

**If you are a sex worker and you are harassed, targeted, intimidated, followed, told to move along, or arrested by the police:**

1 Pivot is committed to holding the police accountable. We need to hear from sex workers about whether the police are living up to the Guidelines. Visit the Pivot office at 121 Heatley Ave, Vancouver or call 604-255-9700.

OR

2 Tell WISH, PACE, Pivot, SWUAV, the MAP Van staff, Aitra, the Downtown Eastside Women's Centre, VANDU, Insite, Aboriginal Front Door, DURC, DAMS, SWAN, HUSTLE, the Vancouver Women's Health Collective, or any other organization that you trust. You can ask them to let Pivot know what has happened to you.

# VANCOUVER POLICE AND SEX WORKERS KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

**PIVOT SWUAV**  
equality lifts everyone. DOWNTOWN EASTSIDE  
SEX WORKERS UNITED AGAINST VIOLENCE

In Canada, sex workers can be arrested and charged for communicating with a client in public if the communication takes place at, in view of, or next to a school, playground or daycare. It is still not clear under the law what a legally acceptable distance from these places is. **Most other acts associated with selling sex are technically legal, but highly restricted by the new law that came into effect in December 2014.**

Since 2013, the Vancouver Police Department (VPD) has acknowledged that targeting sex workers makes them unsafe and makes it difficult for sex workers to turn to police for help. The VPD has Guidelines created with community organizations about how police can use the laws when interacting with sex workers. Since the new law came into effect, the VPD has said publicly that it will continue to follow the Guidelines. **This card will tell you about those Guidelines and what you can do if the police are harassing you.**

#### **VPD GUIDELINES**

#### **WHAT DOES THIS MEAN?**

- 1 Sex work involving consenting adults is not an enforcement priority for the VPD.**

**AND**

- 2 When responding to sex work-related calls or situations, the VPD's priority is to ensure the safety and security of sex workers.**

**The Guidelines say that POLICE SHOULD NOT harass, target, arrest or intimidate you for doing sex work.** While the purchase of sex is illegal under the new law, the VPD has publicly stated that officers will not target clients of sex workers unless they suspect there is violence or exploitation.

**The Guidelines say that police must treat all reports of violence against sex workers as serious criminal matters.** If you go to the police to make a report as a victim or witness of a crime, an officer should be immediately assigned to investigate. They should not tell you to come back another day. The police are required to offer to connect you with support services.