

<https://winnipeg.ctvnews.ca/brandon-police-arrest-21-men-in-sexual-exploitation-investigation-1.6922066>

## **Brandon police arrest 21 men in sexual exploitation investigation**

By: Devon McKendrick  
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Brandon police have arrested 21 men in connection to a sexual exploitation investigation.

In a news release Tuesday, Brandon police said a joint investigation with the RCMP and Winnipeg police started in the first week of June, looking at street level and online sexual exploitation.

The investigation was known as Project Blockade.

Over two days, police arrested 21 men on the charge of obtaining sexual services for consideration or communicating for that purpose.

Police said the arrests happened in downtown Brandon and hotels in the city.

Nine of the arrests also resulted in vehicles being seized.

All men arrested were released on an undertaking. The charges haven't been tested in court.

### **'Does not come as a surprise'**

Janet Campbell, the president and CEO of the Joy Smith Foundation said these are the types of stories her office hears about every day.

"This is something that's very prevalent and is happening in communities across our area," said Campbell. "It is wonderful to see the level of collaboration between three agencies executing on a project like this. I think that's really important, so I commend them for their work. But unfortunately, this is something that we do see in our office every day, so it does not come as a surprise to me."

The foundation is focused on human trafficking and supporting survivors, Campbell said. She said this is a problem that has been getting worse over time, and has only been made worse by the ability to connect online.

While support from law enforcement and levels of government is needed, Campbell said all stakeholders in the community need to be involved.

"Community members at large need to pay attention to this issue. They need to become aware and educate themselves about what this looks like...it's something that is a community-based issue, and really does need community engagement to be able to make an impact."