

2022 Victim Services Annual Report

Prepared by Rachel Cooper



INVESTIGATIVE SERVICES DIVISION

**HAMILTON
POLICE SERVICE**
Together. Stronger. Safer.

VISION • MISSION • OUR VALUES

COMPASSIONATE • DEDICATED • INCLUSIVE • INTEGRITY • INNOVATIVE • PROFESSIONAL • TEAMWORK



VISION: To be a trusted partner in delivering public safety.

MISSION: To serve and protect in partnership with our communities.

OUR VALUES: Compassionate, Dedicated, Inclusive, Integrity, Innovative, Professional, Teamwork.

Victim Services is a Branch of the Hamilton Police Service (HPS) established in 1992. It is the only 24-hour on-scene crisis intervention service for victims of crime and trauma in the City of Hamilton. We respond to the immediate needs of people who have been victimized by crime and/or trauma such as homicides, suicides, sudden death, assaults, sexual assault, domestic violence, motor vehicle and fire fatalities, robberies, harassment, hate crime and hate bias incidents, human trafficking and missing persons, among others.

In 2022, the Victim Services Branch (VSB) assisted 2,472 new victims and had a total of 6,830 contacts with victims. With 5 full-time staff and over 40 volunteers, the Victim Services Branch is able to provide these services 24/7.

With funding provided through the Ministry of the Solicitor General's Victim Support Grant, the Victim Services Branch established the Community Liaison Program in partnership with Catholic Family Services, Victoria & Friends, and the YMCA of Hamilton, Burlington and Brantford. Each organization provides specialized support for victims/survivors of Domestic Violence and/or Human Trafficking.

The Victim Services Branch was honoured to receive the first ever Service Award presented by the Butterfly Project. This award was given in recognition of the support the Victim Services Branch provided to a family of a young child that tragically lost her life during an incident involving a train. The Victim Services Branch attended a celebration of life concert to receive this award in December 2022.

This year, the Victim Services Branch approach to service adapted to meet ongoing Provincial and Municipal directives for the pandemic environment to support victims and survivors of crime and/or trauma. Due to health and safety concerns as a result of the pandemic, our office continued to use technology and virtual platforms to maintain engagement with our volunteer team and community committees, as well as participate in training. Happily, our volunteer team has been offering on-scene support since March 1st, 2022. Overall, the Victim Services Branch staff and volunteers continue to have a positive impact in supporting victims and survivors 24/7 in Hamilton in collaboration with community partners.

With a shared purpose of responding to the needs of our community, the Victim Services Branch of Hamilton Police Service will continue to: focus on its core mandate to respond to the immediate needs of victims of crime and trauma, engage with HPS members to develop programs and resources, collaborate and foster opportunities for partnerships with community agencies and stakeholders.

BUSINESS PLAN OVERVIEW

STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS - VICTIM SERVICES BRANCH



The Victim Services Branch is pleased to share our goals, achievements and initiatives for 2022 that have contributed to the outcomes and success of the 2019-2021 Business Plan in this Annual Report. The goals are aligned with the 2019-2021 Business Plan Strategic Directions and Objectives. The Branch's Annual Objectives & Performance follow.



COMMUNITY SAFETY GOAL A: Maximize communication with our community as it relates to services and supports, as well as crime prevention, public safety and harm reduction.

• **ACTION:** Increase community awareness and support for victims by continuing to provide education and supports to staff, and volunteers. Work with victims of crime to reduce the harm and impact of crime and provide supports and resources for recovery.



ENGAGEMENT & PARTNERSHIPS GOAL B: Collaborate and encourage participation within communities and organizations to help implement solutions and manage public safety needs.

• **ACTION:** Continue to work with other service providers to increase knowledge base and available resources for victims.



ENGAGEMENT & PARTNERSHIPS GOAL C: Provide meaningful volunteer opportunities and continue the development of future ambassadors for the Hamilton Police Service.

• **ACTION:** Provide meaningful opportunities for volunteers at all levels and ensure engagement. Find opportunities to recognize volunteers and the importance of their work.



ENGAGEMENT & PARTNERSHIPS GOAL D: Identify funding opportunities available to police services and community groups for the implementation of new programs and the continuation of existing effective programs.

• **ACTION:** Seek out new opportunities for funding and continue to maintain existing sources of funding.



PEOPLE & PERFORMANCE GOAL E: Effective recruitment and retention of high quality internal and external candidates to service in the Hamilton Police Service.

• **ACTION:** Continue to adjust recruiting strategies in maximize the number of interested individuals.



PEOPLE & PERFORMANCE GOAL F: Implement effective delivery of internal and external training.

• **ACTION:** Continue to provide training to volunteers and staff to promote programs and supports for victims and ensure awareness of victim issues, supports, and services.



TECHNOLOGY & ASSET MANAGEMENT GOAL G: Leverage technology to enhance service to the community.

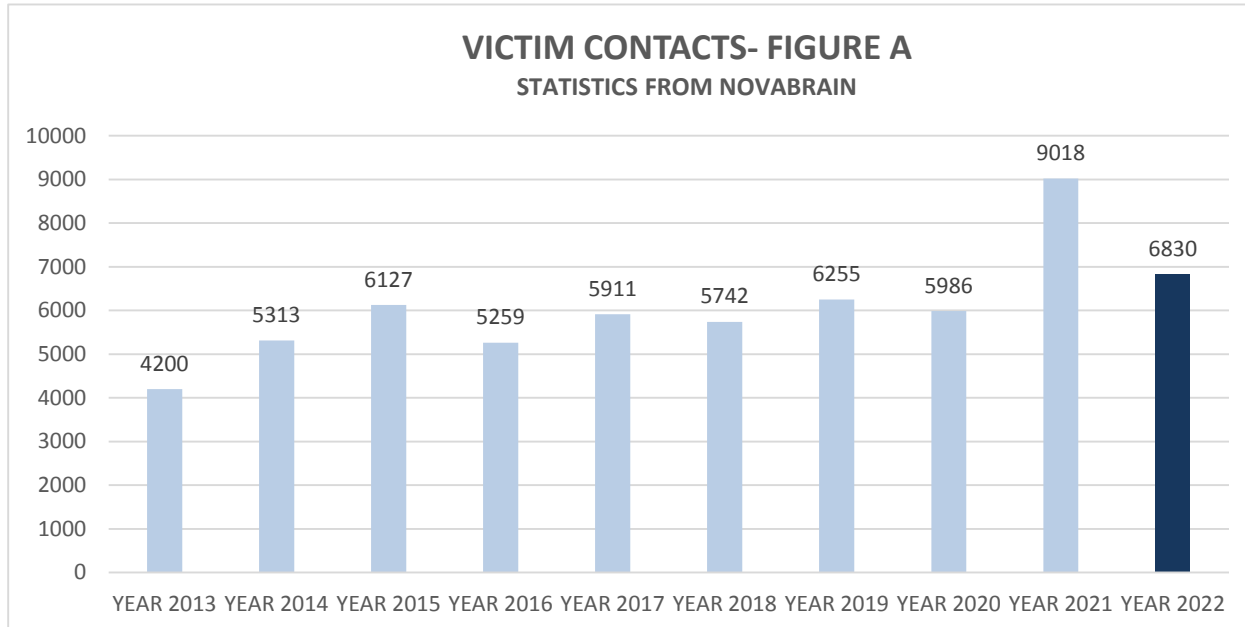
• **ACTION:** Leverage technology to enhance service to the community. Integrate a virtual approach for volunteer training and on-going volunteer engagement.



GOAL A RESULTS

Increase community awareness and support for victims by continuing to provide education and supports to staff, and volunteers.

- 2,472 new victims assisted.
- See Figure A for 6,830 total contacts with victims (includes new and existing clients).
- For breakdown of contact type, please refer to Figure B [next page].

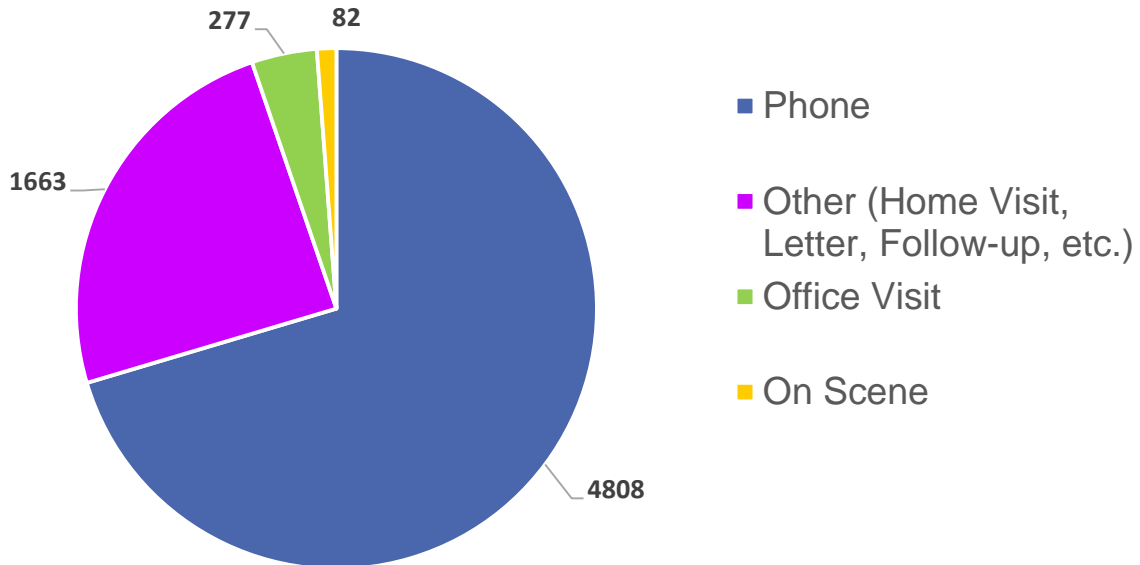


- Changes to public health guidelines allowed Victim Services to provide in person support beginning in March 2022, volume of support provided to members of the community returned to numbers more aligned with pre-pandemic figures.
- Continued to work with victims/survivors of crime in providing support, as well as navigating systems and referrals to reduce harm and promote resiliency.
- Completed one year of the Domestic Violence Intervention Program Pilot, which aims to provide support to individuals involved in non-criminal domestic disputes with community resources and system navigation in an effort to reduce escalation and enhance public safety. Over 200 individuals were referred through the program. 68% of those contacted requested and received referrals to community agencies for supports such as counselling, legal advocacy, transitional housing support, etc.
- Participated in the development of a potential Hate Crime Community Review Team in partnership with both HPS and community members to enhance safety and support for victims of Hate Crimes.
- Participated in the development of a Missing Person Working Group in partnership with both HPS and community members.



Method of Victim Contacts 2022- Figure B

Statistics from Nova Brain



Responses to a stressful situation vary greatly from person-to-person and not all people will experience the same reaction at the same level of intensity nor for the same length of time. For many victims, they are able to empower themselves with self-supporting options and do not require further assistance after initial contact with Victim Services. Other victims may determine that continued resources/interaction with Victim Services is required to support their resiliency. Not all victims request or need on-scene crisis intervention.

- Involved in planning/collaborating with Hamilton partners to increase community awareness and education on Human Trafficking.
- Training provided by staff to organizations in the community to raise awareness about Victim Services and supports available.
- Overall, over 130 hours of training provided by community organizations were completed by Volunteers and over 150 hours were completed by Victim Services staff on important topics such as: Human Trafficking, Indigenous Services, Elder Abuse, Child Abuse, Trauma Counselling, Supporting Grief, and among many others.
- The Victim Services Branch strives to assist all areas of the Hamilton Police Service to best support victims of crime and/or trauma such as: Domestic Violence Unit, Bail Safety Unit, Homicide Unit, Sex Crimes Unit, Criminal Investigations Division, Crimes Against Children Unit, Human Trafficking/Vice & Drugs Unit, Crime Prevention Branch, Training Branch, Communications, and Patrol, among others.

ENGAGEMENT & PARTNERSHIPS

TO FOSTER EFFECTIVE RELATIONSHIPS WITH ALL OF OUR COMMUNITIES



GOAL B RESULTS

Continue to work with other service providers to increase knowledge base and available resources for victims.

- Continued to work in collaboration with community organizations to ensure wrap-around supports are available to any victims/survivors supported through the Victim Services Branch.
- Continued involvement on community committees to enhance collaboration and community-based solutions (10+ committees) to support victims/survivors of crime.
- Committee and Community Work: Victim Services Alliance Ontario; Emergency Preparedness Committee for City of Hamilton; High-Risk Domestic Violence Community Advisory Team; Hamilton Anti-Human Trafficking Coalition (HAHTC) and Steering Committee; Women Abuse Working Group (WAWG); Public Awareness and Education – sub-committee of WAWG; International Women’s Day Planning Committee; Hamilton Police Women’s Services Advisory to the Chief; Emergency Women’s Shelter Protocol Committee; Sexual Assault Community Review Team (SACRT); Safe at Home Hamilton, Domestic Violence Court Advisory Committee; Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (FASD) Network, Hamilton School Board Anti-Human Trafficking Protocol Advisory.
- Introduction of the Community Liaison Program in partnership with Catholic Family Services, Victoria & Friends (formerly Interval House), and the YMCA to provide support to victims/survivors of Domestic Violence and/or Human Trafficking. Over 120 individuals were referred to these agencies via the Victim Services Branch office for community supports.
- Volunteer Resource Manual was updated regularly to ensure up-to-date community resource options are provided by both staff and volunteers. 19 new resources were provided to the team throughout 2022. In addition, information was updated on several existing community resources to reflect current offerings.
- Partnership continued with “Comfort Bears” to provide teddy bears to individuals impacted by trauma. Bears are available through the Victim Services Branch, and are also distributed to the Crimes Against Children Unit, Sex Crimes Unit, and Homicide Unit.
- Continued administration of the Trauma Bear Program in partnership with Shaw Communications Inc. by ensuring all Hamilton Police Service vehicles contain Trauma Bears. Police Officers give Trauma Bears to individuals at scenes to provide some comfort during the aftermath of a crime or traumatic event. This partnership with Shaw Communications Inc. and their donation of the trauma bears has been in place since 2012.
- Continued administration of the Rapid Relief Food Boxes Program to support those experiencing food insecurity.
- Established partnership with The Hospital Activity Book for Children organization to provide activity books for volunteer child kids.
- The Victim Services Branch continued to participate as a member of the Sexual Assault Community Review Team (SACRT). The team is comprised of the HPS Sex Crimes Unit, the Victim Services Branch, the Sexual Assault Domestic Violence Care Centre - Hamilton Health Sciences, the Sexual Assault Centre of Hamilton and Area (SACHA), and the Native Women’s Centre.

ENGAGEMENT & PARTNERSHIPS

TO FOSTER EFFECTIVE RELATIONSHIPS WITH ALL OF OUR COMMUNITIES



GOAL C RESULTS

Provide meaningful opportunities for volunteers at all levels and ensure engagement. Find opportunities to recognize volunteers and the importance of their work.

- Volunteers contribute over 30,000 hours of available on-call coverage, provide almost 500 hours of direct support to victims, and offer support in 23 languages in addition to English.
- Trained 33 new Volunteers and 5 Cadets through 39 hours of instruction throughout our annual Victim Services Volunteer Training.
- 4 Professional Development Training Nights (8 hours) provided.
- 20 External Training Opportunities on various topics to support victims of crime were provided throughout 2022.
- Training on new programs and trends including Ambiguous Loss and Supporting Families with Missing Loved Ones, Well-Being and the Impact of Empathetic Strain, Indigenous Services, Services for Youth, among many others.
- Volunteer recognition completed throughout the year through individual notes of appreciation, as well as through National Volunteer Week and International Volunteer Day.
- Continued Volunteer engagement, training, and meetings through Microsoft Teams to ensure health and safety.
- Volunteer engagement and some meetings transitioned to in person in accordance with public health guidelines.
- Volunteers returned to offering on-scene support as of March 1st, 2022.
- Long time VSB volunteer awarded the Marg Marshall Award at the Hamilton Police Awards Ceremony in July 2022.



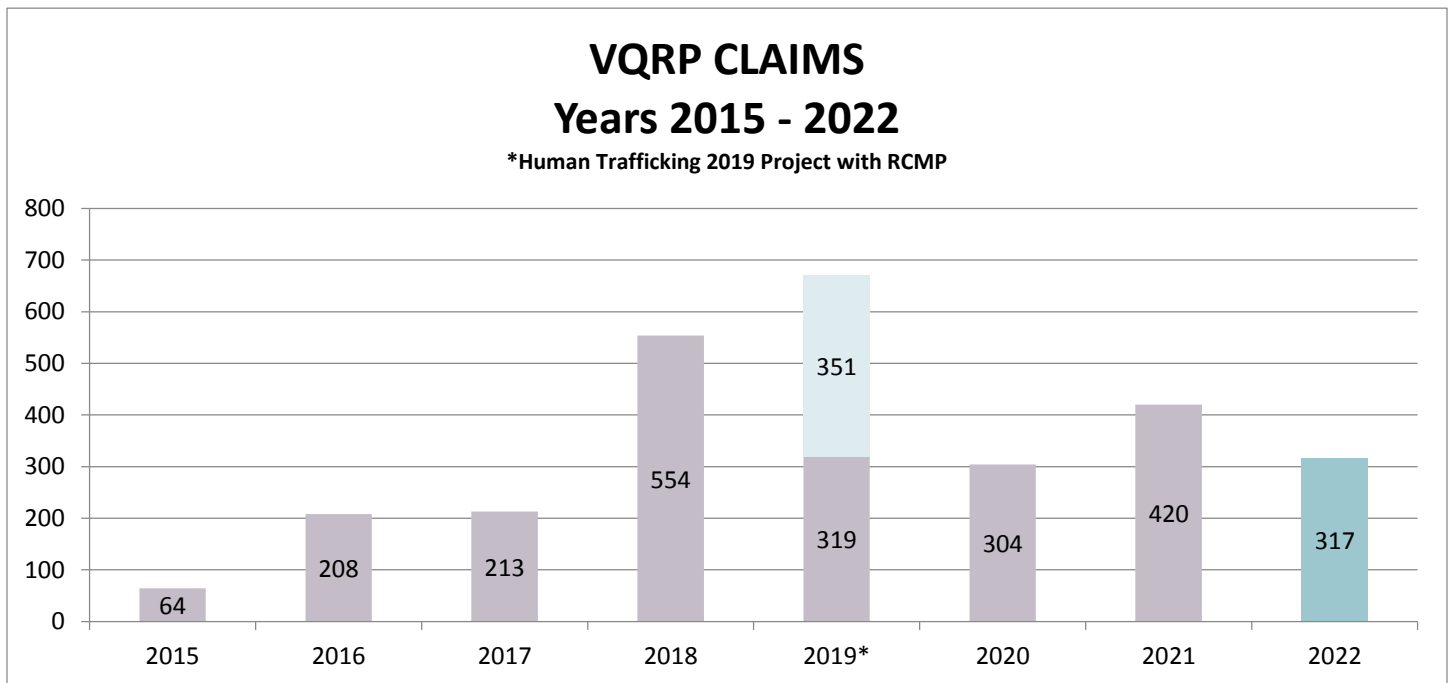
Together, these form a part of the volunteer's commitment to ensure that our core values, integrity and accountability are held to the highest standards of professional and ethical conduct.



GOAL D RESULTS

Seek out new opportunities for funding and continue to maintain existing sources of funding.

- Received funding via the Victim Support Grant through the Ministry of the Solicitor General.
- Funding secured: \$100,000 per year over 2 years to support victims/survivors of human trafficking and/or intimate partner violence. This allowed for the creation of the Community Liaison Program in partnership with Catholic Family Services, Victoria & Friends, and the YMCA of Hamilton, Burlington, Brantford.
- Continued to deliver the Victim Quick Response Program+ (VQRP+) for the City of Hamilton on behalf of the Ministry of Community, Children, and Social Services. There were 317 claims processed through VQRP+ in 2022, e.g. door/lock repairs, cell phone replacement, transportation, crime scene clean-up, funeral, counselling, etc. [See Figure C]. The claims totaled over \$183,000 in direct benefit to victims of crime.
- Submitted a funding request for Victims and Survivors of Crime Week in Collaboration with EDI team. Funding secured: \$9,000 for Hate Crime Symposium during Victims and Survivors of Crime Week May 2023.



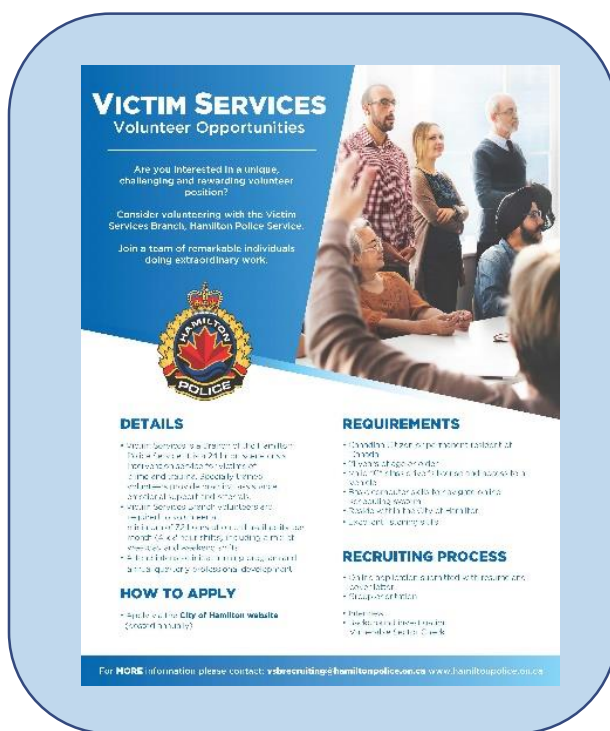


PEOPLE & PERFORMANCE
 TO INCREASE ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY AND EFFECTIVENESS BY ATTRACTING,
 DEVELOPING AND RETAINING OUR MEMBERS

GOAL E RESULTS

Continue to adjust recruiting strategies to maximize the number of individuals interested in volunteering with Victim Services.

- New posters and pamphlets were designed with Graphics Department to promote volunteering with Victim Services.
- Radio advertisement campaign was developed with Corus media to seek potential new volunteers. Radio advertisements played at various days and times on CHML.
- Victim Services staff connected with Mohawk College and their alumni, McMaster University and their alumni, Police Association Retirees, Trios College, City of Hamilton Libraries, Recreation Centres and Senior Centres to share information about volunteer opportunities.



GOAL F RESULTS

Continue to provide training to volunteers and staff to promote programs and supports for victims and ensure awareness of victim issues, supports, and services.

- Training provided to staff and volunteers to educate on important topics to best support victims of crime and/or trauma such as: Human Trafficking, Indigenous Services, Trauma Counselling, Supporting Grief, among many others.
- Overall, over 130 hours of external training were completed by Volunteers and over 150 by staff.
- Information on new programs and community resources distributed to both staff and volunteers on a regular basis to ensure up-to-date awareness of victim issues and supports. 19 new community resources were provided throughout 2022 and many existing resources were updated to reflect current information.
- Publication of the “Did You Know” volunteer monthly newsletter.
- Victim Services Branch arranged for a presentation from Dr. Lori Triano-Antidormi on responding to trauma and sudden death. This was open to all HPS members; volunteers recruits, existing volunteers, and members of MCRRT/COAST,
- Provided Victim Services training to new Hamilton Police recruits post-OPC, as well as Communications Branch members.
- Presentations provided to community partners on supports available through the Victim Services Branch.
- In 2022, 5 HPS Cadets completed Victim Services Branch Volunteer training as part of their Cadet training program. The Victim Services Branch continues to be an integral component of the continuum of learning for the HPS Cadet program since 2014. In addition, another 4 Cadets completed a rotation working within the VSB office as part of their supervised practicum.



GOAL G RESULTS

Leverage technology to enhance service to the community. Integrate a virtual approach for volunteer training and on-going volunteer engagement.

Due to ongoing health and safety concerns as a result of the pandemic, our Branch continued to use technology to continue to support victims of crime and/or trauma, maintain engagement with our volunteer team and community committees, as well as participate in training.

- Microsoft Teams continued to be used to connect with the Victim Services Branch volunteer team (40+ Volunteers) to promote engagement and training.
- Virtual platforms were also used to facilitate the Victim Services Branch Volunteer Training from January – March, 2022. This virtual format resulted in existing Volunteers joining training sessions to refresh their skills and knowledge.
- Technology and virtual training opportunities allowed for an additional 20 external training opportunities to be offered to our Volunteer team.
- Utilized a tablet purchased through grant funding to provide online safety planning resources and tools in office.
- Social Media was used to raise awareness for Victim Services throughout the year, as well as to recruit Victim Services Volunteers.

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Two benches are located in the courtyard at Hamilton Police Service Central Station. The benches provide a peaceful place for those who wish to pause, rest or reflect. On each bench is a plaque with an inscription: "FORGET ME NOT" ~ A Place of Quiet Reflection to Honour All Victims of Crime Because "Every Victim Matters".