

Body Rub Centres - Annual Update

Recommendation

That the June 20, 2018, Citizen Services report CR_4986, be received for information.

Previous Council/Committee Action

At the June 19, 2017, Community and Public Services Committee meeting, the following motion was passed:

That Administration provide an annual report on metrics and outcomes including harm reduction in the body rub centres.

Executive Summary

The Body Rub Centres Task Force Implementation Team has made significant gains towards enhancing harm reduction and physical safety within licensed body rub centres. All 26 recommendations from the Body Rub Centres Task Force have been implemented and embedded into ongoing business practices. Enforcement checks completed on licensed Body Rub Practitioners observed 99 percent compliance and the implementation team is developing further strategies to increase compliance in other adult entertainment licence categories.

Report

The Body Rub Centres Task Force Implementation Team has been operational since the fall of 2016. The implementation team consists of two municipal enforcement officers and one community safety liaison. The work of the team has focused on five priority areas:

1. Implement the 26 Task Force recommendations approved by City Council in 2016.
2. Increase licensing compliance within the adult entertainment sector.
3. Implement actions that enhance harm reduction in body rub centres.
4. Increase physical safety measures within licensed body rub centres.
5. Increase licensing compliance of improperly licensed adult entertainment facilities.

Implementation Plan Recommendation Results

1. Implement the 26 Task Force recommendations approved by City Council in 2016.
 - All recommendations have been implemented and embedded into ongoing operations (Attachment 1).

2. Increase licensing compliance within the adult entertainment sector.
 - Body Rub Practitioner: Currently 345 licences issued; the Body Rub Centres Task Force Implementation Team has encountered only two unlicensed practitioners within the past year. Enforcement checks completed on licensed Body Rub Practitioners observed 99 percent compliance.
 - Escort Agency (Independent): Currently 42 licences issued. There are currently no active licensed escort agencies operating in the city. Of the 42 issued licences, 16 have been obtained since the licence fee dropped to \$0 in December 2017.
 - In November 2017 the target for licensing in the Independent Escort category was set at 20 percent compliance. Due to the closure of Backpage.com by the United States government, Administration will be revising the target as the closure limits Administration's ability to monitor industry activity. The implementation team continues to work with licensed and unlicensed service providers in this category to increase compliance.

3. Implement actions that enhance harm reduction in body rub centres.
 - The implementation team continues to provide information to practitioners on, and access to, social services and other pathways out of the industry if they so choose. The community safety liaison role acts as a single point of contact that connects workers to service providers.
 - Prepared and distributed resource binders containing information related to safety, community supports, licensing, education and health. Binders have been translated and are fully bilingual (English and Mandarin) and are available in all licensed body rub centres.
 - Outreach by community safety liaison in body rub centres from May 1, 2017 to April 30, 2018:
 - 37 centres visited; 97 individual practitioner interactions.
 - Topics discussed: information binders, licensing requirements, living arrangements, personal safety, management/owner fining practices and referrals to other agencies.
 - 50 percent of interactions resulted in follow up or referral services being requested by practitioners.
 - Inspections by municipal enforcement officer in body rub centres from May 1, 2017 to April 30, 2018:
 - 164 centre inspections; 377 individual practitioner interactions.
 - 22 inspections in partnership with community safety liaison.

- 10 follow up referrals to the implementation team community safety liaison.
- Thirty business licence information sessions held between May 1, 2017 and April 30, 2018:
 - 142 attendees; 104 obtained a licence following the course.
 - Type of licence obtained:
 - Body rub practitioner - 99 licences
 - Escort licence - 8 licences
 - Exotic dancer - 2 licences
 - Note: Some individuals obtained more than one type of licence
 - Participants reported:
 - The material covered was helpful to me - 92 percent
 - The speakers were knowledgeable and I could understand them - 96 percent
 - Overall I would rate this course 3 out of 5 or higher - 65 percent
 - 108 service providers signed up at the information sessions to receive monthly updates on resources and services related to the industry in the areas of health, financial empowerment, legislation and safety.
- Administration has contracted a translator for the business licence information sessions, control plan meetings with centre owners, and outreach/inspections to centres, when there are language barriers.
- Printed material (tear-away posters) with City counselling and referral contact information is available in all staff rooms and washrooms of licensed body rub centres.
- Joint inspections with the province's Occupational Health and Safety teams, and Employment Standards teams, are planned for June 2018.

4. Increase physical safety measures within licensed body rub centres.

- The Business Licence Bylaw requires a number of physical safety measures be installed within licensed body rub centres. Site inspections help ensure that these measures are in place:
 - Security cameras and alarm systems/panic buttons installed
 - Height strips made available to all centres to be installed within camera view
 - One person in the centre must be in a 'care and control' position (not providing service delivery).
- Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design information provided to all centres to help guide security camera installation.
- Client behaviour expectation posters have been placed in all licensed body rub centres.

5. Increase licensing compliance of improperly licensed facilities.

- Administration continues to monitor and to take enforcement steps against businesses that may be improperly licensed or unlicensed. The implementation team is currently refining an operational strategy to address these businesses on an ongoing basis.

Corporate Outcomes and Performance Management

Corporate Outcome: Edmonton is a safe city.			
Outcome	Measure(s)	Result(s)	Target(s)
Body Rub centres are in compliance and harm reduction tactics are applied at the centres.	Compliance rate of licensed Body Rub Practitioners.	99 percent	100 percent
	Percent of licensed Body Rub Centres in compliance with the centre control plans	95 percent	100 percent
	Percent of licensed Body Rub Centres visited by implementation team on a quarterly basis.	Quarter 1, 2018: 100 percent	100 percent

Attachment

1. Body Rub Centres Task Force Implementation Plan

Others Reviewing this Report

- S. Padbury / R. Kits, Acting Deputy City Managers, Financial & Corporate Services
- L. McCarthy, Deputy City Manager, Urban Form and Corporate Strategic Development