

News Ottawa and Region

Cornwall police chief offers apology

Ottawa Sun

18 December 2009 Last Updated: 18th December 2009, 7:13am

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CORNWALL -- Police Chief Dan Parkinson apologized yesterday for the shortcomings of the Cornwall service's past dealing with victims of historical sexual abuse, but feels it's more important the focus stay on the prevention of future abuse.

Parkinson's words come in response to Tuesday's release of the Cornwall Public Inquiry report, which outlines 30 recommendations for the Cornwall Community Police from Commissioner Normand Glaude.

"We're not going to sit on our hands," Parkinson said. "This report has been a long time coming, so we're not going to sit idly by."

As a result, the Cornwall Community Police Services Board and the Cornwall police are ramping up to create a Service Improvement Plan based on Glaude's recommendations.

FOCUS ON FUTURE

"I prefer to look ahead and do as much as we can to prevent future sexual abuse," Parkinson said. "Just apologizing isn't good enough."

Parkinson said the police board and the Cornwall police expect to have that plan ready and a report on its feasibility prepared by mid-January.

For about four years now, the Cornwall police have had a full-time victims services coordinator working on-site to address the needs of sexual abuse victims.

Cornwall police also have the Sexual and Child Abuse Unit, a team of four officers dedicated to investigating abuse complaints in place since the 1990s.

In his report, Glaude recommended all officers receive training in the investigation of sexual assault and abuse as part of their basic training.

Meanwhile, the Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police yesterday appointed Cornwall Deputy Chief Danny Aikman to a working group which will develop provincial manuals on sexual assaults and child abuse investigations to ensure consistency across Ontario.