



The Liaison Model Between Peers Victoria and the Victoria Police Department: Successes, Challenges, and Recommendations

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Terminology and Abbreviations

Peers Victoria Resource Society: Multi-service grassroots organization by and for sex workers.

Peers' Violence Prevention and Response Program (VPRP): the primary purpose of this program is to prevent and respond to violence against sex workers. It is primarily comprised of three components: Peers' bad date and aggressor reporting system, the VPRP co-ordinator at Peers, and the VicPD liaison role.

VicPD Liaison Role: The officer in this role receives bad date reports directly from the VPRP Co-ordinator at Peers, investigates bad date information, and shares information that concerns sex workers' safety (when applicable) to agencies who affiliate with sex work. The liaison works with the VPRP Co-ordinator when sex workers (through Peers) wish to give statements of their bad dates/aggressors or find out more information about the process involved in making a statement. The liaison officer appears at Peers in plainclothes and will take statements from sex workers at Peers if so desired. In addition (though this has been put on hold due to COVID-19), the police liaison holds workshops at Peers (in plainclothes) to encourage the reporting of bad dates, and to educate sex workers on the steps VicPD takes after a statement is made to address bad date reports.

Liaison Model: The primary purpose of this model, which is based on a liaison relationship between Peer Victoria Resource Society and the Victoria Police Department, is to address barriers (stigma, criminal code, trust, past experience) sex workers face reporting crimes committed against them to police. This model functions primarily through the working relationship between the Peers' Violence Prevention and Response Program and the VicPD Liaison role.

Bad Date and Aggressor Reporting System (BDARS): The VPRP co-ordinator works to make this system as accessible as possible for sex workers, to help prevent and respond to violence. Peers' goal for this system is to help sex works be safer by sharing information with the sex worker community about bad dates/aggressors in Victoria. Bad dates/aggressors can be reported online through Peers' website, in person, through email, or via phone. All reports are anonymous, unless the reporter consents to have their contact information shared with VicPD and/or wishes to make a statement. A summary of the information provided by reporters is shared in the Bad Date/Aggressor Report that is accessible to sex workers, health and social service providers, and VicPD.

A Bad Date/Aggressor: a bad date/aggressor is someone who is violent, threatening, or harmful to a sex worker (including people who verbally harass or waste time). Reports are used to warn other sex workers of clients to avoid.

Sex worker: an individual who receives money, goods, or services, in exchange for sexual services. The term “sex work” was coined to highlight the labour that sex workers of all genders and sectors of the industry are doing (Stella, 2013).

Sex work is often differentiated from human trafficking on the basis that it is consensual work. However, the focus upon it being consensual can often become problematic due to its legal binary categorization (you either consent or you do not) as exploitation *does* exist in the industry (as it does in other industries), and the reasons why an individual enters into sex work vary from necessity— to empowerment. As a result, advocates trying to separate sex work from human trafficking emphasise the importance of *agency* rather than a binary categorization on consent. Stella, an organization by and for sex workers based out of Montreal states the following:

“the decision to earn income through sex work is made along a spectrum of options, regardless of a person’s age. Some people’s spectrums are more limited than others and youth, like others, confront numerous systemic factors or personal circumstances including poverty, homelessness, drug use and mental health. That being said, people exercise agency when making decisions along these spectrums” (Stella, 2013).

Another important difference between the two is “consenting” to engage in the work, but not consenting to certain acts, or exploitative circumstances. Meaning, that someone can consent to sex work and still experience exploitation or non-consensual acts that does not negate their ability to consent to the work. For example, “stealthling” (when a client takes off the condom during sex without the sex workers consent) is a form of sexual assault that the worker has experienced in the workplace that does not take away from them consenting to work within the industry itself. Similarly, a bartender consents to work at the bar, but does not consent to being fondled by an intoxicated customer— this does not mean that the individual did not consent to be a bartender, it means that they have experienced sexual assault at their workplace.

Human Trafficking (or “trafficking in persons”): The definition of human trafficking given in the United Nations’ “Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons” is:

- a. The recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of

abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation shall include, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs.

- b. The consent of a victim of trafficking in persons to the intended exploitation set forth in subparagraph (a) of this article shall be irrelevant where any of the means set forth in subparagraph (a) have been used (UN, 2000).

The Police Records Information Management Environment (PRIME): The information management system used by police agencies across British Columbia to input and access data and other vital information to aid law enforcement agencies in the reduction of crime and victimization. PRIME-BC is the only multi-jurisdictional police records management and computer-aided dispatch system utilized by an entire province in Canada to facilitate information sharing between agencies and provide real-time access to critical information that supports and informs frontline policing, criminal investigations, and crime analysis (PrimeCorpBC, 2015).

LGBTQA2+: an acronym that encompasses sexual and gender identities outside of the Cis-heterosexual identity. It stands for: Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Queer, Asexual, Two-Spirited, and the + stands for any other gender or sexual identity not already named.

CRO: Community Resource Officer at VicPD.

CRO Burnside/Gorge: Community Resource Officer for the Burnside/Gorge neighbourhood in Victoria.

CRO Midtown: The Community Resource Officer for the Midtown neighbourhood in Victoria.

SILO: Sex Industry Liaison Officer for the Vancouver Police Department

SVU: Special Victims Unit (formally called “Sex Crimes Division”); a unit within VicPD.

VicPD: Victoria Police Department.

VPD: Vancouver Police Department

Executive Summary

Purpose & Necessity

- ◆ This project was undertaken between Peers Victoria in partnership with the Victoria Police Department through funding provided by the United Way to do research and documentation work regarding the history, objectives, practices, benefits and challenges of the liaison model between Peers Victoria and the Victoria Police Department.
 - ◆ The primary purpose of the model— which is based on a liaison relationship between Peers Victoria and the Victoria Police department—is to respond to violence experienced by those in the sex industry and to address barriers sex workers face reporting crimes committed against them to the police.
 - ◆ Sex workers face barriers to reporting such as stigma, the criminalization of the industry, and distrust of police due to negative past experiences and/or the history of policing.
 - ◆ The model is necessary because sex workers experience higher rates of assault and victimization compared to the general population, and yet the majority of sex workers do not report violence to police.
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Research Participants & Findings

- ◆ This project was undertaken between Peers Victoria in partnership with the Victoria Police Department through funding provided by the United Way to do research and documentation work regarding the history, objectives, practices, benefits and challenges of the liaison model between Peers Victoria and the Victoria Police Department.
- ◆ The data for this report was gathered from a series of interviews conducted by the project lead who interviewed participants over Zoom, the phone, or in person. The participants interviewed fell into one of three main categories representing the primary stakeholders: sex workers, past or current employees at Peers Victoria, and past or current employees of the Victoria Police Department. A total of 29 participants were interviewed.
- ◆ Significant responses for each interview question—as well as overarching key themes—were examined together and then broken down according to each stakeholder grouping.

The top ten themes that arose from the interviews—which include challenges and strengths of the model— were:

- i. Accessibility to police liaison needs to increase; there needs to be more time and/or employees dedicated to this role and direct access for Peers Victoria.
 - ii. Relationships take time to develop; the liaison relationship has been and/or should be focused on building trust between VicPD, Peers, and sex workers.
 - iii. The liaison model helps sex workers feel more comfortable accessing police, and it is great for increasing reporting and information sharing.
 - iv. Sex workers distrust police due to negative past experiences and/or because of the history of policing.
 - v. It is—or would be—effective to have a VicPD officer as a trusted ally to the sex worker community.
 - vi. Outreach needs to increase to bring awareness to Peers Victoria's Bad Date and Aggressor Reporting System (BDARS) and the liaison officer role.
 - vii. There needs to be an increase in funding and resources dedicated to both the liaison officer role and Peers' VPRP.
 - viii. Peers and VicPD need to work on improving communication between organizations.
 - ix. Peers' BDARS is a good screening tool for sex workers to help them stay safe and share information with community members; sex workers can remain anonymous and still get information to police and other community allies.
 - x. Job turnover often results in the liaison relationship restarting and/or the liaison relationship changes depending on who is in the liaison officer role.
- ♦ Another important theme that arose from VicPD and Peers participants was the desire to improve upon consistency in standards and approach for the liaison relationship; and to create clear policies and practices for the positions involved.
 - ♦ The conflation of sex work with human trafficking by police (and public) was also a concern for sex worker and Peers Victoria participants who expressed a need for VicPD to be educated on the differences between sex work and human trafficking, the diversity of experience within the sex industry, and the harms of anti-trafficking campaigns.
 - ♦ A desire for education, workshops, and casual fun events that could involve collaboration between stakeholders were mentioned by many participants.
 - ♦ Distrust of police was the most significant theme for sex worker participants in these interviews. However, the second greatest theme for sex workers was that they would *like*

to have an effective and genuine ally in the department who they could trust to be responsive to their safety concerns and issues in the community.

Research Participants & Findings

- ♦ The recommendations and future activities section in this report focuses on actions that will help minimize barriers for sex workers in accessing the liaison model, increase sex workers' confidence in police, and improve stakeholder relations.
- ♦ The recommendations prioritize addressing themes from the interviews that can be addressed in the context of this liaison relationship, including: increasing accessibility to the liaison officer; strengthening relationships between sex workers, Peers, and VicPD; improving communication between organizations; overcoming organizational differences in order to arrive at common objectives that are responsive to the needs of sex workers; improving awareness of services through increased outreach; and building confidence and trust between stakeholders through increased investment in the model, education, workshops, and conferences that lead to greater understanding and less stigmatization.
- ♦ It is important that the liaison model between Peers Victoria and VicPD continue to exist and be improved upon. Findings from this project indicate that it is valued amongst stakeholders, beneficial for sex workers, and that interview participants would like to see more time and resources dedicated to its development.

Introduction

The primary purpose of the liaison model created by Peers Victoria and the Victoria Police Department is to respond to violence experienced by those in the sex industry and to address barriers sex workers face reporting crimes committed against them to the police. The model is necessary because sex workers experience higher rates of assault and victimization compared to the general population, and yet most sex workers do not report violence to police (Benoit et al., 2014). These low reporting rates are likely the result of multiple barriers that sex workers face dealing with law enforcement such as stigma, the criminalization of the industry, and distrust of police. Sex workers who face compound stigma due to racism, LGBTQ2A+ identification, substance use, homelessness, etc., are even more likely to experience violence that goes unreported because of additional systemic and individual barriers (Benoit et al., 2018).

The objective of this project was to document the collective feedback regarding past and/or present experiences with the liaison model and relationships between stakeholders; then from analysis of the findings make recommendations directed at the improvement of the model toward minimizing barriers that sex workers encounter accessing law enforcement and in responding to violence experienced by those in the sex industry. Recommendations were made based upon participant responses to a series of questions directed towards understanding the history, objectives, practices, benefits and challenges of the liaison model between Peers Victoria and the Victoria Police Department from the perspective of all stakeholders.

Importantly, the experiences and recommendations documented below are specific to the context of Victoria BC. Laws and regulations, local police department approaches, etc., all differently impact the experiences of sex workers across the globe. That this relationship between Peers Victoria and VicPD exists speaks to the unique context that enabled this report. We recognize that sex workers and allied organizations often have negative (and/or violent) relationships with police departments that prevent them from being able to create accessible and safe environments for sex workers experiencing—or wishing to prevent—violence.

Literature Review

Violence and Reporting

Sex workers experience higher rates of assault and victimization compared to the general population. This is especially true for cis-women, Indigenous, unhoused, im/migrant and Trans sex workers (Benoit et al., 2018). Vulnerability to victimization increases when sex workers face compound stigmas. However, despite experiencing higher levels of victimization, the majority of sex workers do not report violence to police. In their 2012-2016 study, Benoit et al. (2021) found that more than 77% of sex work participants said they had experienced at least one instance of work-based victimization in the last 12 months, including: “someone tried to take something from you by force”; “someone tried to attack you”; “someone threatened to hit or attack you with a weapon”; “someone forced you into unwanted sexual activity”; and someone tried to “verbally abuse or harass you”. Just over 40% of them said they have experienced violent work-based victimization in the past year: 18% were robbed, 24% were attacked, and 29% sexually assaulted. Participants reported being victimized at work mainly by bosses/managers, co-workers, and clients. Benoit et al. (2021) found similar results in their CIHR funded 2017-2019 study conducted in Victoria, BC. In this study of a cross-section of sex workers (n=60), 90% of participants said they had experienced at least one incident of work-based victimization in the past year: 35% reported being robbed, 33% reported being attacked, and 32% reported being sexually assaulted. Concerningly, only 20% of those that experienced victimization contacted the police, and just 15% had a police report filed (Benoit et al., 2021). It was also found during this study that certain demographics within the sex industry (such as Indigenous, male, and LGBTQ2A+ sex workers) were less likely to report victimization to police than others (Benoit et al., 2021).

Studies focused on sex workers (Benoit, 2016; Benoit et al., 2021; Miller, 2002; Sherman et al. 2015) point to multiple factors contributing to these low reporting rates. The most prominent theme involves negative past experiences with police, which includes police-perpetrated physical and sexual assault against sex workers; police misconduct (such as

delayed responsiveness to calls for help) and stigma/discrimination towards sex workers. These negative interactions have all been found to be contributing factors in decreasing the confidence/trust sex workers have in police, which then result in sex workers not reporting violence to law enforcement.

Importantly, police perpetrated violence against sex workers in Canada also has colonial intersections with the State's history of violence against Indigenous women and girls. Policing is in itself directly connected to settler colonialism and there is a well-documented history of police perpetrated violence against Indigenous women and girls (Palmater, 2016; The Truth and Reconciliation Commission, 2015). Given that in British Columbia Indigenous women are disproportionately overrepresented in the sex trade, these intersecting aspects of colonial violence that affect femme Indigenous sex workers is an important consideration in this context when considering how much confidence sex workers have in police (Hunt, 2013).

Previous Research in this Area

There have been two studies funded by the CIHR that address sex workers' confidence in police in Victoria. The first study was conducted in 2012-2016 and included interviews with 218 sex workers across six Canadian cities, with 42 of those participants located in Victoria, BC. The follow up study was done in Victoria with 60 sex worker participants in 2017-2018 and was undergone as a follow up to the 2012-2013 study (see appendix 2).

Findings from those two studies provide information that is pertinent to understanding and improving relationships between VicPD and sex workers. Firstly, when asked "how much confidence do you have in police?" sex workers generally had less confidence compared to the general population. According to data from the Canada-wide general survey, 31% said they had a great deal of confidence, 54% of the population said they had quite a lot of confidence, and only 15% responded that they did not have very much confidence (13%) or no confidence (2%) in police. Comparatively, out of the 218 sex worker participants from the national study, only 7% said they had a great deal of confidence in police, 30% said they had quite a lot of confidence in

police, 37% stated that they did not have very much confidence, and 26% said that they had no confidence at all (Benoit et al., 2016). This demonstrates that the majority of sex workers have little to no confidence in police compared to the general Canadian population with 85% reporting quite a lot to a great deal of confidence in police services (Benoit et al., 2016).

Interestingly, data collected from the Victoria subsample of the 2012-2013 study and the Victoria sample from the 2017-2018 study shows that participants from Victoria gave slightly more positive responses compared to the national sample of sex workers from the 2012-2013 study. For example, 12% of sex workers in both the Victoria studies stated that they had a great deal of confidence in police, which is 5% higher than the average for the national study. In addition, for the last question, 21% of sex workers from the Victoria subsample stated that police do a good job of treating sex workers fairly, which is 7% higher than the national sample; and in the second study (2017-2018) that number increased to 33% percent—19% higher than the national sample of sex workers. This illustrates that in both studies sex worker participants from Victoria had higher satisfaction rates with police in comparison to the national sample (Unpublished data made available by Cecilia Benoit).

Crucially, the qualitative data from the 2012-2013 study found that, for sex workers, trusting that the police were genuinely concerned for their safety, rather than poised to stigmatize, was the most important element in determining how much confidence sex workers had in police (Benoit, 2016). The researchers noted that themes of stigma and discrimination from the police came up more frequently than fear of arrest. These findings led the researchers to conclude that: “the prejudicial attitudes and unjust treatment of sex workers by police likely present more substantial barriers to accessing protective services than the content of the law” (Benoit, 2016). These findings emphasise the need for police departments to actively address stigma and discrimination experienced by sex workers from police in order to minimize barriers that sex workers face and increase their confidence and trust in police. It then follows that increasing sex workers confidence/trust in police will likely result in an increase of access to law enforcement for this demographic.

Similar Liaison Relationships

There is only one other *current* liaison relationship in Canada between a police department and a sex worker organization(s). The Vancouver Police Department (VPD) has a Sex Industry Liaison Officer (SILO) that goes out into the community (primarily in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside) to liaise with outdoor workers and different sex worker organizations. They have an agreement with WISH (a sex worker organization in Vancouver) to visit their location every Tuesday night (pre-Covid) in plain clothes to address safety concerns or issues that sex workers wish to discuss. Pre-Covid VPD's SILO would also go to social events held at WISH and organize day trips to the Gulf Islands in order to help break down barriers between police and sex workers and build relationships with the community. The SILO also currently takes bad date reports in plain clothes at the MAP van and keeps their phone on 24/7 to answer questions or concerns from outreach workers in the MAP Van, WISH, The Corner—or from sex workers directly¹.

The SILO at VPD is a full-time position and has a small budget of its own to enable daily operations. The liaison is outfitted with an undercover/non-descript car and a budget that allows for the SILO to engage with sex workers by providing such necessities as: coffee, food, phone cards, recycled phones, sleeping mats, bus tickets, rides to detox centres or appointments, etc. As a result of these efforts, the SILO is known in the Downtown Eastside community and has spent fourteen years building relationships with sex workers and allied organizations.

History and Evolution of the Model

Peers Victoria has one of the most longstanding liaison relationships with a police department for sex workers in Canada. One enabling factor for the relationship between Peers Victoria and VicPD is VicPD's stance that they do not normally enforce sex work related laws

¹ The MAP Van is run by WISH and is on the road day and night providing support to street-based women in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside. The Corner (formally known as Boys r Us) is an organization for male or Trans sex workers (or former sex workers) in Vancouver.

related to the 2014 Protection of Communities and Exploited Persons Act (PCEPA)². In 2014, the City of Victoria and Mayor's Office wrote a letter urging the federal government to reject Bill C-36 (now PCEPA), because they listened to—and supported—Peers Victoria which expressed concern with how this Bill would negatively impact the lives of sex workers. They expressed in this letter that the city supports Peers' harm reduction approach in supporting the health and safety of sex workers. One paragraph summarized this sentiment with the following:

The City of Victoria Mayor and Council shares [Peers Victoria's] commitment to broad-based harm reduction approaches (including all aspects of the prevention, treatment and care continuum), and strategies for supporting the health and safety of people in the sex industry. We also support [Peers Victoria's] efforts to prevent crimes against sex workers, call community attention to violence against sex workers, and work with Victoria Police Department to increase reporting and investigation of sex-work related crimes (2014).

The letter concluded by stating that the municipal representatives shared concerns with Peers Victoria that Bill C36 “will cause harm to sex workers by discouraging collaborative relationships with police, health providers and social service organizations” (Office of the Mayor, 2014). These collaborative relationships are viewed by VicPD, Peers Victoria, and Council as instrumental in supporting the health and safety of people in the sex industry. After Bill C36 was passed, VicPD reassured Peers' staff through their liaison and stakeholder meetings that they would not be enforcing the new laws and would instead prioritise the health and safety of sex workers.

It was clear during the interview process that participants were a bit uncertain as to how the liaison relationship between Peers and VicPD originated. A former member of staff from Peers Victoria confirmed that there was no formal liaison relationship between Peers and VicPD between 2004 and 2007. Rather, the relationship during that time consisted mainly of a few officers who had an interest in protecting sex workers approaching Peers and checking in with staff on occasion. Those VicPD officers were asked to come in plain clothes when they had appointments or meetings at Peers (which they honoured). There were also times where Peers

² This is based upon verbal statements VicPD has made to Peers Victoria; there is no policy in place to prevent VicPD from enforcing PCEPA laws.

would contact VicPD asking if they would ignore a warrant in order to receive a report from a sex worker with a warrant out against them—which they agreed to in select circumstances.

A few participants who recalled their experience working as “beat cops” between 2007-2009 recognized that there was not a lot of work being done during this time to help keep sex workers safe on the stroll. Consequently, they began trying to build relationships with street-based workers to see how they could help. This work mostly involved these officers checking in with the outdoor workers to see if they needed assistance with safety concerns. They attested that they would never arrest sex workers or “Johns” and would leave if asked. This relationship building resulted in street-based sex workers recommending that these officers contact Peers’ night outreach van and get to know the staff. This advice and relationship building is what led these officers to become connected with Peers.

Based upon the interviews it seems that the best-known beginning of a more formalized liaison relationship with Peers began through the efforts of a Sargent from the Special Victims Unit (SVU) in 2009/2010. The relationship then involved someone within SVU taking on the role of the liaison as the primary point of contact with Peers. That person would go to Peers in plain clothes to meet and interact with Peers’ staff and clientele. The liaison (and other members of the SVU) were reportedly in regular contact with Peers’ Executive Director and outreach staff.

The SVU liaison also recruited officers working in patrol who were interested in being liaisons to Peers in an unofficial capacity:

If they had an interest in developing a rapport, gathering intelligence, supporting [the] sex trade then they could identify themselves and [the SVU liaison] could share with them stuff about the bad date report, about recent meetings [the SVU liaison] had with Peers, about anything going on within sex crimes—and that way, we had two people on each patrol shift who was a “liaison officer” as well as associated with the SVU position. And so, 24/7 typically there was always someone on the street that would be available as a sex trade liaison and that was just something that someone did off the side of their desk (V7)³.

³ Quotes taken from this study are cited according to the stakeholder category and number assigned to that interviewee: “V” represents VicPD, “P” represents Peers, and “SW” represents sex worker; the numbers were randomly assigned.

These efforts by SVU resulted in a team of liaisons that Peers could connect with regardless of the time of day. VicPD and Peers interview participants who described the liaison relationship during this time spoke highly of the effectiveness of having that increased accessibility of a “team” of liaisons. Recruitment of patrol members was also likely influenced by the increased visibility of Peers’ staff, who would go to the police station at 6am to do presentations about Peers’ services before the officers went out on shift change.

Additionally, Peers worked with SVU to create a reporting form so that outreach workers could gather important information immediately after an assault happened. If a sex worker did not wish to make a report, Peers would hold on to that form so that in the event that worker wanted to contact police weeks or months later, that information was preserved. If a sex worker wanted to make a report to the police, someone from SVU would come into Peers in plain clothes and take down the report with a support worker from Peers in the room.

The liaison relationship continued on in this way until 2015 when the portfolio was moved from SVU to the Community Resource Officer (CRO) at Burnside/Gorge. In 2015 the CRO for Burnside/Gorge was a shared position between two officers. They themselves took interest in the portfolio and requested it be transferred to them. They asked for the transfer because their role in the community exposed them to a lot of anecdotal stories about violence against sex workers, and they felt that there was more they could do in terms of violence prevention and response for those in the sex trade.

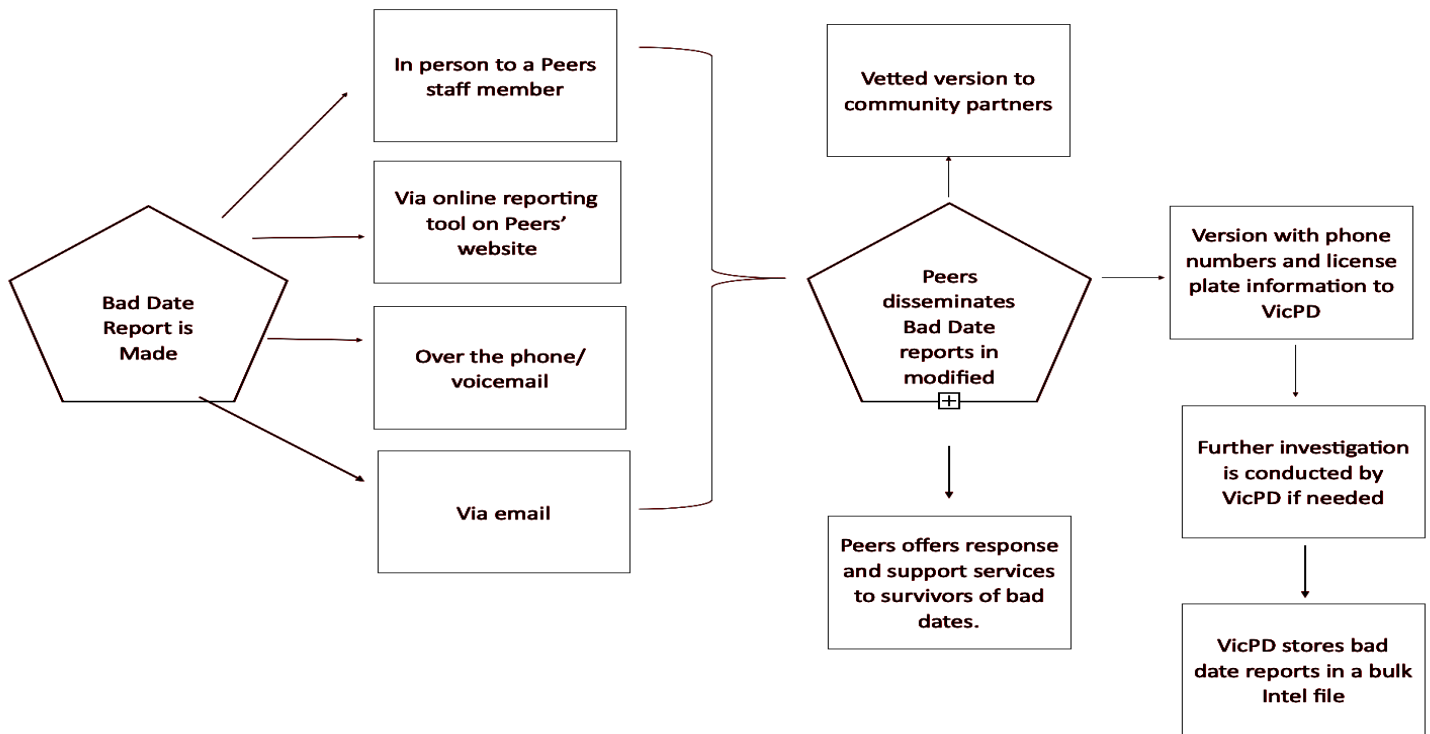
The CRO officers continued the practice of going into Peers in plain clothes to socialize, build trust, and take reports when desired. They also began hosting workshops at Peers to inform sex workers about the steps VicPD takes after a statement is made to address BDARs. Although the position and the portfolio were shared, they were both passionate about the work and tried as best they could to prioritize the portfolio. They were both transferred to different positions within VicPD in 2018 but asked if they could take the portfolio with them; as they felt that they had built a great rapport with Peers’ staff and clientele and did not want relationship

building to begin anew. They continued to share the portfolio until late 2019; the portfolio was then given to the CRO position for Midtown at the beginning of 2020.

Current State

- Currently the liaison model primarily functions through collaboration between one liaison officer from VicPD (the CRO for Midtown) and the Violence Prevention and Response Program (VPRP) co-ordinator at Peers Victoria. The liaison officer receives BDARs directly from the VPRP Co-ordinator at Peers, investigates bad date information, and shares information that concerns sex workers' safety (when applicable) with departments within VicPD who affiliate with sex work (primarily SVU). The liaison works with the VPRP co-ordinator when sex workers, through Peers, wish to give statements of their bad dates/aggressors or find out more information about the process involved in making a statement. The liaison officer appears at Peers in plainclothes and will take statements from sex workers at Peers if they wish to utilize this resource. Afterwards the liaison officer will connect the sex worker with an investigative officer who will then handle their case (the liaison no longer investigates all cases directly as time requirements do not allow for this). Lastly, the police liaison holds workshops at Peers in plainclothes to encourage the reporting of bad dates and to educate sex workers on the steps VicPD takes to address bad date reports (although this has been put on hold due to COVID-19).

Figure 1: Bad Date and Aggressor Reporting System Process



Methodology

The data for this report was gathered from a series of interviews conducted over the span of three months in which the project lead (Leigh Elliott) interviewed 29 participants over Zoom, the phone, or in person (apart from one participant who requested they write out their responses and send them to the project lead). Interview times varied from 13 to 82 minutes depending on the amount of feedback interviewees gave.

The participants interviewed fell into one of three main categories representing the primary stakeholders: past or current employees (or board members) at Peers Victoria Resources Society; past or current employees of the Victoria Police Department; and sex workers. The interviews

included questions that were asked of all participants, as well as questions that were either specific to Peers Victoria and VicPD staff, or to sex workers⁴.

This non-academic study utilized the qualitative research methodology of thematic analysis. “Codes” were determined by the project lead after reading the transcripts multiple times, creating bullet notes of what was said by each respondent, turning those bullet notes into codes, and then grouping together responses according to similar codes into coding themes⁵. The coding process was done twice to ensure accuracy and because some codes were altered after the first round in order to better represent and combine responses. This process was done for each individual question in order to determine significant themes for each. Significance was measured by how many participants gave similar feedback that fit within that coding theme. In order to be deemed significant, a theme had to hit a threshold of three participant responses or more. The most significant themes are the themes the participants mentioned the most for that particular question. Therefore, for some questions there are no significant themes for some, or all, categories (meaning there were only two respondents or less that gave similar feedback).

After thematic analysis for individual questions was complete, the project lead then examined overarching key themes from the interviews arrived at through consideration of trends in the responses found throughout all the interview questions. At this point in the thematic analysis codes were combined to represent “key themes” that arose from the cumulative data. These themes were then arranged from greatest to least significance overall, and then broken down according to the top ten key themes for each stakeholder category.

⁴ See Appendix 1.

⁵ The project lead tried to best represent the interviewees by using their own words for coding. However, in cases where codes were combined into coding themes, they were paraphrased in order to group participants together who had similar responses.

Interview Participants Selection Process and Demographic Information

The interview participants representing Peers Victoria and VicPD were chosen by the Executive Director of Peers, Rachel Phillips, and the current VicPD liaison officer, Jessica Moretto. The recommendations for these candidates were made based on their former and/or current experience with— and/or knowledge of— the liaison model.

Eleven sex workers were interviewed for this project. Only six participants had accessed Peers regularly, three participants had minimal exposure to Peers (with two out of the three only having had one interaction with Peers before being referred to the project lead for an interview), and two participants had never accessed Peers. One out of the two participants who had never accessed Peers was sought out through an indoor workers group on Facebook, and the other participant was found through word of mouth. Out of the three participants who had minimal access to Peers, two were referred to the project lead after they were approached by a support worker (also employed at Peers) at one of the temporary housing sites set up in Victoria in response to COVID-19. The third participant was asked if they would like to be interviewed for this project by Peers' drop-in coordinator after having their initial first contact with the centre.

In order to ensure that sex worker interviewees included a wide range of demographic representation (Trans, Indigenous, indoor/outdoor/online work, connected to Peers/not connected to Peers, etc.) some demographic questions were asked prior to scheduling an interview. All participants from this category were asked these four questions at the beginning of the interview to help gather demographic information:

(1) What type of sex work do you/have you engage(d) in?

(a) Outdoor (b) Indoor (including escort agencies, independent, or out calls) (c) Online work (d) All of the above (e) Other.

(2) What gender do you identify as?

(3) Do you identify as Indigenous, a person of colour, or other?

(4) What is your age range?

(a) 19 and under (b) 20-26 (c) 27-33 (d) 34-40 (e) 41-50 (f) 50+

For the first question, some participants chose more than one option and two further specified their answers. Seven participants stated that they have done/or currently do indoor work, with two respondents further specifying that they do outcalls. Three participants responded that they have done/or currently do online work. Another three participants replied as having done “all of the above” (indoor, outdoor, and online). Finally, one respondent stated that they have done/or currently do outdoor work.

The second question was posed in such a way that gender identification was self-disclosed. Therefore, the exact Trans/non-binary representation that was accessed for this study is unknown. However, one participant did self-identify as zi/hir/femme gender, while another self-identified as non-binary. The remaining participants included seven self-identified women and two self-identified men. Three participants identified as Indigenous, one identified as Metis/white, one identified as a person of colour, and six participants either identified as white or other. One participant was between 20-26, four were between 27-33, another four were between 34-40, one participant stated that they were 50+, and another said they identified with all ages. That means that the majority of participants (8/10—as the age for the one participant is unknown) were between 27 and 40 years of age.

The demographic questions posed were the same for Peers Victoria and VicPD participants; with the exception that they were not asked the first question (what type of sex work do you—or have you—engage(d) in?) and were instead asked what their position is/was within their organization. Out of the interviewees from the VicPD category, two stated that they were former VicPD employees, while eight were currently employed with VicPD; six identified as women and four as men; all ten participants identified as white or other; one participant stated they were between 27 and 33 years of age, one was between 34-40, six were between 41-50, and two said that they were 50+.

Peers Victoria was the smallest category out of the three, with only eight interview participants. In terms of the demographic information collected for Peers: two of the

interviewees were former employees, while six were current employees (apart from one participant who is a Board Member); all eight participants identified as women; one identified as Indigenous, one as a person of colour, and six identified as white or other; one participant was between 20-26, one was between 27-33, four were between 41-50, and two were 50+. Thus, the most common age bracket for both Peers and VicPD staff was 41-50 (10/18 participants).

Interview Questions and Responses

This section will examine the top significant themes from each category for each of the questions. It looks at the significant themes overall, as well as significant themes broken down according to category (Peers, VicPD, and sex workers) when relevant. The questions (along with definitions of terms) were sent out in written form to interview participants at least two days before the interview, with the option for participants to follow up with the project lead if they required any clarification⁶. Questions that had two or more parts to them were broken down during the coding process—which this section reflects. The number in brackets beside each theme indicates how many participants gave feedback that fits that response for that particular question. A summarized chart of this section is also available in the Appendix.

Question One: What can you tell me about the history of the VicPD liaison role for sex workers in Victoria?

The top three most significant themes overall for this question were:

- Relationship building takes time; the focus historically for this role has been on building bridges or strengthening relationships (7).
- Every time staff change positions it restarts the relationships a bit, and/or the relationships change depending on who is in the liaison role (5).
- I believe that a more formal liaison relationship with Peers started with the SVU (5).

⁶ See Appendix #1 for form.

There were no significant thematic responses from sex worker participants for this question. Most participants from this category were not familiar with the history of the liaison role for sex workers in Victoria, and only a few gave feedback for this question. The most significant thematic responses for this question from Peers' participants were:

1. Every time staff change positions it restarts the relationships a bit, and/or the relationships change depending on who is in the liaison role (4).
2. Relationship building takes time; the focus historically for this role has been on building bridges or strengthening relationships (3).

The most significant thematic responses for this question from VicPD participants were:

1. Relationship building takes time; the focus historically for this role has been on building bridges or strengthening relationships (4).
2. I believe that a more formal liaison relationship with Peers started with the SVU (4).
3. An officer would come into Peers in plain clothes/or an officer would approach workers on the street in plain clothes (3).

Question Two: Can you describe some strengths and challenges of the relationships between VicPD, Peers, and sex workers? Please comment on past and current relationships.

The most significant themes overall found in relation to the strengths of the relationships between VicPD, Peers, and sex workers were:

1. That the criminal code has not been enforced by VicPD around sex work as it enables Peers to have this relationship with VicPD (5).
2. That there is an open channel of communication between Peers and VicPD (4).
3. That Peers and VicPD have the ability to work together and co-operate (4).
4. That this relationship between Peers and VicPD tries to create a supportive, safer, and more accessible environment for sex workers to report violence and access police (4).

5. That good relationships/trust is built between the staff at Peers and VicPD and then by extension sex workers who access Peers Victoria (4).
6. That good relationships/trust is built between individuals at VicPD and sex workers (4).

The most significant themes overall found in relation to the **challenges** of the relationships between VicPD, Peers, and sex workers were:

1. That sex workers distrust police due to bad past experiences and/or the history of policing (14).
2. That there is not enough time dedicated to the liaison role. The liaison needs to be more accessible to Peers and sex workers—ideally with someone assigned to this position full-time or having more than one liaison officer (8).
3. That stigma and discrimination against sex workers is a barrier in accessing justice and improving relationships with VicPD (especially when sex workers face compound stigma) (7).

There were no significant themes for sex worker participants found in relation to the **strengths** of these relationships. However, the most significant themes for sex workers found in relation to the **challenges** of the relationships between VicPD, Peers, and sex workers were:

1. That sex workers generally distrust police due to bad past experiences with police and/or the history of policing (5).
2. That sex workers worry about being “outed” and/or worry about confidentiality with VicPD (4).
3. That stigma and discrimination against sex workers is a barrier to accessing justice and to improving relationships with VicPD (especially when sex workers face compound stigma) (3).

The only significant thematic response for Peers participants found in relation to the **strengths** of the relationships between VicPD, Peers, and sex workers was that the criminal code has not been enforced around sex work which enables Peers to have this relationship with

VicPD (4). The most significant thematic responses found in relation to the **challenges** of these relationships were:

1. That sex workers distrust police due to bad past experiences and/or the history of policing (4).
2. That there is not enough time dedicated to the liaison role, the liaison needs to be more accessible to Peers and sex workers—ideally with someone assigned to this position full-time or having more than one liaison officer (4).
3. That stigma and discrimination against sex workers is a barrier to accessing justice and to improving relationships with VicPD (especially when sex workers face compound stigma) (3).
4. That the law/justice system is unsuited for survivors of any type of violence, but especially for survivors who are also sex workers (3).

The only significant thematic response for VicPD participants found in relation to the strengths of the relationships between VicPD, Peers and sex workers was that it is a strength to have the ability to work together and co-operate as organizations (4). The most significant thematic responses found in relation to the challenges of these relationships were:

1. That sex workers distrust police due to bad past experiences and/or the history of policing (5).
 2. That turnover restarts the relationships a bit and/or that the relationship changes depending on who is in the role (5).
 3. That there is not enough time dedicated to the liaison role, the liaison needs to be more accessible to Peers and sex workers—ideally with someone assigned to this position full-time or having more than one liaison officer (4).
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Question Three: Can you describe some strengths and challenges of the liaison violence prevention and response model, again thinking about the past and present: a.) bad date reporting system, b.) the liaison officer role? Do you have any suggestions for areas of improvement?

The most significant themes overall found regarding to the **strengths** of the BDARS were:

1. It is a really important safety tool and is great for screening dates and sharing bad date information with other sex workers (6).
2. It is great and it runs smoothly (4).
3. It makes it easier for sex workers to report things/share information if they do not want to go to the cops, and/or if they want to remain anonymous (4).
4. The bad date list is a great information sharing tool with police and is one of the only ways that VicPD gets information about bad dates (4).

The only significant theme for sex worker respondents was that it is a really important safety tool and is great for screening dates and sharing bad date information with other sex workers (4). The only significant theme for Peers participants for this category was that moving the BDARS online is an excellent addition to the VPRP (3). The most significant themes for VicPD participants were:

1. That the bad date list is a great information sharing tool with police and is one of the only ways that they get information about bad dates (4).
2. It makes it easier for sex workers to report things/share information if they do not want to go to police, and/or if they want to remain anonymous (3).

The most significant themes overall found regarding the **challenges** of the BDARS were:

1. That some workers are not aware of this service and Peers could do more outreach and public education around it (4).
2. The information collected from the BDAR sheets need to be distributed, filed, and processed consistently within VicPD (3).

3. It is difficult for officers to read about violent bad dates and then not be able to follow up on it because the worker does not wish to make an official report (3).
4. Sometimes the information on the bad date sheets is really vague (3).

There were no significant themes for this category for sex worker and Peers participants. However, there were two significant themes for VicPD respondents, including:

1. The information collected from the BDAR sheets need to be distributed, filed, and processed consistently within VicPD (3).
2. It is difficult for officers to read about violent bad dates and then not be able to follow up on it (3).

The most significant themes found overall regarding the **strengths** of the liaison officer role were:

1. That this relationship/role can help create a safer, supportive, and more accessible environment for sex workers to report violence and access law enforcement (5).
2. It would be/it is nice to have a sex worker ally/expert in the police department (4).
3. The liaison role helps build relationships and trust between officers at VicPD and sex workers (4).
4. It is a strength to have a consistent name and face that is welcomed at Peers (3).

There were no significant themes for sex worker participants. The only significant theme for this category for Peers participants was that it is a strength that this relationship/role can help create a safer, supportive, and more accessible environment for sex workers to report violence to the police and access law enforcement (3). The only significant theme for VicPD respondents was that it is a strength to have a consistent name and face that is welcomed at Peers (3).

The most significant themes found overall regarding the **challenges** of the liaison officer role were:

1. That there is not enough time dedicated to the liaison role, the liaison needs to be more accessible to Peers and sex workers—ideally with someone assigned to this position full-time or having more than one liaison officer (10).
2. Every time staff change positions it restarts the relationship a bit and/or the relationship changes depending on who is in the liaison role (6).
3. More resources/funding is needed for the liaison role (3).
4. Picking the right person for the job—ideally it would be someone passionate about the role with either past experience in the industry, or who has knowledge and education around the sex trade and the issues that are important to sex workers (3).
5. That sex workers only trust the liaison—and not other officers— as this restricts their access to justice and safety (3).
6. Having to change into plain clothes before coming into Peers was/is a challenge as it is time consuming and there is not much time dedicated to this role to begin with (3).

There were no significant themes found for sex worker participants for this category. The only significant theme found for Peers participants for this category was consistent with the number one theme for VicPD participants—four Peers participants gave similar thematic feedback. The most significant themes for this category for VicPD participants were:

1. That there is not enough time dedicated to the liaison role, the liaison needs to be more accessible to Peers and sex workers—ideally with someone assigned to this position full-time and/or having more than one liaison officer (6).
2. Every time staff change positions it restarts the relationship a bit and/or the relationship changes depending on who is in the liaison role (5).

There were no significant themes in relation to suggestions for areas of improvement with the BDARS. In terms of suggestions for areas of improvement with the liaison role there were two significant themes overall:

1. That there is not enough time dedicated to the liaison role, the liaison needs to be more accessible to Peers and sex workers—ideally with someone assigned to this position full-time or having more than one liaison officer (7).
2. That the liaison role needs to be prioritized and given the resources and budget that it needs to operate effectively (3).

There were no significant themes for sex worker participants. The participants from Peers and VicPD were consistent here, with both of their groups having the same single significant theme represented as the #1 overall theme (3 from Peers and 4 from VicPD).

Question Four: Do you think the liaison working model between Peers Victoria and VicPD is beneficial for sex workers? Why or why not?

Overall, the response for this question was quite positive, with only three participants responding that it is not beneficial for sex workers and one participant stating that they did not know. Otherwise, participants either stated that yes it was beneficial, or that it was beneficial but with caveats attached, such as: “yes, but there is work to be done”, or “yes, if it is done properly”. The most significant thematic responses overall for this question were:

1. Yes, it is good for helping sex workers feel comfortable and safe accessing law enforcement (8).
2. Yes, I do think it is beneficial (4).
3. Yes, but there is work to be done (4).
4. It is beneficial in some ways (3).
5. Yes, it increases reporting and/or helps sex workers feel comfortable reporting (3).
6. It is beneficial if it is done well, and you have the right people (3).
7. It is beneficial to have an officer that stands with sex worker rights and is an ally to the community (3).

The most significant theme for both sex workers and VicPD was that the liaison model is beneficial for helping sex workers feel comfortable and safe accessing law enforcement (3 and 3 respectively). There were no significant themes that arose from Peers participants. The second significant theme for VicPD was: “yes, it is beneficial, but there is work to be done” (3).

Question Five: Can you describe some of the facilitating and constraining factors of the liaison model that help or hinder relationships between sex workers, Peers, and Vic PD?

There were no significant themes to report for facilitating factors of the liaison model that help relationships between sex workers, Peers, and VicPD. However, there were two themes that could be combined to make a significant theme: (1) having the liaison go to the drop-in centre, visit peers and do workshops (2 from VicPD participants), and (2) being available and going to meet sex workers in plain clothes (2 from VicPD participants); together they both speak to the general idea that having the liaison available and accessible to sex workers at Peers in an approachable and casual way facilitates relationships between sex workers, Peers, and VicPD.

The most significant themes overall for **constraining** factors of the liaison model that hinder relationships between sex workers, Peers and VicPD were:

1. That there is not enough time dedicated to the liaison role, the liaison needs to be more accessible to Peers and sex workers—ideally with someone assigned to this position full-time or having more than one liaison officer (4).
2. The stigma and discrimination that sex workers face (4).
3. The constant turnover that then results in having to restart these relationships (4).
4. Communication challenges and poor relationships between Peers and VicPD (3).
5. Consistency is an issue because there are no clear expectations, protocols, standards, or policy in place for the liaison role (3).

There were no significant themes for sex worker participants for this question. The most significant theme for Peers participants in identifying constraining factors was that there is not enough time dedicated to the liaison officer role and that the liaison officer needs to be more accessible to Peers and sex workers—ideally with someone assigned to this position full-time or having more than one liaison officer (3). Comparatively, for VicPD participants the most significant themes were:

1. The constant turnover that then results in having to restart these relationships (3); communication challenges and poor relationships between Peers and VicPD (3).
 2. Consistency is an issue because there are no clear expectations, protocols, standards, or policies in place for the liaison role (3).
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Question Six: Do you think all people in sex work have equal access to positive outcomes with the liaison model? What might contribute to differences in access?

Overwhelmingly the response for this question was that not all people in sex work have access to the liaison model. There were only two participants who responded otherwise, with one person saying, “I think so”, and another stating that they were unsure.

There were many reasons given for what might contribute to differences in access. The most significant themes overall were:

1. Facing compound stigma from racism, discrimination, and/or belonging to a marginalized population (such as being unhoused, suffering from substance dependency, etc.) in addition to the stigma experienced from being a sex worker (10).
2. Distrust of police due to negative past experiences or cultural perceptions (5).
3. If you have other areas of life where you are in conflict with the criminal code outside of sex work (if you have a warrant out for your arrest, or if you use illegal substances) (5).
4. There is not equal access for sex workers outside of VicPD's jurisdiction (4).

5. Online and indoor workers do not interact with/or have less contact with Peers and the police so it is harder to build those relationships or make them aware of services (4).
6. Street-based workers have less access to resources in general and experience more stigma and so may be more fearful of police (4).

Broken down according to each group, the most significant theme for both sex workers and Peers participants regarding what prevented all people in sex work from having equal access to positive outcomes was in respect to those facing compound stigma from racism, discrimination, and/or from belonging to a marginalized population (such as being unhoused, suffering from substance dependency, etc.) (4 and 6 respectively). The second most significant theme for sex workers was that street-based workers generally have less access to resources and experience more stigma and so may be more fearful of police, which may contribute to differences in access (3). The second most significant theme for Peers participants was that you do not have equal access if you have other areas of life that conflict with the criminal code outside of sex work (if you have a warrant out for your arrest, or if you use illegal substances, etc.) (4). VicPD participants only had one significant theme for this question: that there is not equal access for sex workers outside of VicPD's jurisdiction because the liaison officer will not be able to help them with their case outside of connecting them with an officer in the jurisdiction where the incident occurred (4).

Question Seven: What do you see as the greatest barrier for sex workers in accessing services from the current liaison model between Peers and VicPD (if any)?

The most significant themes overall for what participants saw as being the greatest barriers for sex workers in accessing services from the current liaison model were:

1. The accessibility of the liaison officer. The liaison officer needs to be more accessible to Peers and sex workers, ideally with someone assigned to this position full-time or having more than one person in this role (8).
2. Distrust of police officers due to negative past experiences (7).
3. The stigma that sex workers experience (5).
4. The criminalization of the sex trade (5).

The most significant themes for sex workers that came up for this question were:

1. Distrust of police officers due to negative past experiences (4).
2. The stigma that sex workers experience (3).
3. The criminalization of the sex trade (3).

There were no significant themes that came out of this question from Peers participants. The most significant themes that VicPD participants identified as being the greatest barriers for sex workers accessing services from the current liaison model were:

1. The accessibility of the liaison officer. The liaison officer needs to be more accessible to Peers and sex workers, ideally with someone assigned to this position full-time or having more than one person in this role (6).
2. That VicPD needs to dedicate more time toward improving relationships with sex workers, including indoor workers who are not as visible (3).

The following questions were category specific, with the first three questions directed solely to sex worker participants, and the final two questions reserved for both VicPD and Peers participants. As a result, there are no category specific responses for the questions directed solely to sex worker participants.

Question One: Have you, or would you use the bad date reporting system? Why or why not?

All applicable participants responded that they either have used the BDARS (8); or would now that they have heard of it (2). There was only one participant that this question was not applicable for because they have never engaged in sex work in Victoria due to language barriers.

In response to the second portion of the question (why or why not?) three participants stated that they have/or would use it because it is an important tool that keeps sex workers safe, while another participant noted that they use it because it is one of the only ways to keep people accountable who have caused harm. One participant stated that they continue to use the service because it has proved effective for them in the past: “yah I used it and and right away on—they put out the new sheets I think it was within a day or two and that bad date was on it. So, I mean, I had to access it and it worked for me” (SW 2).

There was also some criticism and suggestions for the improvement of Peers’ BDARS. One respondent expressed that they wished it was more user friendly and that there was an app for it that they could download onto their phone. Another participant replied that they did not feel comfortable reporting directly because of police involvement with the BDARS: “I have had someone else make a report for me. I would not personally use it as I want to stay away from the police/policing, which are harmful. I really like the concept and believe that it helps people, I just don’t think cops should be directly involved” (SW 7)⁷. Finally, one participant mentioned that although the BDARS is great, it is disappointing that only so much information can legally be provided on the sheet, which then renders the information to be vague at times.

⁷ It is unclear how having a friend make the report for them would be a better option for distancing themselves from the police. It is the project lead’s assumption that perhaps this individual believes that the police can see the phone numbers/emails that the reports are connected to even when anonymously reporting (which is not the case).

Question Two: Have you, or would you access services from a) Peers Victoria and b) VicPD liaison if/when you had a safety concern or experienced a bad date? Why or why not?

In response to this question three sex workers stated that they would go to Peers but not the liaison; three workers said that they would contact Peers first and if the date was bad enough they would utilize the liaison officer with Peers' support; similarly, two workers responded that they would go to Peers and then maybe the liaison with Peers' support—but that they would only talk to the liaison at Peers and/or if they were more familiar with the liaison officer; and one worker said they would not access the police liaison, but they might access Peers or fill out a third-party report. In addition, one worker who had stated they would go to Peers and maybe utilize the liaison with Peers' support also commented that they would call VicPD if there was a number to contact the liaison officer to let them know what happened. Finally, one participant who has formally accessed both Peers and the liaison spoke very highly of Peers and commented that the officer who assisted with the case was very helpful.

In response to the latter portion of the question, four participants stated that they would go to Peers because they were more comfortable/familiar with their services, and/or because they have been a huge support in their lives so far. One participant, when asked why they would access Peers but not the liaison, simply stated: “[because] stigma stops at the door here right?” (SW2). Three participants explained that they would not or would be hesitant to access the liaison because of negative experiences they have had with police in the past; and one participant cited they would not access the liaison because they do not trust VicPD with their information.

Question Three: What strategies do you use either as an individual or in your work community to stay safe?

The significant themes found for this question for sex worker participants were:

1. Use group chats or other avenues to communicate with other sex workers to discuss bad dates and check-up on one another (4).
 2. Have a good support system/community (4).
 3. Work in teams and/or with somebody nearby (whether working indoors or outdoors) (3).
 4. Try to stick to the same dates and/or do not go with new people when working alone (3).
 5. Have a driver or someone who checks up on them and/or someone who is aware of their whereabouts at all times (3).
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Questions One: What changes (if any) would you like to see Peers Victoria and VicPD make in order to improve relations with sex workers in Victoria?

There were no significant themes for Peers staff alone, but all of the following were significant themes for VicPD participants. The overall significant themes regarding changes that staff would like to see made in order to improve relations with sex workers in Victoria were:

1. That there needs to be more time dedicated to the liaison role, the liaison needs to be more accessible to Peers and sex workers—ideally with someone assigned to this position full-time or having more than one liaison officer (6).
 2. Staff would like to see VicPD invest more time into building trust with sex workers (5).
 3. There needs to be more consistency in communication between organizations (monthly or quarterly meetings) (5).
 4. There needs to be an increase in resources invested into the relationship from VicPD (4).
 5. There needs to be consistency in standards and approach and clear expectations and policy in place for the liaison role (4).
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Question Two: Can you describe what you know about the objectives of the Peers VicPD liaison relationship? What changes (if any) would you like to see VicPD and/or Peers make in terms of their objectives or priorities for the liaison model going forward?

The majority of staff interviewed were not aware of what the formal objectives were for the liaison relationship. In these cases, they answered based on what they perceived them to be, or on what their objectives were when they were involved with the model. The most significant responses for what staff thought the objectives of the liaison relationships are were:

1. To make it safer, more accessible/comfortable for sex workers to access law enforcement when desired (8—5 Peers and 3 VicPD).
2. To increase reporting to police and/or empower sex workers to report violence (5—2 Peers and 3 VicPD).
3. To try and make everybody safe/work together to help prevent and respond to gender-based and sexualized violence (5—1 Peers and 4 VicPD).
4. To improve communication between Peers and VicPD and break down some barriers (3—2 Peers and 1 VicPD).
5. To improve relations and build trust between sex workers and police (3 VicPD).

The most significant theme for Peers participants was to make it safer and more accessible/comfortable for sex workers to access law enforcement when desired (5). The most significant theme for VicPD participants was to try and make everybody safe and to work with Peers to prevent and respond to gender-based and sexualized violence (4). However, three VicPD participants also mentioned that the objective was to make it safer and more accessible/comfortable for sex workers to access law enforcement. Therefore, both Peers and VicPD participants were pretty aligned in terms of what they saw the objectives of the relationship to be; but VicPD participants seemed to have more diverse ideas of what the objectives were, while five out of eight Peers participants had a similar perspective regarding the objectives of the model.

In terms of what changes (if any) participants would like to see VicPD and/or Peers make in terms of their objectives or priorities going forward, the most significant themes for both groups were:

1. To invest more money and resources towards the liaison officer role/relationship (5: 2 Peers and 3 VicPD).
2. To increase accessibility to the liaison officer; ideally have one more than one liaison or make it a full-time position (4: 2 Peers and 2 VicPD).
3. To have more consistency in the liaison officer and VPRP roles, and in communication between organizations (4: Peers 1 and VicPD 3).
4. Create a job description for the liaison officer role with clear expectations and protocols in place (3 VicPD).

Key Themes from Interviews

After concluding thematic analysis for each individual question, the project lead went through the data to pick out and combine overarching key themes from the interviews. **Figure 2** depicts the key themes in descending order from greatest to least significance in reference to the number of times that topic/theme was brought up throughout the interviews. **Figures 3-5** all illustrate the three most significant key themes from each participant grouping.

Figure 2: Key Themes

Overall Key Themes	PRS N=8	VP N=10	SW N=11	SUM N=29
#1: More time dedication/accessibility/direct access to the VicPD liaison officer is required.	21	28	1	50
#2: Relationship building takes time. This liaison relationship has been and/or should be focused on strengthening relationships and building trust between VicPD, Peers, and sex workers.	12	29	6	48
#3: The liaison relationship is great for information sharing with police and increasing reporting /having sex workers feel safer and more comfortable accessing police.	14	24	5	43

#4: Sex workers distrust police due to negative past experiences and/or the history of policing.	12	11	17	43
#5: It is/would be effective to have a VicPD officer as a trusted ally to the community —accessible through Peers—who is a consistent name and face and knows the issues important to the community.	12	18	9	39
#6: Stigma and discrimination/racism (and/or compound stigma) are barriers to accessing justice and/or the current liaison model.	15	2	14	31
#7: Outreach efforts need to increase in order to have sex workers more aware of the liaison officer role and the BDARS/VPRP at Peers.	14	9	8	31
#8: There needs to be more funding and resources dedicated towards both the VicPD liaison and the VPRP co-ordinator roles.	15	15	0	30
#9: Peers and VicPD need to work on improving communication and have consistent communication between organizations.	3	21	1	25
#10: The BDARS is a good screening tool for sex workers that helps them stay safe and share information. It is also an alternative way that sex workers can remain anonymous and still share intelligence with police and other community allies.	6	8	9	23
#11: Turnover often results in restarting the relationship and/or the relationship changes depending on who is in the liaison officer role.	7	14	0	21
#12: Consistency is an issue with the liaison officer role: there needs to be clear expectations, protocols, and policies in place.	1	18	0	19
#13: It would be great to see VicPD officers educated on	9	2	4	15

the diversity of sex work from a rights-based approach (training and workshops).				
#14: Different organizational objectives and priorities cause issues; there needs to be effort invested in navigating these differences so that common goals can be reached.	6	9	0	15
#15: The criminalization of the sex trade is a barrier for sex workers in accessing the justice system and developing this liaison relationship with VicPD further.	7	2	5	14
#16: VicPD's interest in human trafficking hinders their relationship with Peers and sex workers. They need to understand the difference between trafficking for sexual exploitation and sex work and the harms of anti-trafficking campaigns.	6	0	5	11
#17: Sex workers worry about being "outed" and/or have confidentiality concerns which is a barrier to accessing police.	2	1	7	10
#18: Jurisdiction is a barrier for sex workers wanting to access these services if an incident occurred outside of VicPD's jurisdiction.	0	8	0	8

*PRS = Peers participants, VP = VicPD participants, and SW = sex worker participants. "N" represents the number of participants in that group and "Sum" is the combined total from all participants.

Figure 3: Top Themes for Sex Worker Participants

Top Three Themes For Sex Worker Participants	SW N=11
#1: Sex workers distrust police due to negative past experiences and/or the history of policing.	17
#2: Stigma and discrimination/racism (and/or compound stigma) are barriers to accessing justice and/or the current liaison model.	14

#3: It is/would be effective to have a VicPD officer as a trusted ally to the community—accessible through Peers—who is a consistent name and face at Peers and knows the issues important to the community.	9
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Figure 4: Top Themes for Peers Participants

Top Three Themes For Peers Participants	PRS N=8
#1: More time dedication/accessibility/direct access to the VicPD liaison officer is required.	21
#2: Stigma and discrimination/racism (and/or compound stigma) are barriers to accessing justice and/or the current liaison model.	15
#3: There needs to be more funding and resources dedicated towards both the liaison and the VPRP co-ordinator roles.	15

*The themes highlighted in red depict shared top three significant themes between Peers and sex worker participants. Those highlighted in purple illustrate the top three significant themes shared between Peers and VicPD participants. There were no shared top three significant themes between VicPD and sex workers.

Figure 5: Top Themes for Peers Participants

Top Three Themes For VicPD Participants	VP N=10
#1: Relationship building takes time. This liaison relationship has been and/or should be focused on strengthening relationships and trust between VicPD, Peers, and sex workers.	29
#2: More time dedication/accessibility/direct access to the VicPD liaison officer is required.	28
#3: The relationship is great for information sharing with police and increasing reporting/having sex workers feel more comfortable accessing police.	24

Implications of Findings

There are quite a few positive themes that arose from the findings, including an acknowledgment of (especially from VicPD participants) the importance of relationship building between sex workers, Peers, and VicPD. 90% of participants believed that the liaison model benefited sex workers, and many of the key themes point to a desire to see the model improved and more time and resources dedicated to its development. To accomplish this, many of the key themes stress the need for the creation of new policies and practices that should be implemented by Peers and/or VicPD, and most require a coordinated effort between organizations. There are also some key themes that cannot be rectified immediately and will take time, resources, and consistency—amongst other systemic and social factors—to address. However, that is not to say that the implications for these themes are any less relevant. Indeed, effort should be invested in beginning to—or continuing to—address them.

Distrust of Police

As the #2 key theme highlights, relationship building and establishing trust takes time. One example of a theme that will take an investment in time and effort to address—#4 from overall key themes (**figure 2**) and the #1 key theme for sex worker participants (**figure 3**)—is regarding sex workers' distrust of police due to negative past experiences and/or the history of policing. This challenging theme is one that was discussed in the literature review and is not limited to the context of Victoria BC. Studies referenced in the literature review show that trust/confidence in police is connected to addressing stigma in the police force; and as the interviews for this project demonstrate, distrust of police and stigma were two of the greatest barriers for sex workers in accessing services from the current liaison officer (Benoit et al., 2016; Benoit et al., 2021).

Importantly, distrust of police is one of the many reasons why this liaison model was created, and this liaison relationship is one valuable avenue VicPD has for building trust with sex workers in the community. Strengthening relationships with Peers, addressing stigma through education and training, and improving on the liaison model by taking into account the feedback gathered for this project are crucial steps in addressing sex workers' distrust of police.

Increased Accessibility & Resources Dedicated to Liaison Officer Role

The most significant key theme overall that was mentioned 28 times by VicPD staff, 21 times by Peers staff, and once by a sex worker, is that the liaison officer needs to have more time dedicated to the position. Moreover, Peers participants commented that they would like to have direct access to the liaison to avoid having to go through dispatch, and ideally have someone accessible during night shifts. This is because most bad dates occur at night and outreach staff would like to have the option to contact the liaison if they connect with a worker that would like to make a report right away. One staff member from Peers commented on how critical it can be to have an officer accessible right after a bad date, stating: “the memories are still fresh and they still want to let people know like ‘please help me, this is what happened, this is what this person looked like’, you know? And they don’t have to have it dragged out again a couple weeks later and then a couple weeks later after that” (P7). Thus, having a liaison officer accessible during the hours the night outreach van is out would likely increase reporting, help get more accurate information, and minimize the trauma experienced during the reporting process. Furthermore, a few Peers and VicPD participants spoke to how one constraining factor of only having one liaison officer is that when the liaison officer is on vacation, busy, or otherwise unavailable, it means that sometimes sex workers have to wait a week or two before being able to speak with them, which can be problematic in time sensitive situations and in building trust with the sex work community.

Participants who spoke to the liaison model when the portfolio resided within SVU talked about how the model functioned effectively with a police liaison who was the point of contact for Peers, but who was also supported by patrol officers who were familiar with Peers’ staff, the sex worker community, and the BDARS. As a result, there was almost always a “liaison” on shift that the night outreach van could contract when a sex worker wanted to connect with an officer. Both VicPD and Peers interview participants spoke highly of the model during this time.

Almost every participant from Peers and VicPD commented that they believed the liaison officer role should either be a full-time position or a shared position (with either two liaisons or

one liaison as a point of contact supported by a team of patrol officers who also acted as liaisons to Peers). However, despite the desire to see the liaison role given more resources and time dedicated to it, many also recognized that VicPD does not have unlimited resources, and they were not entirely sure how feasible the expansion of the role would be. Still, the interviews point to a strong need for increased accessibility in this area. A few participants suggested that it might be feasible to make the role a shared position to increase the likelihood of a liaison being available and to help share the responsibility of this important and time-consuming portfolio.

Building Relationships & Trust

The second greatest theme to come out of the interviews was that relationship building takes time; the liaison relationship has been and/or should be focused on strengthening relationships and building trust between VicPD, Peers, and sex workers. This reinforces the need for more time allocation dedicated to the liaison officer role, as most participants spoke in favour of how the liaison officer is an important element in building trust/confidence with police and minimizing barriers for sex workers—as well as in breaking down barriers between VicPD, Peers, and sex workers.

Connected to a focus on relationship building is the theme that job turnover often results in restarting the liaison relationship and/or the relationship changes depending on who is in the liaison officer role. When asked about the history of the liaison role, one Peers participant said: “it’s... I guess gone through a couple different manifestations, it kind of seems to change depending on who our liaison is” (P2). A VicPD participant echoed this sentiment while also commenting that this is an issue for both organizations, stating: “police change jobs every couple years and then, you know, people start deleting emails or not forwarding to the right people [...] so I think we’re both...we’re both sort of inconsistent... it’s not ...it’s not really helping. There’s too much turnover I think and it’s not benefiting either side” (V9). This problem with turnover and inconsistency with staffing disrupts relationships building and can lead to an ineffective model. Some participants suggested that this could be solved by having more than one liaison, and/or

by having training protocols and clear expectations in place for VPRP co-ordinator/Peers employees and the liaison officer role.

The second greatest theme for sex workers—and the fourth greatest theme overall—was that it is (or would be) effective to have a VicPD officer as a trusted ally to the community. A consistent name and face at Peers who does not stigmatize, knows the issues important to the sex workers, and is an “expert” on the trade for VicPD. Only three sex worker participants that were interviewed believed that the relationship between Peers and VicPD should not exist. The other eight participants thought that it was an important resource for sex workers and that having an ally in law enforcement who is non-judgemental, supportive, and understanding of their perspective would be welcomed. When asked if the liaison model was beneficial for sex workers one participant responded “Yes...um...definitely yes. And because...well it helps us be safe right? It helps us...it helps us report things that have happened to us without...without being put down or looked at differently [...]” (SW11). In addition, another worker pointed to the benefit of having that “friendly face” at Peers that could be a resource for workers, stating “it’s nice to just have that liaison or whatever coming into Peers and talking to the guys and girls about what’s going on out there and you know...the bad dates and stuff like that. So, I think it’s important and it’s um...it’s nice to know...they’re not against us basically” (SW4).

The concept of having a police officer as an ally, who is “not against” sex workers, seemed to be a bit unbelievable for some of the sex worker participants. A few commented that although they would love to have an ally in the department, they were skeptical it was the case that they had this ally currently. One sex worker participant who has not accessed Peers and was not familiar with the liaison model said this when asked about the role: “I mean, it would be nice to have someone that is part of the police force and... you know...would be able to—we would be able to confidently say that we have their support, but I don’t know...I don’t know if that option is fully there or trusted to say” (SW5).

Furthermore, two out of the three sex worker participants who stated that they opposed the model gave “not trusting that the liaison was actually an ally or doing anything for the

community” as a reason for this. They posited that the role was more of a publicity stunt than a genuine effort to help sex workers. One participant referenced this, saying: “I found that a lot of the liaison roles are more of an image building thing [...] I think that they have a lot of buy in to creating this social work outreach image, but in my experience that doesn’t translate well to actually helping people who are most marginalized” (SW8)

Similarly, another participant commented that sex workers really have to rely upon the BDAR for safety because “[VicPD are] certainly not doing it for us. I mean that liaison worker, you can tell me that she might go drive around on a weekend night to see if she can see one of these, you know, bad date things but I guarantee you she aint. She’s not doing that, right? So...what’s the point of having her right? It’s kind of useless” (SW2).

Both participants in this case are speaking to a lack of trust in the genuineness and effectiveness of the role. Although distrust of police was the greatest theme for sex worker participants in these interviews, the second greatest theme for this group was that sex workers would like to see an effective and genuine ally in the department who is responsive to their safety concerns and issues in the community. Thus, investing in the relationship to help build trust between VicPD, Peers and sex workers is heavily connected to investing in the liaison officer role and making that individual (or individuals) more accessible and responsive to sex workers.

In fact, one Peers participant pointed out that having the role not be accessible, responsive, or effective, further damages relationships between VicPD and sex workers because it decreases the (already low) confidence sex workers have in police:

there isn’t a lot of confidence in the system amongst sex workers, that’s why you have to be especially responsive and umm...yah... because it only reenforces for people that they don’t have access to the justice system and that it’s a bad idea to try when we do stuff and then we don’t hear responses (P1).

Similarly, a VicPD participant also commented on the importance of having the right person in the role who is genuine about being an ally for the industry:

if you get someone going in for a Peers meeting [...] and they can show up in plain clothes and they can, you know, there's some interest from the workers to meet with a police officer, or it gets passed on from the staff at Peers, and during the meeting if someone comes across as inauthentic, or that they don't really want to be there, or that they don't really buy into the whole trade—that's it, it's done, and it's gunna be written off for as long as that person's there (V7).

This quote speaks to inauthenticity not only affecting trust between VicPD and sex workers, but also between Peers and VicPD. Many VicPD participants noted the effectiveness in having Peers as a “middle-man” between VicPD and sex workers and understood that gaining trust with Peers often results in an increase of confidence with the liaison officer for sex workers connected to Peers. A former liaison officer commented that reporting increased during their time in the role partly because of the trust gained with Peers staff members who would then be more likely to recommend liaison officer services to sex workers who had safety concerns.

Organizational Communication

Findings also indicate that both VicPD and Peers participants would like to see communication between organizations improve so that common goals can be reached through agreed upon means. Both groups recognized that Peer Victoria and VicPD have different organizational priorities and approaches that sometimes serve to hinder their relationship. However, these differences were not seen as insurmountable, or necessarily negative. Instead, it was suggested that both organizations examine their differences in priorities and focus on navigating them so that common goals and objectives could be reached effectively.

Another finding related to communication revolved around consistency. VicPD members especially spoke to the need for there to be more consistent communication between organizational stakeholders, as well as between the police liaison and the VPRP coordinator.

Suggestions that came out of the interviews for how to improve communication, navigate organizational differences, and have more consistent communication between organizational stakeholders included: having regular meetings between organizational stakeholders (monthly or quarterly depending on feasibility); regular check-ins between the police liaison and the VPRP

coordinator (such as scheduled weekly phone calls to update one another on relevant business); and finally, a meeting (or series of meetings) between stakeholders and relevant staff to have an open and honest conversation about organizational limits, expectations from the model and for the roles within it, and perceived organizational differences that hinder the model and how to navigate them. Interest in having “open and honest” conversation was demonstrated by one Peers participant who stated: “I do think we need to spend some time working through our difference of values, organizational opinions, and organizational objectives. So really just lay those bare and then come to some sort of compromise on them if we can” (P1).

Open communication between organizations was seen by many VicPD and Peers participants to be important for improving the liaison relationship between Peers and VicPD. A VicPD participant echoed this sentiment with the following:

I think as far as the relationship between VicPD and Peers...that could be stronger. So, whether it's creating a working group, or just sitting down and talking about some of the barriers that staff feel and some of, you know...and just be honest [...] just breaking it down and creating that stronger relationship I think would help (V10).

The suggestion to “just sit down talk” about the liaison relationship in order to address its barriers and objectives is especially important as it was increasingly clear during the interviews from both VicPD and Peers participants that they feel as though there is confusion between organizations about what the purpose of the model is, what the expectations are, where the limits for each organization lie, and why those limits exist (and in some cases, how they could be overcome). One VicPD participant voiced that unclear expectations was the foremost challenge they saw with the relationship:

[it's a challenge] not knowing what the expectations are because then [we] don't know if we are meeting them or if we're failing. So, it is hard to say whether or not we are doing a good job when we don't know what was expected of us in the first place. Because there are—there are limitations in what the police can do when...for example when we don't have all of the information [...] and there are some limitations on what people would like us

to do [...] but we need to know those limitations so that we're not unnecessarily pushing, or unnecessarily, you know, harming those relationships. So that's probably [the] number one challenge, is that there's a lack of knowledge of expectations (V4).

As this quote shows, VicPD participants worry about harming relationships through misunderstandings arrived at through poor communication and unclear expectations. There is a desire from both VicPD and Peers participants to educate one another on how each organization functions so that they could better understand one another and co-operate more effectively. For instance, one VicPD participant said:

so just more education, um, I think that we could probably learn a lot more with regards to sex workers and what they experience, and understanding, I guess, for lack of a better—the Peers side and where they're coming from, I think there's a lot for us to learn. And then just that shared education and maybe we could educate, you know, Peers on some of the roadblocks and why we do things and just breaking down those barriers, yah because sometimes we do things and it's not, you know, because we're mean, it's just things have to be done, and we have to—we're trying to prove an offense [...] (V10).

Education & Events

Education and workshops were brought up frequently from Peers and VicPD participants, as well as some sex worker participants. VicPD and Peers staff who were involved with the model back when the portfolio was based out of SVU spoke highly of the relationship building that occurred as a result of Peers going into VicPD to host workshops on Peers' services and organizational operations. One Peers participant explained that these workshops began after they were approached by a Sargent from SVU, who expressed disappointment with the lack of consistent communication between Peers and VicPD. They commented that this conversation sparked a change in the relationship, stating:

and I was like "ok well...you know, I didn't know this [that we have drifted apart organizationally] so let's change this, let's make a difference", right? So, we started going to the...to the police station at 6 o'clock in the morning to do a presentation about what Peers is about before the guys and ladies went out on shift change. So, we—6:30 in the morning, I am not a morning person, but I went anyway—there was a bunch of us, and we just told them, you know, like this is what we're about, and these are the hours that the night

outreach van is out, and these are the hours that the office is open, and what's at the office [...] and I believe that that started a really good communication (P7).

This demonstrates how reaching out and educating one another can enable relationship building between organizations. Additionally, the workshops done at Peers by the police liaison for sex workers was seen as a facilitative factor of the liaison model that helped build relationships with Peers' staff, as well as individual relationships with sex workers. A former liaison for Peers spoke to this, saying: "the drop-ins, the workshops, and stuff like that were definitely good just to see the faces and be able to just be there. I'd kind of come in, I'd do even just a 10...15...20-minute talk and I'd just offer to hang around if anyone wanted to chat" (V2). Other participants also pointed out that the workshops helped the liaisons establish a rapport with sex workers and staff at Peers, resulting in those sex workers feeling more comfortable coming to the liaison when they had questions or wished to make a report.

There was interest from all three groups in increasing education for the liaison model and its stakeholders. VicPD participants wished to bring more awareness to their public safety/non-enforcement approach regarding sex work, and also wanted to educate sex workers and Peers staff about what VicPD can do as an organization to help address safety concerns for sex workers. Peers and sex worker participants mostly expressed a desire to educate VicPD officers on the sex trade to decrease stigma surrounding the industry, as well as to better inform officers on the differences between human trafficking and sex work and the potential harms of anti-trafficking operations.

Anti-trafficking deployments by VicPD were seen by Peers and sex workers alike as harming relationships with Peers and sex workers. One sex worker stated, "I think they [VicPD] still come from this lens of trafficking 'must save, must save', and they haven't, kind of, parceled out that there's significant differences between the two" (SW7). Furthermore, a few Peers participants spoke about how Operation Honour—a VicPD anti-trafficking operation in 2020—damaged VicPD's relationship with Peers, as Peers was not consulted prior to the operation, which some Peers participants believed demonstrated a lack of respect for the relationship.

Some participants were unsure what the intentions were behind Operation Honour. One participant spoke to this saying: "I think the raid in July might have been also a means to say 'we're out there, we're protecting people, we're looking for minors in the sex industry, we are actually good people who are protecting, you know, the vulnerable' etc. When in fact this intervention really was super problematic" (P10). This participant commented that if VicPD is genuine in wanting to help sex workers and trafficked individuals, education on the documented harms of anti-trafficking raids and the difference between sex work and human trafficking for sexual exploitation could potentially be effective in preventing future harms to the relationship.

Stakeholders engaging in activities together was also something that was seen as facilitative for the relationship. Casual events held at Peers that would involve the VicPD liaison(s) were thought to be helpful in both breaking down barriers between VicPD and sex workers and in strengthening the working relationship between Peers and VicPD.

Another suggestion was for Peers and VicPD to co-host a conference comprised of sex workers, Peers staff, and VicPD officers to discuss the sex trade in Victoria. The conference was viewed as a good idea to help break down barriers, educate one another on different perspectives, and address safety concerns together.

Lastly, there was a strong desire from all participant groups for Peers and/or VicPD to do more outreach in the sex worker community to inform workers about the liaison model and Peers' BDARS. One suggestion for a way to achieve this and demonstrate cooperation was for the VPRP co-ordinator and the liaison officer to go out to supportive housing sites and escort agencies to do this outreach work together. This would not only make sex workers aware about the resources available to them, but would also give them an opportunity to meet the liaison officer and put a friendly face to the role.

Emerging Best Practices

Liaison Officer Role

- ♦ Attending Peers on a regular basis in plain clothes to visit the drop-in centre, host workshops, and meet with sex workers at Peers who would like to make a report or have questions about doing so⁸.
- ♦ Being in regular contact with the VPRP co-ordinator and/or appropriate staff from Peers to discuss the BDAR and any current cases.
- ♦ Receive BDARs directly from Peers, create PRIME reports (when applicable) and/or input reports into an appropriate database.
- ♦ Try to identify patterns of harm within the community that facilitates addressing sex workers' concerns.
- ♦ Investigate bad date information as resources permit and in consideration of concerns brought forward by sex workers.
- ♦ Be an ally for the community and support a right's-based approach for sex workers.

Violence Prevention and Response Program

- ♦ Disseminating the information in order to provide both an online and printed BDAR sheet; and then circulating the printed sheets to allied service providers.
- ♦ The ability to make reports anonymously is a strength for this program. It allows sex workers to face less barriers sharing bad date/aggressor information to help track patterns of harm in the community with fellow workers, service providers, and police.
- ♦ To have employees from Peers in regular contact with the liaison officer to discuss bad date information, on-going investigations, and safety concerns.
- ♦ Continue trying to engage with sex workers from all sectors in the industry and work to make these services as accessible and inclusive as possible; especially for workers who belong to marginalized populations and face compound stigma.

⁸ Workshops and drop-in visits from the liaison officer have been suspended due to COVID-19. These practices are expected to resume after the pandemic. If the pandemic continues, these workshops could be moved into a virtual space, and "drop-in" visits could be supplemented with outreach visits suggested in the following section.

- ♦ Ensure that program operators are educated on trauma informed and decolonial practices; and that they embody these practices in the work and prioritize the needs of the survivor
-

Recommendations & Future Activities

Short Term

- ♦ Jointly fund the creation of a Sex Industry Advisory Committee (SIAC) that approves the recommendations in this report and oversees the implementation of them. Ensure that this advisory committee represents a wide range of lived experience in the sex trade (indoor work, outdoor work, etc.), LGBTQA2+ individuals, and BIPOC voices.
- ♦ Schedule a series of meetings between stakeholders with the aim of achieving four goals:
 1. Have an open and honest conversation about the following topics so that both organizations can better understand how to collaborate: organizational differences in priorities and values; organizational limits to better understand what each organization can do to address the safety concerns of sex workers; past issues with the model; and common objectives of the model.
 2. Write up a co-operation agreement outlining how the model should function with clear expectations for the liaison officer role and the VPRP role.
 3. Address standards and consistency in communication between organizations. Decide on monthly or quarterly stakeholder meetings; standards for communication between the liaison officer and VPRP co-ordinator; and consider drawing up a “memorandum of understanding” agreement so that more information can be shared between Peers Victoria and the liaison officer regarding cases involving Peers’ clientele without breaching confidentiality.
 4. Work with the SIAC to develop a set of policing guidelines for people in the sex industry based on the findings from this report approved by the SIAC.
- ♦ Formalize the expectations for the VPRP coordinator and liaison officer role that come out of the co-operation agreement and create a job description with standards/protocols within each organization so that the expectations for the roles are clear moving forward.

- ♦ Create a transition plan so that turnover can occur without having to completely restart the relationship. It is recommended that this includes introductory meetings with stakeholders and staff involved with the model; and some overlap/training with the former liaison officer/VPRP co-ordinator.
- ♦ Collaborate organizationally to utilize social media as a platform to inform sex workers about the VPRP, the liaison model, and VicPD's non-enforcement stance on PCEPA (the latter would be especially effective coming from VicPD's social media page).
- ♦ Determine how to file the bad date/aggressor reports in a consistent and effective manner in VicPD's databases.
- ♦ Update Peers' online BDARS to have the option to be contacted by a liaison and/or the VPRP co-ordinator on the first submission page.
- ♦ Update the BDAR (both online and printed versions) when the VicPD liaison officer is able to identify an aggressor. This way sex workers are able to see that VicPD is being responsive to their concerns. It will also allow for VicPD to peruse the case further if sex workers come forward with more information and/or decide to make a report.
- ♦ Increase access to the liaison officer role; it seems that the most feasible option for how to accomplish this currently is to share the portfolio between two officers. It would also be good to involve some patrol members in the portfolio to begin building a "team of liaisons" with one or two main liaison officers as points of contact.

Medium Term

- ♦ If a "team" of liaisons is established, re-establish contact between Peers' night outreach van and patrol members associated with this team. This way if a sex worker would like to make a report during the night, Peers' outreach team will have a list of contacts from VicPD that they know will not stigmatize the workers and be safe to connect with.
- ♦ Continue applying for funding jointly as organizations to help develop the liaison model.
- ♦ Have more resources dedicated to the VPRP so that Peers can resolve gaps in services for the BDARS (such as for male, non-binary, and trans sex workers), and so that the co-ordinator role (or positions connected to this program) continues to be funded.
- ♦ Have the liaison officer and VPRP co-ordinator/an appropriate employee from Peers engage in outreach work at supportive housing sites and escort agencies together, to inform sex workers about the BDARS and the liaison model with VicPD.

- ♦ Have more social events that involve the liaison at Peers so that staff and clientele can become better acquainted with the liaison. This will hopefully help break down some barriers and enable relationship building between the liaison, sex workers, and staff.
- ♦ Host workshops at VicPD that are led by the VPRP co-ordinator and the police liaison to help improve the department's knowledge of Peers' services, Peers' BDARS, and the safety concerns and needs of Peers' clientele.
- ♦ Peers should continue trying to reach sex workers from all corners of the industry and work to make the BDARS as inclusive as possible for all genders (especially for non-binary, Trans, two-spirit, and male workers). Perhaps look into having the sheet include a subcategory for workers who identify as male (and perhaps other subcategories).

Long Term

- ♦ Collaborate on co-hosting a conference (in-person or virtual) wherein sex workers, VicPD, and Peers staff present on different topics related to sex work in Victoria. This will be a great opportunity to educate one another on different perspectives, experiences, and objectives; to problem-solve and address safety concerns in the community; and to socialize and engage with one another on a peer-to-peer level.
- ♦ Incorporate education around sex work in VicPD training programs that include topics arounds intersectionality and the diverse experiences of being a sex worker; the barriers that sex workers face accessing law enforcement; and the differences between human trafficking and sex work (which varies from survival based to empowered).
- ♦ Incorporate education around trauma-informed practice and empathetic listening in VicPD's training programs.
- ♦ In a stakeholder meeting discuss the implications of the province wide BDARS that is being developed in the next three years on the current liaison model.
- ♦ Consider having ride-along programs wherein a sex worker goes out with the police liaison/liaison team patrol members to approach street-based workers in order to help break down barriers and inform workers about VicPD's non-enforcement policy around sex work and the steps VicPD is taking to respond to violence experienced by those in the sex industry.

- ♦ VicPD could consider hiring a sex worker as a sex worker liaison to police in a consulting position. This could help to further break down barriers between sex workers and police within the department itself.
 - ♦ VicPD should consider publicly advocating for the decriminalization of sex work and substance use in order to further ally themselves with harm reduction philosophies and the sex work community.
 - ♦ Stigma came up in this report as a significant barrier for sex workers in accessing services. Stigma is an intersectional issue that can be compounded by an individual experiencing discrimination due to many overlapping factors (homelessness, race, substance use, immigration status, etc.). Thus, to improve relationships with the sex trade community, VicPD's relationships with the unhoused community, the migrant community, the LGBTQ2A+ community, etc. must all be taken into consideration when looking to improve access to services and decrease fear of stigmatization for sex workers.
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Conclusion

The objective of this project's analysis was to make recommendations directed at the improvement of the liaison model toward minimizing barriers that sex workers face accessing law enforcement and in responding to violence experienced by those in the sex industry. According to interview participants, the greatest barriers sex workers face in accessing services from the current liaison model are: a lack of accessibility to the liaison officer, distrust of police due to negative past experiences and/or the history of policing, the criminalization of the sex trade, and stigma. Decriminalization of the sex trade is a larger systemic issue that cannot be solved directly through this relationship. However, increasing accessibility to the liaison officer, working on building confidence and trust with VicPD (especially the liaison officer), and engaging in education to minimize stigma, are all feasible objectives that can be addressed.

The recommendations and future activities given in the previous section all focus on addressing these objectives and improving stakeholder relations through suggestions that aim to increase accessibility to the liaison officer; strengthening relationships between sex workers,

Peers, and VicPD; improve communication between organizations; overcome organizational differences in order to arrive at common objectives that are responsive to the needs of sex workers; improve awareness of services through increased and co-ordinated outreach; and build confidence and trust between stakeholders through education, workshops, and conferences that lead to greater understanding and less stigmatization.

The data collected from the interviews demonstrates that the liaison relationship between VicPD and Peers Victoria is providing sex workers in Victoria B.C. with a service that most participants from all stakeholder categories found to be instrumental for relationship building, necessary for minimizing barriers sex workers face accessing justice, and important in responding to violence and addressing community safety. Ultimately, findings indicate that the liaison model is valued amongst stakeholders and that sex workers, Peers, and VicPD would like to see more time and resources dedicated to its development.

Appendix

1. The information sheet that was sent out to all participants at least 24 hours prior to their interview: it includes definitions of key terms and the interview questions.

Key Terms

Peers' Violence Prevention and Response Program (VPRP): the primary purpose of this program is to prevent and respond to violence against sex workers. It is primarily comprised of three components: Peers' bad date reporting system, the VPRP Co-ordinator at Peers, and the VicPD liaison role.

VicPD Liaison Role: The officer in this role receives bad date reports directly from the VPRP Co-ordinator at Peers, investigates bad date information, and shares information that concerns sex workers' safety (when applicable) to agencies who affiliate with sex work. The liaison works with the VPRP Co-ordinator when sex workers (through Peers) wish to give statements of their bad dates/aggressors or find out more information about the process involved in making a statement. The liaison officer appears at Peers in plainclothes and will take statements from sex workers at Peers if so desired. In addition (though this has been put on hold due to COVID-19), the police liaison holds workshops at Peers (in plainclothes) to encourage the reporting of bad dates, and to educate sex workers on the steps VicPD takes after a statement is made to address bad date reports.

Liaison Model: The primary purpose of this model, which is based on a liaison relationship between Peer Victoria Resource Society and the Victoria Police Department, is to address barriers (stigma, criminal code, trust, past experience) sex workers face reporting crimes committed against them to police. It is a model that functions primarily through the working relationship between Peers' VPRP and the VicPD Liaison role.

Bad Date and Aggressor Reporting System: The VPRP Co-ordinator works to make this system as accessible as possible for sex workers, to help prevent and respond to violence. Peers' goal for this system is to make sex work safer by sharing information with the sex worker community about bad dates/aggressors in Victoria. Bad dates/aggressors can be reported online through Peers' website, in person, through email, or via phone. All reports are anonymous, unless the reporter consents to have their contact information shared with VicPD and/or wishes to make a statement. A summary of the information provided by reporters is shared in the Bad

Date/Aggressor Report that is accessible to sex workers, health and social service providers, and VicPD.

A Bad Date/Aggressor: a bad date/aggressor is someone who is violent, threatening, or harmful to a sex worker (including people who are verbally harassing or waste time). Reports are used to warn other sex workers of clients to avoid.

General Questions for Interviews:

1. What can you tell me about the history of the VicPD liaison role for sex workers in Victoria?
2. Can you describe some strengths and challenges of the relationships between VicPD, Peers, and sex workers? Please comment on past and current relationships.
3. Can you describe some strengths and challenges of the liaison violence prevention and response model, again thinking about the past and present: a.) bad date reporting system, b.) the liaison officer role? Do you have any suggestions for areas of improvement?
4. Do you think the liaison working model between Peers Victoria and VicPD is beneficial for sex workers? Why or why not?
5. Can you describe some of the facilitating and constraining factors of the liaison model that help or hinder relationships between sex workers, Peers, and Vic PD?
6. Do you think all people in sex work have equal access to positive outcomes with the liaison model? What might contribute to differences in access?
7. What do you see as the greatest barrier for sex workers in accessing services from the current liaison model between Peers and VicPD (if any)?

Specific for Sex Workers:

1. Have you, or would you use the bad date reporting system? Why or why not?
2. Have you, or would you access services from a) Peers Victoria and b) VicPD liaison if/when you had a safety concern or experienced a bad date? Why or why not?
3. What strategies do you use either as an individual or in your work community to stay safe?

Specific for Peers Staff:

1. What changes (if any) would you like to see Peers Victoria and VicPD make in order to improve relations with sex workers in Victoria?
 2. Can you describe what you know about the objectives of the Peers VicPD liaison relationship? What changes (if any) would you like to see VicPD and/or Peers make in terms of their objectives or priorities for the liaison model going forward.
2. What follows below is a chart detailing the results of the two studies funded by the CIHR that addressed sex workers' confidence in police. The first study was conducted in 2012-2016 and included interviews with 218 sex workers across six Canadian cities, with 42 of those participants located in Victoria. The following study was done in Victoria with 60 sex worker participants in 2017-2018.

Figure 6: Confidence in Police (Benoit, 2020)

Table 2. Confidence in the Police Compared to national Sample					
Do you think that your local police force does		Victoria Sample - Study 2 (2017-2018) (%)	Victoria subsample (2012-2013) (%)	National Study (2012-2013) b (%)	GSS (2009) c(%)
How much confidence do you have in the police?					
A great deal of confidence		12	12	7	31
Quite a lot of confidence		25	29	30	54
Not very much confidence		50	38	37	13
No confidence at all		13	19	26	2
(a) ___ of enforcing the laws?					
A good job		33	41	29	61
An average job		47	43	55	33
A poor job		20	10	16	6

(b) ___ of promptly responding to calls?					
	A good job	38	41	32	63
	An average job	38	41	48	29
	A poor job	23	12	20	8
(c1) ___ of being approachable and easy to talk to?					
	A good job	30			73
	An average job	43			22
	A poor job	27			5
(c2) ___ of being approachable and easy for you to talk to?					
	A good job	38	43	31	
	An average job	33	29	34	
	A poor job	28	26	34	
(d1) ___ of treating people fairly?					
	A good job	20			64
	An average job	35			29
	A poor job	43			7
(d2) ___ of treating sex workers fairly?					
	A good job	33	21	14	
	An average job	32	31	37	
	A poor job	35	31	49	

Note: Canada-wide General Social Survey data are included for reference purposes. Source: Statistics Canada (2011).

a All 60 participants responded to each question

b The number of valid responses for each item ranges from 208 to 215

c The number of valid responses for each item ranges from 16,196 to 18,627

3. What follows below is a summary of the significant responses from each interview question asked for this project (see appendix 1).

Question	Peers Participants	VicPD Participants	Sex Worker Participants	Overall
What can you tell me about the history of the VicPD liaison role for sex workers in Victoria?	<p>#1 Every time staff change positions it restarts the relationships a bit, and/or the relationships changes depending on who is in the liaison role (4).</p> <p>#2 Relationship building takes time; the focus historically for this role has been on building bridges or strengthening relationships (3).</p>	<p>#1 Relationship building takes time; the focus historically for this role has been on building bridges or strengthening relationships (4).</p> <p>#1 I believe that a more formal liaison relationship with Peers started with the SVU (4).</p> <p>#2 An officer would come into Peers in plain clothes/or an officer would approach workers on the street in plain clothes (3).</p>	N/A	<p>#1 Relationship building takes time; the focus historically for this role has been on building bridges or strengthening relationships (7).</p> <p>#2 Every time staff change positions it restarts the relationships a bit, and/or the relationships changes depending on who is in the liaison role (5).</p> <p>#2 I believe that a more formal liaison relationship with Peers started with the SVU (5).</p>

<p>Can you describe some strengths of the relationships between VicPD, Peers, and sex workers? Please comment on past and current relationships</p>	<p>#1 That the criminal code has not been enforced around sex work which enables Peers to have this relationship with VicPD (4).</p>	<p>#1 The ability for Peers and VicPD to work together and cooperate as organizations (4).</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>#1 it is a strength that the criminal code has not been enforced by VicPD around sex work as it enables Peers to have this relationship with VicPD (5). #2 It is a strength that there is an open channel of communication between Peers and VicPD (4). #2 It is a strength that Peers and VicPD have the ability to work together and co-operate (4). #2 It is a strength that this relationship between Peers and VicPD tries to create a supportive, safer, and more accessible environment for sex worker to report violence and/or access law enforcement (4). #2 It is a strength that good relationships/trust is built between the staff at Peers and VicPD, and then by extension sex workers (4). #2 It is a strength that good relationships/trust is built between</p>
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				individuals at VicPD and sex workers (4).
Can you describe some challenges of the relationships between VicPD, Peers, and sex workers? Please comment on past and current relationships.	<p>#1 Sex workers distrust police due to bad past experiences and/or the history of policing (4). #1 That there is not enough time dedicated to the liaison officer role, the liaison needs to be more accessible to Peers and sex workers—ideally with someone assigned to this position full-time or having more than one liaison officer (4). #2 That stigma and discrimination against sex workers is a barrier to accessing justice and to improving relationships with VicPD (especially when sex workers face compounded stigmas) (3). #2 That the law/justice system is unsuited for survivors of any type of violence, but especially for survivors who are also sex workers (3).</p>	<p>#1 Sex workers distrust police due to bad past experiences and/or the history of policing (5). #1 That turnover restarts the relationships a bit and/or that the relationship changes depending on who is in the role (with one participant suggesting that here should be more than one liaison officer in place to prevent this) (5). #2 That there is not enough time dedicated to the liaison officer role, the liaison needs to be more accessible to Peers and sex workers—ideally with someone assigned to this position full-time or having more than one liaison officer (4).</p>	<p>#1 Sex workers distrust police due to bad past experiences with police and/or the history of policing (5). #2 That sex workers worry about being “outed” and/or worry about confidentiality with VicPD (4). #3 That stigma and discrimination against sex workers is a barrier to accessing justice and to improving relationships with VicPD (especially when sex workers face compounded stigmas) (3).</p>	<p>#1 Sex workers distrust police due to bad past experiences and/or the history of policing (14). #2 That there is not enough time dedicated to the liaison officer role, the liaison needs to be more accessible to Peers and sex workers—ideally with someone assigned to this position full-time or having more than one liaison officer (8). #3 That stigma and discrimination against sex workers is a barrier to accessing justice and to improving relationships with VicPD (especially when sex workers face compounded stigmas) (7).</p>

<p>Can you describe some strengths of the liaison violence prevention and response model, again thinking about the past and present: a.) bad date reporting system</p>	<p>#1 that moving the bad date reporting system online is an excellent addition to the program (3).</p>	<p>#1 That the bad date list is a great information sharing tool with police and is one of the only ways that they get information about bad dates (4). #2 It makes it easier for sex workers to report things/share information if they do not want to go to the cops, and/or if they want to remain anonymous (3).</p>	<p>#1 That it is a really important safety tool and is great for screening dates and sharing bad date information with other sex workers (4).</p>	<p>#1 it is a really important safety tool and is great for screening dates and sharing bad date information with other sex workers (6). #2 It is great, and it runs smoothly (4). #2 It makes it easier for sex workers to report things/share information if they do not want to go to the cops, and/or if they want to remain anonymous (4). #2 The bad date list is a great information sharing tool with police and is one of the only ways that they get information about bad dates (4).</p>
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<p>Can you describe some Challenges of the liaison violence prevention and response model, again thinking about the past and present: a.) bad date reporting system</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>#1 The information collected from the bad date report sheets need to be distributed, filed, and processed consistently within VicPD (3). #1 It is difficult for officers to read about violent bad dates and then not be able to follow up on it because the worker does not wish to make an official report (3).</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>#1 That some workers are not aware of this service and Peers could do more outreach and public education around it (4). #2 The information collected from the bad date report sheets need to be distributed, filed, and processed consistently within VicPD (3). #2 It is difficult for officers to read about violent bad dates and then not be able to follow up on it because the worker does not wish to make an official report (3). #2 Sometimes the information on the bad date sheets is really vague (3).</p>
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<p>Can you describe some strengths of the liaison violence prevention and response model, again thinking about the past and present: b.) liaison officer role</p>	<p>#1 It is a strength that this relationship/role can help create a safer, supportive, and more accessible environment for sex workers to report violence to the police and access law enforcement (3).</p>	<p>#1 It is a strength to have a consistent name and face that is welcomed at Peers (3).</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>#1 It is a strength that this relationship/role can help create a safer, supportive, and more accessible environment for sex workers to report violence and access law enforcement (5). #2 It would be/it is nice to have a sex worker ally/expert in the police department (4). #2 The liaison role helps build relationships and trust between officers at VicPD and sex workers (4). #3 It is a strength to have a consistent name and face that is welcomed at Peers (3).</p>
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<p>Can you describe some Challenges of the liaison violence prevention and response model, again thinking about the past and present: b.) liaison officer role</p>	<p>#1 that there is not enough time dedicated to the liaison role, the liaison needs to be more accessible to Peers and sex workers—ideally with someone assigned to this position full-time and/or having more than one liaison officer (4).</p>	<p>#1 that there is not enough time dedicated to the liaison role, the liaison needs to be more accessible to Peers and sex workers—ideally with someone assigned to this position full-time and/or having more than one liaison officer (6); and #2 every time staff change positions it restarts the relationship a bit and/or the relationship changes depending on who is in the liaison role (5).</p>	<p>#1 That there is not enough time dedicated to the liaison role, the liaison needs to be more accessible to Peers and sex workers—ideally with someone assigned to this position full-time or having more than one liaison officer (10). #2 Every time staff change positions it restarts the relationship a bit and/or the relationship changes depending on who is in the liaison role (6). #3 More resources/funding is needed for the liaison role (3). #3 It is a challenge to pick the right person for the job—ideally it would be someone passionate about the role with either past experience in the industry, or who has knowledge and education around the sex trade and the issues that are important to sex workers (3). #3 It is a challenge when Peers' clients only trust the liaison—and not</p>
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				<p>other officers— as this restricts their access to justice and safety (3).</p> <p>#3 having to change into plain clothes before coming into Peers was/is a challenge as it is time consuming and there is not much time dedicated to this role to begin with (3).</p>
<p>Can you describe some strengths and challenges of the liaison violence prevention and response model, again thinking about the past and present: a.) bad date reporting system, b.) the liaison officer role? Do you have any suggestions for areas of improvement?</p>	<p>#1 That there is not enough time dedicated to the liaison role, the liaison needs to be more accessible to Peers and sex workers—ideally with someone assigned to this position full-time or having more than one liaison officer (3).</p>	<p>#1 That there is not enough time dedicated to the liaison role, the liaison needs to be more accessible to Peers and sex workers—ideally with someone assigned to this position full-time or having more than one liaison officer (4)</p>	N/A	<p>#1 That there is not enough time dedicated to the liaison role, the liaison needs to be more accessible to Peers and sex workers—ideally with someone assigned to this position full-time or having more than one liaison officer (7).</p> <p>#2 That the liaison role needs to be prioritized and given the resources and budget that it needs to operate effectively (3).</p>

<p>Do you think the liaison working model between Peers Victoria and VicPD is beneficial for sex workers? Why or why not?</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>#1 The liaison model is beneficial for helping sex workers feel comfortable and safe accessing law enforcement (3).</p>	<p>#1 The liaison model is beneficial for helping sex workers feel comfortable and safe accessing law enforcement (3).</p>	<p>#1 Yes, it is good for helping sex workers feel comfortable and safe accessing law enforcement (8). #2 Yes, I do think it is beneficial (4). #2 Yes, but there is work to be done (4). #3 It is beneficial in some ways (3). #3 It increases reporting and/or helps sex workers feel comfortable reporting (3). #3 It is beneficial if it is done well and you have the right people (3). #3 It is beneficial to have an officer that stands with sex worker rights and is an ally to the community (3).</p>
<p>Can you describe some of the facilitating factors of the liaison model that help or hinder relationships between sex workers, Peers, and Vic PD?</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>N/A</p>

<p>Can you describe some of the constraining factors of the liaison model that help or hinder relationships between sex workers, Peers, and Vic PD?</p>	<p>#1 There is not enough time dedicated to the liaison role, the liaison needs to be more accessible to Peers and sex workers—ideally with someone assigned to this position full-time or having more than one liaison officer (3).</p>	<p>#1 The constant turnover that then results in having to restart these relationships (3). #1 Communication challenges and poor relationships between Peers and VicPD (3); and consistency is an issue because there are no clear expectations, protocols, standards, or policy in place for the liaison role (3).</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>#1 That there is not enough time dedicated to the liaison role, the liaison needs to be more accessible to Peers and sex workers—ideally with someone assigned to this position full-time or having more than one liaison officer (4). #1 The stigma and discrimination that sex workers face (4). #1 The constant turnover that then results in having to restart these relationships (4). #2 Communication challenges and poor relationships between Peers and VicPD (3). #2 Consistency is an issue because there are no clear expectations, protocols, standards, or policy in place for the liaison role (3).</p>
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<p>Do you think all people in sex work have equal access to positive outcomes with the liaison model? What might contribute to differences in access?</p>	<p>#1 There is not equal access for those facing compound stigma from racism, discrimination, and/or belonging to a marginalized population (such as being unhoused, suffering from substance dependency, etc.) in addition to the stigma experienced from being a sex worker (6). #2 If you have other areas of life where you are in conflict with the criminal code outside of sex work (if you have a warrant out for your arrest, or if you use illegal substances) (4).</p>	<p>#1 There is not equal access for sex workers who work outside of VicPD's jurisdiction, because the liaison officer will not be able to help them with their case outside of connecting them with an officer in the jurisdiction where the incident occurred (4).</p>	<p>#1 There is not equal access for those facing compound stigma from racism, discrimination, and/or belonging to a marginalized population (such as being unhoused, suffering from substance dependency, etc.) in addition to the stigma experienced from being a sex worker (4). #2 Street-based workers have less access to resources in general and experience more stigma so may be more fearful of police (3).</p>	<p>#1 There is not equal access for those facing compound stigma from racism, discrimination, and/or belonging to a marginalized population (such as being unhoused, suffering from substance dependency, etc.) in addition to the stigma experienced from being a sex worker (10). #2 Distrust of police due to negative past experiences or cultural perceptions (5). #2 If you have other areas of life where you are in conflict with the criminal code outside of sex work (if you have a warrant out for your arrest, or if you use illegal substances) (5). #3 There is not equal access for sex workers outside of VicPD's jurisdiction (4). #3 Online and indoor workers do not interact with/or have less contact with Peers and the police so it is harder to build those relationships or</p>
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				<p>make them aware of services (4).</p> <p>#3 Street-based workers have less access to resources in general and experience more stigma and so may be more fearful of police (4).</p>
<p>What do you see as the greatest barrier for sex workers in accessing services from the current liaison model between Peers and VicPD (if any)?</p>	N/A	<p>#1 The accessibility of the liaison— the liaison needs to be more accessible to Peers and sex workers, ideally with someone assigned to this position full-time or having more than one liaison officer (6).</p> <p>#2 That VicPD needs to dedicate more time toward improving relationships with sex workers, including indoor workers who are not as visible (3).</p>	<p>#1 The lack of/loss of trust for police officers due to negative past experiences (4).</p> <p>#2 The stigma that sex workers experience (3). #2 The criminalization of the sex trade (3).</p>	<p>#1 The accessibility of the liaison— the liaison needs to be more accessible to Peers and sex workers, ideally with someone assigned to this position full-time or having more than one liaison officer (8).</p> <p>#2 The lack of/loss of trust of police officers due to negative past experiences (7).</p> <p>#3 The stigma that sex workers experience (5).</p> <p>#3 The criminalization of the sex trade (5).</p>

Have you, or would you use the bad date reporting system?	N/A	N/A	All participants responded that they either have used the bad date reporting system (8) or would now that they have heard of it (2). There was only one participant that this question was not applicable for because they have never engaged in sex work in Victoria due to language barriers.	N/A
Why or why not?	N/A	N/A	See question	N/A
Have you, or would you access services from a) Peers Victoria and b) VicPD liaison if/when you had a safety concern or experienced a bad date? Why or why not?	N/A	N/A	See question.	N/A

<p>What strategies do you use either as an individual or in your work community to stay safe?</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>#1 Use group chats or other avenues to communicate with other sex workers to discuss bad dates and check-up on one another (4). #1 Have a good support system/community (4). #2 Work in teams and/or with somebody nearby (whether working indoors or outdoors) (3). #2 Try to stick to the same dates and/or do not go with new people when working alone (3). #2 Have a driver or someone who checks up on me and/or someone who is aware of my whereabouts at all times (3).</p>	<p>N/A</p>
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<p>What changes (if any) would you like to see Peers Victoria and VicPD make in order to improve relations with sex workers in Victoria?</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>#1 That there needs to be more time dedicated to the liaison role, the liaison needs to be more accessible to Peers and sex workers—ideally with someone assigned to this position full-time or having more than one liaison officer (4). #1 Staff would also like to see VicPD invest more time into building more trust with sex workers (4). #1 That there needs to be more consistency in communication between organizations (perhaps regular monthly or quarterly meetings) (4). #1 An increase in resources invested into the relationship from VicPD (4). #1 There needs to be consistency in standards and approach—clear expectations and policy in place—for the liaison role (4).</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>#1 That there needs to be more time dedicated to the liaison role, the liaison needs to be more accessible to Peers and sex workers—ideally with someone assigned to this position full-time or having more than one liaison officer (6). #2 Staff would also like to see VicPD invest more time into building more trust with sex workers (5). #2 That there needs to be more consistency in communication between organizations (perhaps regular monthly or quarterly meetings) (5). #3 An increase in resources invested into the relationship from VicPD (4). #3 There needs to be consistency in standards and approach—clear expectations and policy in place—for the liaison role (4).</p>
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<p>Can you describe what you know about the objectives of the Peers VicPD liaison relationship?</p>	<p>#1 To make it safer and more accessible/comfortable for sex workers to access law enforcement when desired (5).</p>	<p>#1 To try and make everybody safe and to work with Peers to prevent and respond to gender based and sexualized violence (4). #2 To make it safer and more accessible/comfortable for sex workers to access law enforcement when desired (3). #2 To increase reporting to police and/or empower sex workers to report violence (3). #2 To improve relations and build trust between sex workers and police (3).</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>#1 To make it safer and more accessible/comfortable for sex workers to access law enforcement when desired (8). #2 To increase reporting to police and/or empower sex workers to report violence (5). #2 To try and make everybody safe/work together to help prevent and respond to gender based and sexualized violence (5). #3 To improve communication between Peers and VicPD and break down some barriers (3) #3 To improve relations and build trust between sex workers and police (3).</p>
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<p>What changes (if any) would you like to see VicPD and/or Peers make in terms of their objectives or priorities for the liaison model going forward?</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>#1 Create a job description for the liaison role with clear expectations and protocol (3).</p> <p>#1 To invest more money and resources towards the liaison role/relationship (3).</p> <p>#1 To have more consistency in the liaison and VPRC roles and in communication between organizations (3).</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>#1 To invest more money and resources towards the liaison role/relationship (5).</p> <p>#2 To increase accessibility to the liaison—ideally have one more than one liaison, or make it a full time position (4).</p> <p>#2 To have more consistency in the liaison and VPRC roles and in communication between organizations (4).</p> <p>#3 Create a job description for the liaison role with clear expectations and protocol (3).</p>
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