

Attachment 5

City of New Westminster Guidelines to Promote Sex Worker Safety

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The City of New Westminster (City) is committed to ensuring the safety and security of all community members. It is also committed to ensuring that City employees treat community members of all backgrounds, occupations, and status, with dignity, fairness and respect. The City recognizes that some community members are at increased risk of discrimination. This is the case with sex workers who sometimes work in isolation, may be subjected to violence, may be stigmatized and stereotyped, and may be reluctant to seek assistance, including from City services.

Purpose

These guidelines are intended to make the city safer for sex workers by promoting their health and rights, and ensuring that City of New Westminster employees treat sex workers with dignity, fairness and respect, including acknowledging that sex work is an occupation.

These guidelines are intended to inform City employee interactions with sex workers and individuals involved in sex work occupations in New Westminster.

These guidelines are also intended to:

- Promote a non-discriminatory and consistent approach among City employees;
- Foster community understanding of sex work as an occupation; and,
- Inform the community-at-large about the objectives contained in these guidelines.

Objectives

- Ensuring equity for all sex workers, including related to intersectionality;
 - Immigrant, Migrant, Individuals with Precarious or No Immigration Status, Indigenous, Black, People of Color, Racialized, LGBTQ2S+, People with Disabilities and others
- Building a consistent and ongoing approach that is dignified, fair, respectful and non-discriminatory to engagement with sex workers through staff training to promote sex worker safety.
- Foster positive and respectful relationships with individuals engaged in the sex work sector through public information to promote sex worker and public safety.

Scope

The guidelines consider the diversity of individuals involved in sex work occupations. They apply to:

- Sex workers in all locations in New Westminster and including; Immigrant, Migrant, Individuals with Precarious or No Immigration Status, Indigenous, Black, People of Color, Racialized, LGBTQ2S+, People with Disabilities and others.

The guidelines will support City employees in addressing the following areas connected to sex work:

- Responding to complaints from the public and sex workers;
- Planning and policy work;
- Staff education and training; and,
- Public information.

Principles

The City's Standards of Conduct Policy includes the following principles that all City employees must observe:

- Conduct themselves with personal integrity, ethics, honesty and diligence in performing their duties for the organization;
- Conduct themselves without bias, without favor, and without allowing outside interests to conflict with work decisions; and,
- Ensure every municipal employee must perform his or her duties in an impartial manner.

In addition to the above, the following principles focused on dignity, health and safety speak to City employee conduct when responding to sex work issues and complaints:

- That the safety of sex workers is a priority of all interactions addressing issues related to sex work;
- That employees that may interact with sex workers during the course of their regular duties participate in training to promote sex worker safety developed by a peer driven organization; and,
- That building positive and respectful relationships is a primary focus of the guidelines.

Policies

- When drafting policies and practices, staff will listen to, include, consider and where possible incorporate feedback from experiential persons and sex work organizations; and,
- Staff will abide by confidentiality agreements between all individuals in advisory capacities and will respect the privacy and identity concerns of experiential persons.

Bylaw Regulation and Inspections

- When responding to complaints about sex work, the safety, health, rights, privacy, and autonomy of individuals engaged in sex work occupations will be respected.
- When individuals involved in sex work are the subject(s) of a complaint, staff will investigate the nature of the complaint and where appropriate, will consult with partner agencies.
- When sex workers make a complaint, their safety, health, rights, privacy, and autonomy will be respected. Additionally, the City of New Westminster Sanctuary City Policy states that staff will not ask for information about immigration status and will not provide information about immigration status to other institutions or orders of government.
- The City recognizes that any policy that inhibits people from safe sex practices is counteractive to the health and safety of all individuals.
- When engaged in regulatory activities, City employees will be transparent about their reasons for inspecting premises.
- It is not the City's practice to alert the media when regulatory actions are carried out for any licensed business, including establishments where sex work may occur.

Responsibility

- Managers, supervisors, front-line staff, and/or all other staff who may interact with anyone in the sex work sector through the course of their regular duties, will participate in training to promote sex worker safety developed by a peer driven organization.
- Supervisors and Managers are responsible for promptly addressing employees when their conduct or behavior is inconsistent with the Guidelines to Promote Sex Worker Safety.
- The designated supervisor will investigate the complaint and seek to resolve the concern with a primary focus on the safety, autonomy, dignity and rights of sex workers.
- Any further action taken will abide by current City respectful workplace protocols.

The City considers all forms of human trafficking, including domestic and international trafficking for the purposes of sexual exploitation, as an abhorrent violation of human rights which is criminalized under international, national, and regional anti-trafficking laws, policies and interventions. The City does not consider sex work the same as trafficking.

The City considers the involvement of anyone under the age of 18 in transactional sex as child and youth sexual exploitation. All City employees who have reason to believe that a child or youth has been or is likely to be abused, exploited or neglected have a legal duty under the Child, Family and Community Service Act to report the matter immediately. The City does not consider sex work the same as child and youth sexual exploitation.