

SPECIALIST SEX WORK POLICING ROLES:

Sample role descriptor for police forces

ROLE TITLE

Sex Work Liaison Officer (SWLO)

Job description/purpose

Overall purpose of role

To provide a single point of contact and reference for police officers and external agencies to facilitate effective support for sex workers as victims of crime, using early intervention and prevention principles to maximise sex worker safety, reduce vulnerability and target those who exploit or cause harm to sex workers. To investigate/support investigations of crimes against sex workers across all sex work environments, including those more hidden from view, and to liaise with, build and maintain strong relationships with partner agencies using innovative and evidence-led approaches to ensure appropriate interventions with sex workers.

Key outcomes/accountabilities

1. To be a definitive point of contact for those within the organisation and to provide advice and guidance in dealing with crime in ways that increase the safety of sex workers, reduce vulnerability and target those who exploit or cause harm.
2. To work with colleagues and partners to ensure correct policy and practice when dealing with sex workers in line with NPCC guidance.
3. To encourage crime reports from sex workers who are victims of crime, maximising their safety, increasing sex worker trust and confidence in police.
4. To proactively promote the role of the police in tackling crimes against sex workers, especially in places (localities/venues/virtual spaces) where sex workers work, facilitating open channels of communication between police and sex workers and ensuring a focus on vulnerability.
5. To ensure suitable provisions and partnership arrangements are in place to enable sex workers to provide best intelligence and evidence against offenders, advocating informed choices for sex workers in criminal justice processes and respecting the wishes of sex workers.
6. To scope and address exploitation and coercion of sex workers, supporting vigorous pursuit of organised criminality within the sex industry where uncovered and also ensuring a sensitive and supportive approach cognisant to the welfare needs and dignity of those encountered.
7. To proactively build and maintain strong local partnerships in order to support victims and gather evidence, creating bespoke interventions, making assessments of what action can be taken by police and partners, sharing intelligence and information to maximise sex worker safety and target those who exploit or cause harm to sex workers.
8. To use all available criminal and civil powers, effective information sharing and partnership working structures to systematically manage policing of crimes against sex workers, with a focus on improving safety and targeting those who exploit or cause harm to sex workers.
9. To ensure sex worker voices and perspectives are regularly taken account of in the design and operation of specialist provision associated with the SWLO role.
10. To gather, submit and monitor accurate data and intelligence on crimes against sex workers and data that assists with improved sex worker safety and targeting of those who exploit or cause harm to sex workers.

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Key outcomes/accountabilities *continued*

11. To support wider best practice in police responses to sex work, monitoring and identifying best practice on a local and national level and informing/introducing relevant processes to support this, providing advice on sex-work related crime to officers force-wide.
12. To support police responses to public concerns about sex work in ways that reassure communities and also prioritise the wider public interest, sex worker safety and reducing sex worker vulnerability.
13. To promote public and inter-agency awareness of police partnership approaches to sex work and the complex needs of sex workers, working to ensure the police engagement and vulnerability-based approach is clearly understood by all affected.

Expertise and capabilities (listed desirable/essential)

- Knowledge of relevant legislation, Force policy and procedures which relate to role, including the NPCC guidance on sex work.
- Can demonstrate a strong commitment to safety and justice for sex workers.
- Can demonstrate successful proactive policing skills, especially tenacity, effective problem-solving and a 'can do' attitude.
- Skills to reassure, support and obtain evidence from marginalised groups who may be reluctant to report to police for fear of judgement or criminalisation.
- Can demonstrate the ability to communicate clearly, effectively and to support sex workers in an approachable, compassionate and non-judgemental manner, always being respectful to sex workers.
- Demonstrated ability to manage relationships of dialogue with marginalised/criminalised populations and agencies that support them, negotiating to achieve mutually beneficial aims.
- Ability to communicate effectively with a wide range of stakeholders: partners, colleagues, residents, communities, councillors, including in public, multi-agency and formal forums.
- Willingness to work flexibly/flexible shift pattern.
- [Generic items as required by Force as appropriate].

Expertise in role, after initial development

- Knowledge of sex worker motivations, rights and types of sex work, as well as of issues facing sex workers in the criminal justice system.
- Can demonstrate ability to listen and take account of sex worker views and experiences in order to take forward victim-centred positive criminal justice outcomes.
- Enhanced knowledge of sex work-related police policy, procedures and legislation.
- [Generic items/training requirements as required by Force as appropriate].

Additional items for consideration at Force level

Reporting mechanisms: Arrangements will vary according to local infrastructure with consideration to ensuring needs are met across the diversity of the local Force sex worker population, partnerships/integration of the role with IDVAs, ISVAS, sex work support services, missing persons and anti-trafficking work in particular. The Hate Crimes model of policing sex work is a complementary framework for SWLO interventions.

This role profile is based on research with police, partners and sex workers about the SWLO role in West Yorkshire Police. The study was conducted by The University of York and funded by the N8 policing research partnership (N8PRP). With thanks to sex workers in Leeds who gave their time and expertise, West Yorkshire Police, Basis Yorkshire, National Ugly Mugs, SWLOs and police advisors and Professor Teela Sanders.