

What We Heard:

Personal Information and Privacy Considerations for Adult Services Workers

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Edmonton

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INTRODUCTION

At the August 10, 2021 Urban Planning Committee, two speakers who work in the adult services industry expressed concern with requirements under the Business Licence Bylaw for adult services businesses to collect and maintain an employee list containing each worker's full name, date of birth and phone number. The speakers felt that this was an unnecessary collection of very personal information that could put them at risk in the event of a misuse or breach of information. Administration committed to engaging with workers in the adult service industry and returning to Committee with the appropriate bylaw amendments.

Administration engaged with licensed adult service workers to determine their level of support or opposition for removing the bylaw requirements in question. This "What We Heard" report summarizes their feedback and will inform potential bylaw amendments.

METHOD OF ENGAGEMENT

Adult service workers are a vulnerable group with unique licensing needs that are often not addressed through other engagement channels. Public Engagement was designed using Gender-Based Analysis (GBA+) principles to ensure this group of hard-to-reach stakeholders, who often go unheard, were given opportunities to fully participate and voice their feedback in a safe space. Engagement was designed in collaboration with a City of Edmonton Community Safety Liaison who supports workers in the adult services industry. Her experience and expertise informed the approach and methodology.

Starting on August 30, 2022, Administration invited approximately 200 licensed adult services industry workers to participate in a survey. Participants were provided with details of the current bylaw requirements and asked to indicate their level of agreement or disagreement with potential bylaw changes to remove requirements for workers' full name, date of birth and telephone number to be collected and maintained by businesses in their employee lists. The survey also included an open-ended option for the participants to provide qualitative feedback.

The survey was prepared both in English and Mandarin and participants were given the option to choose their preferred language. A team led by the Community Safety Liaison, including a person with lived experience in the adult services industry and an interpreter (when needed) visited body rub centres to encourage workers to complete the survey. The team answered

questions about the survey and the proposed bylaw amendments, and assisted those who needed help with the survey (including providing a tablet to complete the survey).

The survey was open until September 30, 2022.

RESULTS

Participants

Survey invitations were sent by email to approximately 200 individuals licensed under one or more of the following business licence categories:

- Body Rub Practitioner
- Escort Agency (Independent)
- Escort
- Exotic Entertainer

45 people or approximately 23 percent responded to the survey.

Quantitative Results

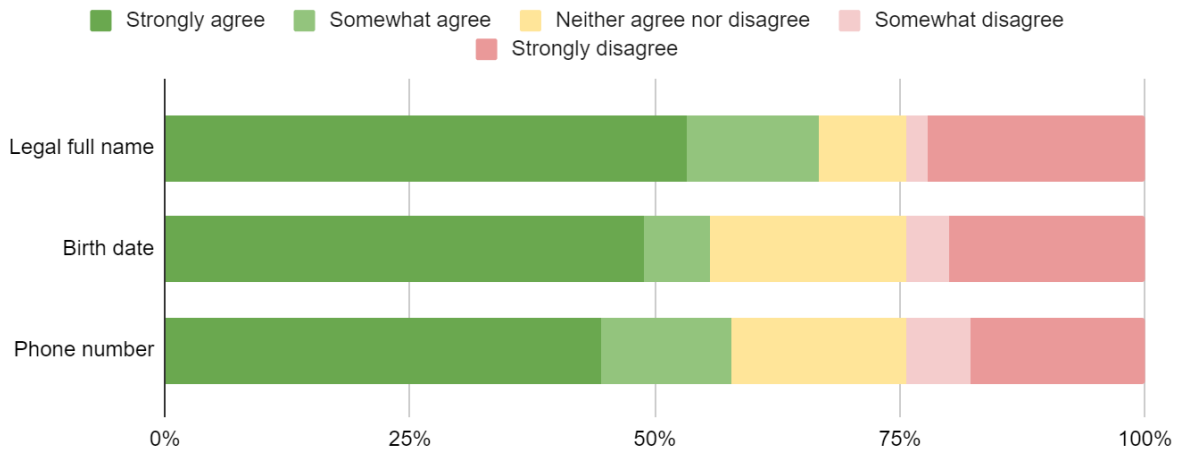
Quantitative survey questions used a five-point rating scale (1 = Strongly Disagree and 5 = Strongly Agree) to assess respondents' level of agreement or disagreement with the proposed bylaw amendments. Since the purpose of the survey was to identify opposition or potential barriers to the proposal, neutral responses were interpreted favourably.

Requirement to Collect Workers' Personal Information

Participants were asked to share their level of support for a proposed bylaw amendment to remove the requirement for body rub centres, escort agencies and exotic entertainment venues to collect each worker's legal full name, birth date and phone number.

75 percent of respondents agreed, strongly agreed or had no opinion about the proposed bylaw amendment, while 25 percent of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed. The results were generally consistent for each type of personal information, although the level of explicit support was slightly higher with respect to the collection of workers' legal full names.

Share your level of support for the proposed bylaw amendment to remove the requirement for Body Rub Centres, Escort Agencies, and Exotic Entertainment Venues to collect each worker's legal full name, birth date and phone number:



Requirement to Maintain a List of Workers' Personal Information

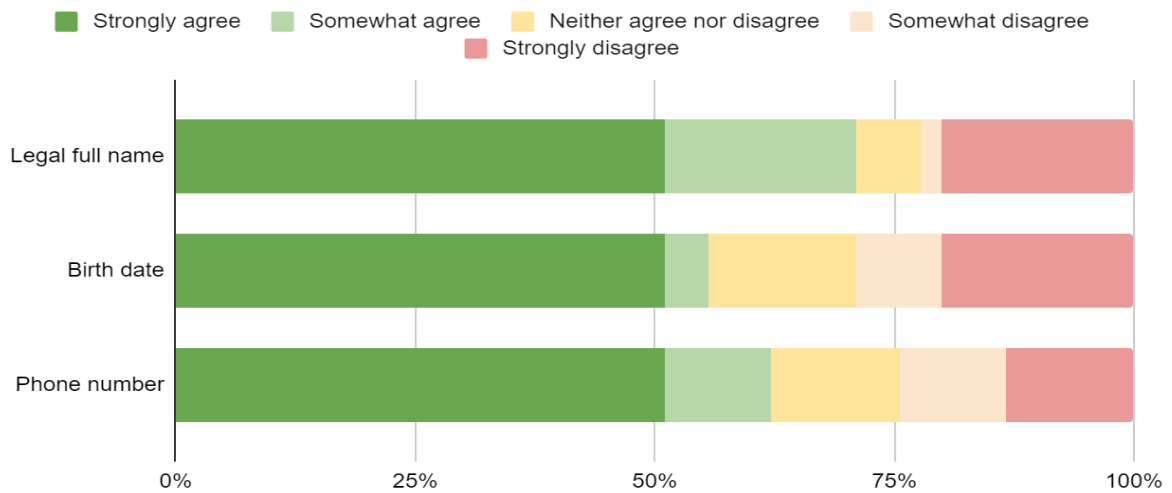
Participants were asked to share their level of support for a proposed bylaw amendment to remove the requirement for body rub centres, escort agencies, and exotic entertainment venues to maintain a list on the premises that includes each worker's legal full name, birth date and phone number.

Legal Full Name: **78 percent** of respondents agreed, strongly agreed or had no opinion about removing the requirement for businesses to maintain each worker's legal full name on the employee list, while 22 percent of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed.

Birth Date: **71 percent** of respondents agreed, strongly agreed or had no opinion about removing the requirement for businesses to maintain each worker's birth date on the employee list, while 29 percent of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed.

Phone Number: **76 percent** of respondents agreed, strongly agreed or had no opinion about removing the requirement for businesses to maintain each worker's phone number on the employee list, while 24 percent of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed.

Share your level of support for the proposed bylaw amendment to remove the requirement for Body Rub Centres, Escort Agencies, and Exotic Entertainment Venues to maintain a list on the premises that includes each worker's legal full name, birth date and phone number:



Qualitative Feedback

At the end of the survey, respondents were asked to share any comments or concerns about the requirements for body rub centres, escort agencies and exotic entertainment venues to collect and maintain industry workers' personal information. 24 respondents shared their thoughts; however, seven responses were not relevant to this engagement and are not discussed in this report.

Of the remaining 17 responses, 14 were supportive of the proposed amendments to remove these requirements. Reasons provided by the respondents include:

- Safety and security concerns (9)
- Concern for being 'outed' as an adult services industry worker (3)
- Potential for information to be misused (2)

Two respondents indicated that the City of Edmonton already has workers' personal information, and one indicated that collecting and maintaining workers' pseudonyms and licence numbers should be sufficient for businesses.

One response did not support the proposed amendments to remove these requirements, and indicated that a record of information should be kept in order to provide assistance to women who go missing.

RECOMMENDATION

Based on these findings, Administration recommends amending Business Licence Bylaw 20002 to remove the requirement for businesses licensed under the Body Rub Centre, Escort Agency, Exotic Entertainment Agency and Exotic Entertainment Venue categories to collect and maintain each worker's legal full name, date of birth and phone numbers in their employee lists. Businesses will continue to collect and maintain each workers' business licence number and pseudonyms which can be cross-referenced with licensing records by authorized City of Edmonton staff when required to ensure the safety and well-being of workers.