

## **INFORMATION FOR SEX WORKERS ONLY**

### **Examination of clients prior to provision of service**

Regardless of the service to be provided all clients should first be examined to detect any visible signs of sexually transmitted infections (STIs).

As a client may have an STI and not be displaying any visible signs, checking of clients should not be seen as an alternative to or lessening the need for workers to undergo regular sexual health monitoring and maintenance of safe sex practice.

Ideally the client should be checked before he has a shower/wash or urinates as this can remove discharge from the penis that would indicate an STI.

Before providing any service the worker should - using a strong direct light source such as a 100-watt globe - examine the client for:

- any sores, ulcers, lumps, warts or blisters on the genitals or surrounding area
- pubic lice (crabs) or their eggs in the pubic hair
- any signs of itching or rashes in the genital or anal area
- unpleasant odours

After visually inspecting the client, gently squeeze along the shaft of the client's penis to see if discharge emerges. A thick discharge - yellow or grey in colour and which may have an odour - is a sign of a possible STI. A clear sticky discharge would be pre-cum and nothing to be concerned about. If unsure about a possible STI, ask another experienced worker to have a look.

Workers doing outcalls should carry a small torch to be used in the event of there being unsatisfactory lighting for a thorough examination of a client in the client's home, hotel room, car and so on.

The sex worker has the right to refuse to engage in any sexual practice with a client

- whom the worker suspects of having an STI
- who will not allow an examination
- who will not agree to safe sexual practice

Any client who displays signs of a possible STI should be referred for medical consultation at a sexual health clinic or private general practitioner.

For further information or advice on checking clients for STIs, contact the sex worker organisation in your state or territory.

**From: A Guide to best practice: occupational health and safety in the Australian sex industry/ Scarlet Alliance; AFAO. – [Red Hill, ACT] Scarlet Alliance & AFAO, 2000.**