.'s Gender-Based Violence Action Plan](#), established in 2023 through the Ministry of Finance, to prevent, address and respond to gender-based violence. Actions include boosting programming and supports for survivors, strengthening government's response to the crisis of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls, and ramping up prevention and awareness initiatives.

There are several ongoing projects and initiatives that align with and support the recommendations and observations of the Review, including:

- **Criminal Law Changes and Bail Reform** – British Columbia has led the country in calling for reforms that put public safety first, including bail decisions that better reflect risk, impose stronger consequences for repeat and violent offenders and provide better protections for victims of gender-based violence, including intimate partner violence. The federal government's proposed amendments reflect many of the priorities B.C. has championed, such as reverse-onus bail in high-risk cases and expanded sentencing tools for serious repeat offences, ensuring that bail determinations consider both the seriousness and the number of past offences, better tools to address extortion and a sharper focus on harms and intimate partner violence, such as strangulation, suffocation and choking.
- **Safe Supports** – The Safe Supports Project is implementing, monitoring and evaluating prototype programs to explore ways to improve the experience of families who have been impacted by IPV as they navigate the family law system. The project includes family court support worker services in five primarily rural, remote and Northern locations to provide wraparound services to survivors who have, or are considering commencing, *Family* matters in Provincial Court. The Safe Supports project also includes an information gatherer role to support survivors of IPV in accessing court information and records relating to their own court matters across family, criminal and child protection proceedings.
  - **Family Court Support Workers** – Family Court Workers operate in three community based anti-violence organizations in rural and remote regions of the province. The



Year Two Interim Evaluation of the Safe Supports Family Court Support Workers is complete and demonstrates that the program continues to provide meaningful support to survivors of family violence as they navigate the family legal system.

- **Information Gatherer** – Safe Supports and other projects are looking at improving the ways that survivors of violence can access their own court information across criminal and family law proceedings. The Year Two Interim Evaluation of the Safe Supports Information Gatherer indicates that the role is valued for reducing the complexity and stress of obtaining court documents.
- **Aunties program** – Supported by funding from the Justice Partnerships and Innovation Program, the Government of Canada and the Province of B.C., three of the BC First Nations Justice Council’s Indigenous Justice Centers are supported by an Auntie staff role. Aunties provide cultural and trauma informed support to the various stages of the legal process, specialized service resourcing aimed at wholistic healing, and advocacy with complex system navigation for Indigenous clients who have experienced intimate partner violence.
- The Province provides **\$60 million per year** to support more than **475 victim service and violence against women programs** across the province, including **75 new sexual assault services programs and sexual assault centres**, as well as significant investments in safe housing for women leaving violence, expanding rural cellphone service to make travel safer, and investing in training and affordable child care to boost economic independence.

As part of **the Canada-British Columbia bilateral agreement** to end gender-based violence, B.C. will receive \$18 million this year from the federal government to support survivors and break the cycle of violence through the Action Plan. This funding augments the annual provincial funding of more than \$60 million. The Province will continue to advocate the federal government for continued resources.

This funding is guided through the Province’s **Safe and Supported: B.C.’s Gender-Based Violence Action Plan**, coordinated through the Ministry of Finance, which aims to prevent, address and respond to gender-based violence.

We acknowledge the need for further resources and will continue to look for opportunities to do this.

- The Province’s **Family Justice Services Division (FJSD)**, in collaboration with Justice Institute of British Columbia (JIBC), is recreating their family violence course. This course



is designed to be part of training for new Family Justice Counsellors in British Columbia as well as other FJSD staff, including Justice Interviewers and Child Support Officers. Other practitioners and professionals involved in family dispute resolution will also be able to take this course. FJSD collaborates with the Office of Indigenization at the JIBC to promote understanding and respect for Indigenous perspectives, culture and values in FJSD courses and training. The projected timeline for this course to be available for student enrollment is March 2026.

- **Indigenous Women’s Justice Plan** – The BCFNJC released their [Indigenous Women’s Justice Plan](#) in April 2024. In collaboration with the Province, BCFNJC have prioritized actions related to Man Camps and Resource Extraction, Crisis Response, and Gender-Based Violence training and education for action in the next fiscal year, and that work is supported with funding through the Canada-British Columbia bilateral agreement to end gender-based violence..
- **The Child and Youth Well-Being Action Plan** – The Child and Youth Well-Being Action Plan (CYWP), expected to be released in early 2026, is a coordinated, government-wide strategy aimed at improving outcomes for children and youth across British Columbia. Developed in response to the Representative for Children and Youth’s [Don’t Look Away report](#), the plan acknowledges systemic gaps and commits to earlier, more integrated interventions to prevent crises. It recognizes that families are central to child and youth well-being, and that supporting family stability and health is key to helping children thrive. The CYWP lays the foundation for lasting change over the next five years through a whole-of-government approach that aligns ministries under shared outcomes and accountability.

The CYWP does not seek to replace existing government action plans or strategies, such as the [Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act \(DRIPA\) Action Plan](#) or [B.C.’s Poverty Reduction Strategy](#). Instead, it strengthens and aligns these efforts under a unified vision. This includes ensuring that actions arising from the Stanton Review complement and reinforce key areas of focus within the plan, such as preventing and responding to intimate partner, gender-based, and family violence, by supporting coordinated, trauma-informed approaches that help create safer, more stable environments for children and families.

The CYWP marks a fundamental shift in how government approaches child and youth well-being, moving away from siloed efforts toward a more connected, equitable system that helps every child and youth thrive in their family, community, and culture.



- **Intimate Images Protection Act Amendments** – On October 6, 2025, the Government introduced new amendments to the Intimate Images Protection Act (IIPA), creating stronger protections and a trauma-informed process for people who have had their intimate images shared without their consent and improving access to justice for survivors of sexualized violence.
- **Women's Transition Housing Fund** - The Province created the Women's Transition Housing Fund (WTHF) in 2018 to fund the operations of Women's Transition Housing and Supports Program (WTHSP) sites across BC. This included an initial commitment of \$734 million in WTHF funding to pay for the development and operations of 1,500 new units of WTHSP housing sites over 10 years.

In April 2023, as part of its new Homes for People plan, the Province committed to funding an additional 1,500 new units of WTHSP housing. This additional funding brings the total program target to 3,000 WTHSP units.

- **Sexual Assault Policy Act** – On October 6, the [Minister of Post-Secondary Education and Future Skills introduced new legislation and launched BC's Sexual Violence Action Plan](#). The *Sexual Violence Policy Act* (Bill 18), currently awaiting royal assent, will maintain core elements of the *Sexual Violence and Misconduct Policy Act* while introducing enhancements to strengthen prevention and response efforts to sexual violence in post-secondary communities. The proposed Act also aligns with and supports the implementation of several actions in the new [Sexual Violence Action Plan](#) – which outlines 12 actions to support institutions in preventing and responding to sexual violence.
- **Public Awareness** – There are a number of opportunities being explored to raise public awareness through collaborations between government, the anti-violence sector, and non-profit organizations. This includes initiatives to promote positive expressions of masculinity among men and boys.
- **Legal System Working Groups** – The Report calls for a number of cross-sectoral working groups to be established to consider how best to implement the Legal System Recommendations. Work is underway to tap into, repurpose, or expand existing groups relating to protection orders and restorative approaches to justice.



## Provincial Progress on Report's Recommendations

The Attorney General asked Dr. Stanton how to break through the barriers that stood in the way of change, and she answered with a clear roadmap containing 21 recommendations to address systemic and legal barriers. The Province has advanced work related to 13 of those recommendations, including three key priority actions.

This work includes a number of actions and initiatives that are new since the release of the Report, and several that were underway before it was released. This update provides an overview of how the Province intends to continue to work to address the systemic and legal barriers that the Report highlighted.

A summary of government's progress to these 13 recommendations follows.

**RECOMMENDATION 1** - The Review recommends that the BC government declare that gender-based violence is a provincial epidemic.

**Early steps:** In his July 17, 2025, mandate letter to Finance Minister Brenda Bailey, Premier David Eby called gender-based violence a national epidemic. The Province acknowledges that intimate-partner and gender-based violence are more than an epidemic - they are a systemic crisis. They are persistent and pervasive. Work is underway on multiple fronts to raise awareness and support public education about the scope and challenge of eradicating gender-based violence. This work will be based in tangible actions that drive lasting change.

Since 2023, government has been acting on the Gender Based Violence Action Plan to address this crisis, which has included the following actions (more details in the above section):

- Criminal Law Changes and Bail Reform
- Safe Supports
  - Family Court Support Workers
  - Information Gatherer
  - Aunties program
- The Women's Transition Housing Fund
- Indigenous Women's Justice Plan



- The Child and Youth Well-Being Action Plan
- *Intimate Images Protection Act* Amendments
- *Sexual Assault Policy Act*
- Public Awareness
- Legal System Working Groups

**RECOMMENDATION 2** The Review recommends that the BC government create a strong internal government accountability mechanism.

**Early Steps:** See Priority Actions. The creation of an internal accountability mechanism has been identified as one of the three key priorities for government. Work has begun to explore what form this should take to ensure accountability and authority, not only for the implementation of the recommendations in the Final Report, but also for the ongoing and sustained response necessary to address the underlying issues.

**RECOMMENDATION 4A** The Review recommends that the BC government prioritize support for prevention initiatives, including public education, to reduce and prevent violence before it escalates to the point of engaging the legal system.

**Early Steps:** See Priority Actions. The newly established Action Committee and Reference Group will explore public awareness plan as one of its early objectives.

**RECOMMENDATION 4B** The Review recommends that in addition to prioritizing support services for survivors (recognizing that sexual violence and intimate partner violence disproportionately affect women and gender-diverse people), the BC government support quality, accredited services for men who use violence

**Early Steps:** In October 2025, under B.C.'s Gender-Based Violence Action Plan, the Province provided \$750,000 from the Canada-British Columbia bilateral agreement to expand the reach of domestic-violence intervention programs. One of the recipient organizations is Options Community Services in Surrey.

Options Community Services will receive \$150,000 to expand access and services for its successful Caring Dads program, which supports fathers working to break the cycle of domestic



violence. The therapy-based program helps fathers recognize the impact of their actions and develop the skills needed to foster healthy family relationships.

An additional \$600,000 will support the enhancement of domestic-violence intervention programs such as Caring Dads in more communities throughout the province. The funding will help reduce wait times and improve access to services for fathers, ensuring they receive timely support to stop abusive behaviours and foster safer family environments.

**RECOMMENDATION 4C** The Review recommends strengthening the system-wide framework for education and training of institutional actors (including government agencies, police, Crown counsel, courts, and corrections) on the causes and dynamics of gender-based violence, unconscious bias, and the elements of effective trauma-informed practice. This framework should include:

- A) a system of core competencies and certification; and
- B) evaluation of whether education and training for system actors is being utilized, whether the programs are effective, and whether outcomes are improved.

**Early Steps:** The newly established Action Committee and Reference Group will also explore a strengthened training framework for other institutional actors.

**RECOMMENDATION 6A** The Review recommends that the BC government provide ongoing support for collaborative mechanisms between entities that address gender-based violence.

**Early Steps:** A key focus of the Action Committee will be on exploring how to implement timely, appropriate, and standardized screening, risks assessment, and safety planning in both criminal and family court processes. (see Priority Actions).

**RECOMMENDATION 7** The Review recommends that the province create a standing Gender-Based Violence Death Review Committee (GBV-DRC).

**Early Steps:** The BC Coroners Service is currently undertaking a death review panel examining intimate partner violence-related deaths. In September 2025, an in-person session was held, bringing together 24 subject matter experts to contribute to the process. The panel's report is now in development and is expected to take several weeks or months to complete. Details from the in-person discussions will remain confidential until the final report is publicly released.



The BC Coroners Service has previously conducted two death review processes focused on intimate partner violence, in 2010 and 2016.

**RECOMMENDATION 8** The Review recommends the development of a broad and collaborative gender-based violence data strategy across government agencies and legal system institutions, with participation from academic and frontline experts.

**Early Steps:** The Ministry of Finance's Gender Equity Office is collaborating with the Ministry of Citizen Services' Data Innovation Program and additional ministry and external partners on a three-year, GBV-related data integration project.

The goal of the project is to integrate and analyze multiple administrative datasets that contain GBV-related data to improve understanding of service utilization and prevalence of GBV, including among rural communities and underserved populations. Government will use this project to build towards a more comprehensive GBV data strategy.

**RECOMMENDATION 9** The Review recommends that the BC government lead a process to update and reinvigorate the VAWIR policy to improve the legal system's treatment of intimate partner violence and sexual violence.

**Early Steps:** See Priority Actions. Updating the Violence Against Women in Relationships (VAWIR) policy will be part of the work in establishing a new provincial sexual assault policy.

**RECOMMENDATION 10A** The Review recommends that specified listed key amendments to the Family Law Act and associated policy changes be adopted without delay.

**RECOMMENDATION 10C** The Review recommends that specified additional amendments to the Family Law Act be implemented at the earliest opportunity.

**RECOMMENDATION 10D** The Review recommends several changes to family law Protection Orders.

**Early Steps:** The Ministry of Attorney General has completed a review of the family violence provisions in the *Family Law Act*, which included extensive engagement with the anti-violence community, as well as people from vulnerable groups such as Indigenous peoples, people with disabilities, and youth. As part of this work, the Ministry published [an intentions paper on Aug. 25, 2025](#), that included key proposals that align with the Review's recommendations to improve



the ways B.C.'s legal systems treat intimate-partner and sexual violence and people who are affected by it. These proposals include:

- updating the legal definition of family violence to ensure all forms of family violence are recognized, including coercive and controlling behaviour, and make it easier to identify people experiencing violence;
- expanding eligibility for protection orders and extending the default length of the orders from one to two years; and
- reducing the burden on survivors who are applying for subsequent protection orders.

The Ministry anticipates proposing policy and legislative changes related to family violence as a result of this review, including updating the definition of family violence and expanding eligibility for protection orders.

**RECOMMENDATION 5B** The Review recommends that survivor support services with stable and adequate core funding be available to survivors navigating the legal system, whether through civil or criminal processes. In particular, programs underway to support survivors in the family law system should be continued and strengthened.

**RECOMMENDATION 13A** The Review recommends expanding the scope and funding of legal aid for GBV survivors to cover family law services.

**Early Steps:** The Province is investing \$29.1 million through to 2026 to support Legal Aid BC in providing a historic level of access to legal aid services to people, including women leaving family violence.

These services include a new multidisciplinary, trauma-informed family law clinic in Surrey that offers in-person and virtual services, as well as expanded financial eligibility and improved intake capacity to ensure more people have timely access to family legal aid services, including through the new clinic.

**RECOMMENDATION 16** The Review recommends that Crown counsel policy be updated to clarify that when a decision not to prosecute has been made and the survivor, the public, or another significantly interested person is aware of the police investigation, it is in the public interest that the survivor, public, or other significantly interested person be given adequate reasons for the non-prosecution.



**Early Steps:** The BC Prosecution Service (BCPS) is conducting a review of this policy.

**RECOMMENDATION 18A** The Review recommends that a transparent, accessible process be provided for survivors (or their representatives) to make complaints about Crown counsel conduct and decisions.

**Early Steps:** The BC Prosecution Service (BCPS) has introduced an online complaint form for persons affected by a prosecution, which is accessible through [the BCPS website](#).

**RECOMMENDATION 18B** The Review recommends that Crown counsel develop an automatic review mechanism of sexual violence and intimate partner violence files to identify areas for improvement or reinforcement.

**RECOMMENDATION 18C** The Review recommends that the BC Prosecution Service annual reports include reporting on the uptake and outcomes of both the complaints mechanism and the automatic review mechanism.

**Early Steps:** The BC Prosecution Service (BCPS) is conducting a review of these policies.

**RECOMMENDATION 21** The Review recommends that the Ministry of Attorney General create a working group to explore the use of responses to sexual violence and intimate partner violence in BC.

**Early Steps:** See Priority Actions.

Aspects of the Report may take longer than Dr. Stanton envisioned. The Province takes seriously the remaining recommendations and continues to examine them to determine approach.