

Westminster Sex Worker Task Group

VIOLENCE FACED BY SEX WORKERS IN WESTMINSTER

RECOMMENDATIONS REPORT

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1) Foreword

In July 2012 the Westminster Sex Worker task group was established in order to take part in an innovative national programme sponsored by the Department of Health, which encourages local authorities to consider how **health inequalities faced by vulnerable groups can be reduced**. In Westminster we decided to focus on sex workers due to a knowledge gap regarding their health and safety. This project gave us an opportunity to develop our understanding of sex work in Westminster, which we have discovered to be an extremely complicated topic.



Violence experienced by sex workers stood out as the most serious public health concern associated with the topic and therefore this was the primary focus of our review. The work of the task group avoided debates regarding the legality of sex work and whether the existence of sex work is acceptable, and instead based its research and recommendations on the premise that **violence against sex workers should not be tolerated. We consider this perspective to be complementary to firm enforcement action in relation to anti-social behaviour and crime, associated with on street and off street sex work.** Indeed, these often result in environments in which sex workers are at higher risk of violence. Evidence suggests that many sex workers from a range of backgrounds, engaging in different forms of sex work, are at significant risk of violence. The reluctance of most sex workers to report violence to the police compounds this problem, meaning that perpetrators can become repeat offenders and victims of serious violence are not receiving the support they need. Evidence also suggests that these offenders commit serious crimes against both sex workers and other members of the community, meaning that this is a community safety concern. The current situation regarding the sex industry in Westminster is that falling demand and an increase in those selling sex has resulted in a collapse in prices, with female sex workers in particular taking more risks. As a result the risk of violence has increased substantially.

We consider that our recommendations will help address this issue, which are focussed on harm reduction and have been conceived with the current social and legal conditions in mind. We want sex workers to have more confidence in being able to report crimes, and we want to make sure that when they do report, adequate support and appropriate policy are in place to ensure they receive the services they need. We expect this to result in an increase in reports of crime against sex workers and a subsequent increase in successful prosecutions. It is our hope that in Westminster a fresh way of working can be initiated, one which has an enhanced focus on minimising harm faced by sex workers. We hope that this is a premise everyone can agree to and work towards collaboratively. Our recommendations involve mostly minimal resources – they are about doing things differently with the resources which exist. Evidence also suggests that our recommendations will potentially result in substantial financial and social savings. The Department of Health estimates that violence against women in prostitution costs £2.1 billion a year to the criminal justice system, health and social services and victims¹. If

¹ <https://www.wp.dh.gov.uk/publications/files/2012/11/Violence-prevention.pdf>

violence against sex workers can be reduced, not only will the wellbeing of sex workers improve but also organisations in Westminster will save money and risks of violence to the wider community will be reduced.

The context of this work is one of an increasing realisation and concern by central government, the police nationally, and the Greater London Assembly, of the extent of violence experienced by sex workers and the severe impacts of this on sex workers and society.

As Chairman of the task group I would like to thank Laura Johnson for her support, Brenda Cook from the Centre for Public Scrutiny for her guidance, the members of the task group and all the stakeholders who participated in this work, without whom it would not have been possible to undertake this work. In particular this includes the support of the local Sex Work Projects which has been fundamental to assisting our understanding of the needs of sex workers in Westminster, the Metropolitan Police, Merseyside Police and Officers from Westminster City Council.

Councillor Ian Rowley
Chair of the Sex Worker task group

Members of the Sex Worker task group:
Councillor Paul Dimoldenberg, Councillor Ruth Bush and Councillor Robert Rigby

2) Executive Summary

This report examines the nature of sex work in Westminster and considers the key health and wellbeing needs of sex workers. The major part of this report is focused on violence faced by sex workers, as this was found to be the most pressing public health and community safety issue relating to sex work in the borough. The Sex Worker task group has found significant national and local evidence which suggests that sex workers are a group of people who are extremely vulnerable to violence, including rape, sexual assault, and violent robbery. The vulnerability of sex workers is heightened by the fact that so few report incidences of violence to the police, resulting in them being a hidden cohort of victims.

In response to this evidence, the task group makes recommendations to Westminster City Council, Westminster Police and the NHS which should result in improved support to sex workers who are victims of violence, and reduced violence against sex workers and the wider community through identifying and convicting perpetrators. The task group conducted a Return on Investment review (ROI) in order to estimate the social and financial savings which could be made if the recommendations were to be implemented – these were found to be significant. The ROI review was an analytical tool used to forecast the potential impacts of scrutiny recommendations: here, our primary objective is to address the issue of violence against sex workers, but in a way which requires minimal resources.

Summary of recommendations:

1) To Westminster City Council – Establishment of a multi-agency model

It is recommended that a multi-agency partnership model is established and hosted by Westminster City Council in order that information and knowledge on violence against sex workers and related issues can be shared, strategic policies agreed, and challenging cases be dealt with holistically.

2) To Westminster Metropolitan Police – development of policies in relation to violence experienced by sex workers

It is recommended that Westminster Metropolitan Police develops and embeds policies that result in increased reports of violence and crime from sex workers in Westminster. These include:

- Standard codes of engagement with sex workers to which all members of the police are aware of and follow;
- A standard method of responding to reports of violence from sex workers in which the incident is prioritised over any other issues or crimes if appropriate;
- The treatment of all crimes against sex workers as hate crimes;
- Regular communication links between a named Police Officer and the local Sex Work Projects;
- Well publicised messages stating that crimes against sex workers will not go unpunished;
- Utilisation of the National Ugly Mugs project locally²; and

² See <https://uknswp.org/um/> for more information

- The development of a brothel closure policy that includes consultation with local sex work projects.

3) To Westminster Metropolitan Police, Westminster City Council, Central London Clinical Commissioning Group and West London Clinical Commissioning Group: Employment of an Independent Sexual Violence Advisor

It is recommended that an Independent Sexual Violence Advisor (ISVA) is funded by the above organisations and hosted by a local Sex Work Project. The ISVA would provide proactive and reactive support to sex workers to report crimes to the police and subsequently participate in the prosecution process.

4) To Westminster Metropolitan Police, Westminster City Council, Central London Clinical Commissioning Group and West London Clinical Commissioning Group: Training and education for staff

It is recommended that a training and education package is provided for front line staff in order that they are able to engage with sex workers and identify and respond to risk in the best way possible.

5) To Westminster City Council, Central London Clinical Commissioning Group and West London Clinical Commissioning Group: continued funding to Westminster's Sex Work Projects

It is recommended that the funding which is currently provided to the local sex work projects in Westminster from the above organisations is continued to ensure that the projects have the capacity to continue providing a range of support to sex workers.

3) Introduction and background

3.1 Purpose of the task group

The Westminster Sex Worker task group was established in July 2012 in order to participate in the Centre for Public Scrutiny's (CFPS) Health Inequalities Scrutiny Programme. Sponsored by the Department of Health, this programme enables local authorities to use scrutiny to investigate the health outcomes and inequalities of vulnerable groups. In Westminster, Scrutiny Members chose to focus their research on the needs of sex workers.

The task group followed the processes outlined by CFPS's document '*Tipping the scales! A model to measure the return on investment of overview and scrutiny*'³. This guide enabled the task group to calculate the social and financial return on investment of its review. The key findings of the ROI review are included in this report, making the case that significant social and financial savings can be made should the task group's recommendations be implemented.

Following completion of its scrutiny investigation, the task group makes recommendations to Westminster City Council, Westminster Police and the NHS in this report. It is expected that implementation of these recommendations will result in improved health and wellbeing outcomes for both sex workers and the wider population, and will enable resources to be directed effectively towards the prevention of violence which has costly impacts on both victims and organisations.

3.2 The work of the task group

The task group began its work by conducting a broad scoping exercise in order to understand the prevalence and types of sex work taking place in Westminster. Research was also conducted around six health and wellbeing areas:

- Mental health;
- Sexual health;
- Substance misuse;
- Violence;
- Trafficking and migration related issues; and
- Young people in care and care leavers' risk of exploitation.

In line with the ROI process, the topic of violence was selected as a priority area upon which to conduct the return on investment review. This resulted from evidence which demonstrated that violence is having the most serious impact on sex workers' wellbeing, together with strong support from stakeholders for investigation of this topic. The task group agreed to base its ROI review on the following question:

How can we reduce the risk of violence against sex workers and in turn the wider population?

This report is primarily concerned with violence faced by sex workers, as this was found to be the most pressing public health and community safety issue facing the sex worker population in Westminster. Evidence suggests that perpetrators who commit crimes against sex workers also commit crimes against other members of the community. This report is therefore also

³ http://www.cfps.org.uk/domains/cfps.org.uk/local/media/downloads/L12_379_tipping_the_scales_v4.pdf

about addressing violence and promoting community safety in general, which has strong links to public health issues including mental health, sexual health and substance misuse.

4) Methodology

4.1 Centre for Public Scrutiny (CFPS) Return on Investment model

The task group followed the CFPS Return on Investment (ROI) model throughout its scrutiny review. This model enabled the task group to focus on a priority area of concern, and consider recommendations which could tangibly make a difference and result in both social and financial savings should they be implemented. The task group's work comprised the following steps:

1) *Identifying and short listing topics*

The task group researched the six health and wellbeing areas listed above in order to understand the key health inequalities faced by sex workers. A scoping exercise was also conducted in order to understand the nature of sex work in Westminster in terms of its prevalence, the nature of the industry and the services being accessed by sex workers. This research presented a very complex picture in which a range of individuals are participating in the sex industry with varying needs.

2) *Prioritisation*

In order to follow the ROI model, a health inequality topic needed to be selected, upon which a Return on Investment calculation could be made. The task group prioritised the topic of violence due to its significant public health impact on sex workers and stakeholders' universal support for investigation of this area.

3) *Stakeholder engagement*

The task group held a stakeholder event in order to garner the views of a wide range of stakeholders. Stakeholders included representatives from London Metropolitan Police, Westminster City Council, the NHS, local Sex Work Projects and voluntary organisations. The findings of this event have directly influenced the task group's recommendations.

4) *In depth research and development of recommendations*

In order to understand the topic of violence more fully, a literature review was conducted regarding the issue of violence against sex workers. In addition, further in-depth consultation was held with a range of organisations, questionnaires were sent to sex workers in Westminster for their views, and interviews were held with sex workers. This work combined with the results of the stakeholder event enabled the task group members to agree to their draft recommendations.

5) *Undertaking the review*

Using the evidence base developed through the four stages above, the task group then conducted the Return on Investment Review in order to calculate the potential return on investment should the task group's recommendations be implemented.

4.2 Data implications

It must be noted that whilst the information in this report provides an indication of the prevalence of sex work, the risks associated with sex work for those selling sex, and the services which exist to support these individuals, this information does not provide a 'full picture' of the situation. Indeed, in some instances organisations reported slightly different

information, for example regarding the ethnicity of sex workers and the location of brothels. These discrepancies exist because:

- Services do not always record whether their service users are involved in sex work;
- There is likely to be a 'hidden' cohort of sex workers who have no contact whatsoever with services;
- The data that is collected does not always provide information about sex workers' needs;
- Some organisations have different client bases and therefore see different individuals with varying needs
- The sex worker population in Westminster is highly transient and therefore difficult to understand fully; and
- Sex workers don't always self-identify as sex workers when using services.

5) Context: sex work in Westminster

The Sex Worker task group began its work by conducting broad research in order to develop an understanding of the prevalence and forms of sex work in the City, and also the health and wellbeing needs of sex workers. The following information summarises these findings.

5.1 Sex work in Westminster

‘Sex work’ refers to the exchange of sexual services for some form of payment, usually money or drugs⁴. Westminster has a number of areas that have long been associated with the sex trade, particularly in Soho and in the Paddington area. It is difficult to estimate the number of sex workers selling sex in Westminster, however the following information summarises current knowledge. The scoping exercise demonstrated the complexity of the sex work industry in Westminster, in terms of the types of sex work taking place, the types of individuals participating in the industry and the degree of vulnerabilities they experience.

Street-based sex work (on street)

On-street sex work exists in Westminster mostly around Paddington and occasionally in other areas. Most of these sex workers are British women (of varying ages) and approximately 30-40 individuals have been identified as selling sex in this area, which is thought to be an increase from previous years⁵. There have recently been instances of homeless Romanian women selling on-street sex - activity that is believed to be gang led (many of these women were either previously begging or are now combining the two activities). Research is currently being conducted on this by Operation Chefnak⁶.

Off street sex work

Off street sex work takes place in a variety of contexts in Westminster, ranging from one individual selling sex in their own or the client’s home/other venues (these individuals are often considered ‘escorts’), to individuals renting rooms from which to sell sexual services, to the traditional brothel model in which a ‘maid’ organises the sale of sexual services from more than one sex worker⁷. There are approximately 80-100 known brothels in Westminster (the highest number in London and this is thought to be higher in reality)⁸. These are located across the whole borough but those based in Soho tend to be most visible. Police evidence indicates that it is primarily women who work in brothels, of varying ages. The number of women selling sex on their own off street is unknown but has increased considerably over the last few years⁹. A saturation of the sex work market in the UK has resulted in sex workers needing to travel nationally in order to meet clients, which has impacted upon outreach organisations’ ability to engage with sex workers consistently. Furthermore it has resulted in a decrease in support networks for many sex workers who are now more transient. Saturation of the market has also had the impact of increased competition, meaning that some sex workers are now selling sex for less money and providing a wider range of services, some of which present higher health and wellbeing risks¹⁰. In our interviews with sex workers, they reported a 50% reduction in prices over the last few years. They reported that this has resulted in many sex workers accepting clients who appear to be more dangerous in order to make enough money. This change has put many sex workers at higher risk of violence.

⁴ Department of Health (2010) ‘Inclusion health: evidence pack’

⁵ Reported by Praed Street Project (Feb 2013)

⁶ Reported by Westminster City Council Street Management Officers

⁷ Reported by Praed Street Project (Feb 2013)

⁸ Reported by Westminster Borough Police

⁹ Reported by Praed Street Project (Feb 2013)

¹⁰ Reported by Praed Street Project (Feb 2013)

Most off-street sex workers in Westminster are from abroad; the majority are currently from Eastern Europe, South America (particularly Brazil), and South East Asia (particularly China and Thailand)¹¹. Sex workers' journeys and backgrounds vary greatly, as does the period of time which they spend selling sex.

Brothels/Working flats can be classified into three different types¹²:

- a) 'Walk-ups': These have an open door policy and tend to be made up of small flats in which one sex worker plus a 'maid' are based. The average sex worker will see six clients in one shift (although this can be up to 10/12) and make approximately £20 per hour;
- b) 'Mid-tier': These tend to be the most common form of brothel/working flat. They are advertised via telephone cards or on the internet. The sex workers, most of whom are women, tend to work on their own. They will earn approximately £150-200 per hour, however a minimum of one third of these earnings go to the internet provider, their rent is often significant and many do not see enough clients to cover expenses¹³;
- c) 'High-end': These tend to have the lowest associated risks (drugs, violence and sexual health). Officers did report, however, that a number of women involved in this type of sex work report mental health issues, problematic alcohol use and cocaine use.

Trafficked women

Evidence suggests that a minority of sex workers in London are trafficked (though the exact percentage is not known)¹⁴. Research suggests¹⁵ that there is a great variety of migration and work trajectories within the UK sex industry, meaning that the degree of exploitation or coercion that a sex worker experiences varies greatly. The Project Acumen report, which sought to understand the scale and nature of trafficking in England and Wales¹⁶, found that of an estimated 30,000 women involved in prostitution, 17,000 were migrants. Of these migrant sex workers, 2,600 were identified as trafficked. A further 9,600 were identified as vulnerable e.g. financially. The remaining 5,500 did not meet the 'trafficked' or 'vulnerable' thresholds. The report found that in London 96.4% of sex workers were migrants.

Police evidence suggests that the vast majority of individuals trafficked for sexual exploitation are women, and therefore the findings below relate to women only.

The majority of trafficked sex workers work off-street, in private flats, saunas, massage parlours and brothels. The London Metropolitan Trafficking and Prostitution Unit reported that some brothels are controlled by traffickers but that this form of management is hidden. Between the 1st January 2012 and the 31st March 2012, the National Referral Mechanism (NRM) received 238 referrals; of these 61 (26%) were found to have been trafficked, most of whom were sexually exploited. The most common countries of origin for people who were confirmed as trafficked were Poland, Romania, Hungary, Czech Republic and Nigeria¹⁷. In 2012 the Westminster Police ASSET team found 3 trafficked women in Westminster.

¹¹ Reported by officers from the Police and the Praed Street Project

¹² As reported by the Westminster Police ASSET team

¹³ Reported by Praed Street Project (Feb 2013)

¹⁴ Mai N (2009) 'Migrant Workers in the UK Sex Industry – Final Policy-Relevant Report' ESR

<http://www.londonmet.ac.uk/research-units/>; ACPO (2010) 'Setting the Record: the trafficking of migrant women in the England and Wales off-street prostitution sector' Association of Chief Police Officers

<http://www.acpo.police.uk/documents/crime/2010/201008CRITMW01.pdf>; Platt L, Grenfell P, Bonell C, et al. (2011) Risk of sexually transmitted infections and violence among indoor-working female sex workers in London: The effect of migration from Eastern Europe.

¹⁵ Mail (2009) (above)

¹⁶ <http://www.acpo.police.uk/documents/crime/2010/201008CRITMW01.pdf>

¹⁷ <http://www.soca.gov.uk/about-soca/about-the-ukhtc/national-referral-mechanism/statistics>

In Kensington & Chelsea and Westminster a trafficking project has been established, called 'ECAT', in which a range of organisations are working together to identify trafficked victims in these boroughs and prevent the movement of trafficked victims from Europe to London. Through this project it is likely that an enhanced evidence base will be developed regarding trafficking locally.

Male and Transgender sex workers

Transgender sex workers sell sex in Westminster, though this is less prevalent than the numbers of female and male sex workers. The sale of sexual services is often associated with drug use, and takes place both on and off street, and in environments such as parties and clubs¹⁸. According to Swish¹⁹, the transgender community, and number of transgender sex workers, has increased in size, particularly since the accession of EU states. Without access to NHS services, private surgery for redefining procedures is mostly self funded, often through sex work. Over seven transgender clubs now exist in central London; these are varied – some provide sex on premises whilst others are community meeting places. Violence against transgender sex workers is particularly high due to discrimination on the basis of both gender and being labelled as a sex worker²⁰.

Male sex work is not prevalent on street, however PSE (public sex environment) activity is²¹. On the rare occasions where men are known to be working on the streets or in PSEs, they are usually newly migrant individuals who do not continue to do so upon realising that in the UK this form of sexual activity more commonly does not involve the exchange of money. As a result, these individuals find their way into various agencies in order to work off street in the 'escorting' scene. Organisations reported that this scene is sometimes associated with drugs, and that sexual and physical abuse can take place. Male brothels are widespread, but strictly within the definition of two or fewer people working together in one location; often in their home environments. Only one large managed male brothel in central London is known to organisations. The Working Men Project (WMP)²² reported that male sex work is mostly internet based, and the men mostly work independently. This cohort of sex workers tend to be very transient. 90% of WMP's patients are migrants.

The health and wellbeing needs of sex workers in Westminster

A broad range of health and wellbeing issues were identified for sex workers in Westminster including mental health, violence and substance misuse. Please refer to appendix A for a summary of these needs. As part of the CFPS Return on Investment process, the task group needed to select a priority area upon which to conduct the review. Following consultation with a wide range of organisations, the task group selected violence as the enquiry topic.

¹⁸ Reported by Swish, Terrence Higgins Trust (Sep 2012)

¹⁹ Sexual health service run by the Terrence Higgins Trust

²⁰ Reported by Swish, Terrence Higgins Trust

²¹ Reported by Swish, Terrence Higgins Trust: PSE refers to a public place where people actively look for sexual activity with strangers – money is not usually exchanged.

²² Sexual health service run by Imperial Healthcare Trust

6) Violence faced by sex workers: findings

‘Violence not only makes sex workers’ working life more difficult, but also threatens their health and wellbeing. For instance, rape almost always takes place without the protection of a condom, raising fears about becoming pregnant or infected with an STI. Also their psychological health may be affected by extreme incidents of violence, especially when there is no support system available for sharing experiences or seeking legal action’²³

6.1 Introduction

The task group decided to focus its scrutiny review on violence faced by sex workers due to the provision of evidence which demonstrated that this is currently the most pressing health and wellbeing issue being faced by sex workers in Westminster. This chapter seeks to summarise the task group’s findings in order to provide the rationale for its recommendations in subsequent chapters.

6.2 Literature review

6.2.1 Methodology

The task group conducted a literature review in order to situate its local research and findings within a broader evidence base. This literature review is by no means complete but seeks to draw on key findings (national and international) regarding violence faced by sex workers.

Sex workers’ experience of violence

Andrew Boff’s²⁴ research on sex work in London finds that all evidence available demonstrates that female sex workers are at far higher risk of violence than any other group of women. The World Health Organisation (WHO)²⁵ finds that many sex workers experience violence on the streets, whilst selling sexual services or in their personal lives. According to the WHO, sex workers are frequently regarded as easy targets for harassment and violence for several reasons:

- They are considered immoral and deserving of punishment
- Criminalisation of sex work contributes to an environment in which violence against sex workers is tolerated, leaving them less likely to be protected from it
- Many sex workers consider violence "normal" or "part of the job" and do not have information about their rights
- There is a belief by the perpetrators that their attacks and even murders will be under-reported to police

²³ RVan Beelen, N & Rakhmetova (2010) ‘Addressing violence against sex workers’ *Research for Sex Work issue 12*

²⁴ Boff (2012) ‘Silence on violence: Improving the safety of Women – the policing of off-street sex work and sex trafficking in London’

²⁵ WHO ‘Violence against sex workers and HIV prevention’ <http://www.who.int/gender/documents/sexworkers.pdf>

Findings from Merseyside research²⁶ - interviews with sex workers

“People think because you do what you do they can do what they want to you because you’re lower than the low in some people’s eyes” (Woman, street sex worker, Age 36)

“They target sex workers because they think they’re out there doing what they do so the police aren’t going to take them seriously for one” (Woman, street sex worker, Age 40)

In a UK based survey conducted by Day and Ward²⁷, 112 (58%) out of 193 women reported previous assault; these women worked in all sectors of the sex industry, including indoor and on street sex work. Women reported that 40% of the recent assaults were by clients.

European research²⁸ finds that sex work is not inherently violent, but the conditions and the environment in which sex workers work may facilitate violent situations. Kinnell²⁹ argues that the laws surrounding sex work in the UK put sex workers in a more vulnerable situation because many operate alone in order to be selling sex legally – making them more vulnerable to attack. This research found that violence in indoor settings is mostly verbal and physical. Psychological violence, a term which covers a wide range of mental and emotional pressures, demands and expectations, is also found to be a frequent form of violence experienced by both national and migrant sex workers. In this research, clients were the most common perpetrators. Kinnell’s³⁰ research on violence in the UK finds that the majority of perpetrators are not ‘regular’ clients but non-paying ‘bogus’ clients who negotiate a deal, proceed and then ask for their money back. Alternatively, a man approaches a woman, takes her to an isolated location and attacks her. Day’s research³¹ supports this, noting the problem and seriousness of non-negotiated sex acts that some clients take advantage of after the original service (or contract) has been negotiated and paid for. In their UK based research, Campbell and Sanders³² found that robbery was of concern to indoor sex workers. The degree of violence accompanying robbery varied, as did the extent to which the incidents were part of organised groups targeting parlours. They also found that many women interviewed reported encounters with men who either attempted to or were successful in removing the condom³³. This was considered a clear violation of the negotiated agreement. Lupton (1999)³⁴ argues that sex workers ‘who experience the most vulnerable social and economic status are least likely to have recourse to physical safety strategies and are therefore more exposed to violence’ (p12).

²⁶ Campbell (2011) powerpoint presentation

²⁷ Day, s. & Ward, H. (2001) ‘Violence towards female prostitutes’ British Medical Journal, 323(7306)

²⁸ Indoors (2010) ‘Indoor sex work: analysis and good practice manual on indoor sex work settings in seven European cities’

²⁹ Kinnell, H (2008) ‘Violence and Sex Work in Britain’ Cullompton, Devon :Willan Publishing

³⁰ Kinnell, H (2008) ‘Violence and Sex Work in Britain’ Cullompton, Devon :Willan Publishing

³¹ In Sanders, T., Campbell, R. (2007) ‘Designing out vulnerability, building in respect: violence, safety and sex work policy’ The British Journal of Sociology 58(61)

³² Sanders, T., Campbell, R. (2007) ‘Designing out vulnerability, building in respect: violence, safety and sex work policy’ The British Journal of Sociology 58(61)

³³ Sanders, T., Campbell, R. (2007) ‘Designing out vulnerability, building in respect: violence, safety and sex work policy’ The British Journal of Sociology 58(61)

³⁴ In Sanders, T., Campbell, R. (2007) ‘Designing out vulnerability, building in respect: violence, safety and sex work policy’ The British Journal of Sociology 58(61)

Mai's research³⁵ has found that the combination of the stigmatisation of sex work and lack of legal immigration documentation makes migrant sex workers more vulnerable to violence and crime. European research³⁶ has found that transgender sex workers experience violence most prevalently - 22% of transgender sex workers had experienced violence compared with 13% of (non-transgender) female sex workers.

Campbell and Sanders³⁷ suggest that street based sex workers are at the highest risk of violence, with research throughout the world describing how between 50% and 100% of street sex worker samples experience physical, sexual and economic violence in their job. According to Sanders and Campbell³⁸, street sex workers in the UK have reported multiple incidents of violence. The UK Network of Sex Work Projects reports that since 1990 138 sex workers have been murdered, the majority of whom were street sex workers. A range of academics have found between 36% and 53% of on street sex workers to experience rape or sexual assault³⁹.

6.1.2 Reporting violence

Case Study⁴⁰

A London-based offender used client guise in order to rob, sexually assault and rape sex workers in Chelsea. He was convicted in July 2011 of 3 rapes, 3 robberies, 2 sexual assault charges and 1 attempted robbery. Outreach organisations reported that:

"He appeared to think he could get away with his crimes and that his victims would not report him to police, nor would they be believed"

European research⁴¹ finds that violence is an issue which is not easily spoken about amongst sex workers, particularly among indoor sex workers. According to the World Health Organisation (WHO), sex workers are surrounded by a complex web of "gatekeepers" including owners of sex establishments, managers, clients, intimate partners, law enforcement authorities and local power brokers who often have control or power over their daily lives. As a result, they are often reluctant to report incidents of violence to the authorities. European research⁴² found that of 1,976 sex workers contacted, only 32 had ever pressed charges.

³⁵ Mai (2011) 'Migrant workers in the UK Sex Industry' <http://www.londonmet.ac.uk/research-units/iset/projects/esrc-migrant-workers.cfm#report>

³⁶ Indoors (2010) 'Indoor sex work: analysis and good practice manual on indoor sex work settings in seven European cities'

³⁷ Sanders, T., Campbell, R. (2007) 'Designing out vulnerability, building in respect: violence, safety and sex work policy' The British Journal of Sociology 58(61)

³⁸ Sanders, T., Campbell, R. (2007) 'Designing out vulnerability, building in respect: violence, safety and sex work policy' The British Journal of Sociology 58(61)

³⁹ Campbell (2002), Campbell and Stoops (2008), Hester and Westmorland (2006) and Church et al (2001)

⁴⁰ Case study taken from UK Network of Sex Work Projects (UKNSWP) presentation

⁴¹ Indoors (2010) 'Indoor sex work: analysis and good practice manual on indoor sex work settings in seven European cities'

⁴² Indoors (2010) 'Indoor sex work: analysis and good practice manual on indoor sex work settings in seven European cities'

According to London Assembly Member Andrew Boff⁴³ sex workers in London feel that when they report violence committed against them, the police focus on their crimes related to sex work, such as having a brothel, over the crimes they originally reported against them. As a result, sex workers largely believe that they cannot safely report crimes to the police. Boff's research found that organisations in London who work with sex workers had all noticed a decline in the number of sex workers reporting crimes to the police. This change may be in part related to Kinnell's⁴⁴ findings that 'there has been an increase in hostile policing and prosecutions relating to indoor sex work where no evidence of trafficking or coercion is adduced' (p112). Within the Metropolitan Police extremely good practice exists in relation to responding to sex workers' reports of violence from the perspective of prioritising their safety. Within the Sapphire Unit, for example, sexual violence against sex workers takes priority over any other issues and the Unit has been developing a partnership approach with local outreach organisations to ensure that they are effectively supporting victims. However this good practice does not appear to be consistent across the Metropolitan Police.

Summary of why sex workers don't report⁴⁵

- Lack of trust in the Police: belief that no action will be taken, not taken seriously, treated as an occupational hazard or due to previous negative experiences with the police
- Fear of their own arrest or of others they work with
- Fear of public identification
- Fear of implication on migration status since some migrant sex workers are undocumented or have illegal or irregular immigration status
- Anxieties about the court process
- Fear of reprisals/intimidation
- Resignation to/normalisation of violence
- The pressures of daily life/survival mean that reporting is not a high priority

6.1.3 The role of public services

The task group supports Kinnell's⁴⁶ argument that safety should be the first priority for women who work in the industry, whether voluntarily or not, and regardless of any personal conviction that prostitution is immoral and/or unacceptable. Home Office guidance⁴⁷ states that the police's responsibility for public protection means that stopping attacks on those involved in prostitution, and catching and convicting those responsible, is a core part of reducing harm from prostitution (p3). Campbell and Saunders' research⁴⁸ finds that the safety strategies, which sex workers interviewed used, are evidence that the responsibility

⁴³ Boff (2012) 'Silence on violence: Improving the safety of Women – the policing of off-street sex work and sex trafficking in London'

⁴⁴ Kinnell, H (2008) 'Violence and Sex Work in Britain' Cullompton, Devon :Willan Publishing

⁴⁵ Campbell (2011) presentation

⁴⁶ Kinnell, H (2008) 'Violence and Sex Work in Britain' Cullompton, Devon :Willan Publishing

⁴⁷ Home Office (2011) 'A review of effective practice in responding to prostitution':

<http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/publications/crime/responding-to-prostitution?view=Binary>

⁴⁸ Sanders, T., Campbell, R. (2007) 'Designing out vulnerability, building in respect: violence, safety and sex work policy' The British Journal of Sociology 58(61)

for keeping safe and avoiding danger is placed entirely on sex workers; Stanko⁴⁹ and other criminologists have repeatedly argued that locating the responsibility of risk avoidance with women is locating the cause of crime with the victim rather than the perpetrator. Campbell and Saunders⁵⁰ argue that in the UK there is an absence of proactive preventative strategies to protect sex workers, despite a Home Office report highlighting the extreme violence directed at sex workers, resulting in this group of women being the most vulnerable to homicide across social groups.

The issue of violence against sex workers impacts significantly upon public health and community safety at a local level:

Public health

Violence is widely considered to be a public health issue. In a recent publication⁵¹ the Department of Health recognises that violence has a significant impact on the health of individuals and on health care systems, estimating that violence against sex workers costs £2.9 billion annually. The prevention of violence is therefore seen by the Department as a priority for public health, health care and multi-sectoral working since addressing the results of violence places significant costs on public resources, including health services, criminal justice agencies, education and social services. The Public Health Outcomes Framework includes a number of violence related indicators, covering violence in general plus sexual and domestic violence. The Department of Health explains that violence damages physical and emotional health, and can have a wide range of long-lasting impacts on health, social and economic outcomes, reducing victims' prospects in terms of education, employment and social and emotional wellbeing. Fear of violence in the community can also limit use of parks and other public spaces, impacting upon personal wellbeing and social cohesion.

The World Health Organisation⁵² argues that violence increases sex workers' vulnerability to HIV and other health concerns; 'Violence has a direct and indirect bearing on sex workers' ability to protect themselves from HIV and maintain good sexual health' (p1). Violence and lack of control over one's life means that sex workers may give lower priority to their health needs and behaviour change, in order to focus on more immediate concerns for safety and survival. According to the WHO, programme experiences with sex workers suggest that maintaining health and preventing HIV hold lower priority for sex workers than coping with violence and daily harassment from police. Many sex workers experience low self-esteem, emotional stress and depression associated with living with violence and fear of arrest. Some resort to alcohol and drug use to cope with their situation – behaviours that are linked to violence, lack of control and HIV risk.

⁴⁹ In Sanders, T., Campbell, R. (2007) 'Designing out vulnerability, building in respect: violence, safety and sex work policy' The British Journal of Sociology 58(61)

⁵⁰ Sanders, T., Campbell, R. (2007) 'Designing out vulnerability, building in respect: violence, safety and sex work policy' The British Journal of Sociology 58(61)

⁵¹ <http://www.dh.gov.uk/health/2012/11/violence-prevention/>

⁵² WHO "Violence against sex workers and HIV prevention" <http://www.who.int/gender/documents/sexworkers.pdf>

Community Safety

Home Office guidance⁵³ states that local ‘multi-agency partnerships need to adhere to their duty of care for all citizens and their responsibility for public protection, including the public safety of all people in prostitution’. According to Boff⁵⁴, protecting sex workers’ safety has the broader benefit of preventing violence against all women in the community. This is because many perpetrators attack both sex workers and non-sex workers. Violence against sex workers can also result in fears of crime within communities, impacting upon night time economies and outdoor activity. Home Office and ACPO guidance highlight that police activity must prioritise the safety of sex workers when handling ‘vice’ issues⁵⁵. In line with these policies, the UK Network of Sex Work Projects stresses that whatever priorities are identified locally, multi-agency partnerships must accept their duty of care for all citizens and responsibility for public protection, including the public safety and protection of sex workers⁵⁶.

6.1.4 Evidence of good practice

The following guidance summarises key national policy guidance, academic recommendations and good practice learnt from the model implemented in Merseyside in relation to supporting sex workers who are victims of violence and preventing violence against sex workers.

<i>Empowering sex workers</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Free or subsidised language courses to help migrant sex workers negotiate better terms for themselves (Mai⁵⁷)• Making sure that information about their rights is accessible to sex workers• Employing an ISVA (Independent Sexual Violence Advisor) for sex workers to assist them in seeking justice
<i>Multi-agency working</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A multi-agency approach, with appropriate partnership structures (at operational case level and strategic level), with as many relevant agencies involved as possible, in order to tackle the range of complex needs and issues that surround sex work. The partnership model should have common objectives, which are monitored against outcome measures e.g. a reduction of violent attacks against people

⁵³ Home Office (2011) ‘A review of effective practice in responding to prostitution’:

<http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/publications/crime/responding-to-prostitution?view=Binary>

⁵⁴ Boff (2012) ‘Silence on violence: Improving the safety of Women – the policing of off-street sex work and sex trafficking in London’

⁵⁵ Boff (2012) ‘Silence on violence: Improving the safety of Women – the policing of off-street sex work and sex trafficking in London’

⁵⁶ UK Network of Sex Work Projects (2011) ‘Submission to: “Home Office Review of local effective practice”’

⁵⁷ Mai (2011) ‘Migrant workers in the UK Sex Industry’ <http://www.londonmet.ac.uk/research-units/iset/projects/esrc-migrant-workers.cfm#report>

⁵⁸ Home Office (2011) ‘A review of effective practice in responding to prostitution’:

<http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/publications/crime/responding-to-prostitution?view=Binary>

	involved in prostitution ⁵⁸
<i>Police policies</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Well publicised messages that crimes against sex workers do not go unpunished in order to encourage reports of violence • Named Officers within the police who work closely with sex work projects, to encourage sex workers to report crimes and access support services⁵⁹ • Prioritisation of the safety of sex workers over lesser crimes related to sex work⁶⁰ • A code of conduct for officers of all ranks dealing with sex workers⁶¹ • Proactive and consistent policing, which communicates and liaises with specialist projects as far as possible so that disruption between activities can be minimised • Violence against sex workers are treated as Hate Crimes⁶² • Utilising the National Ugly Mugs Scheme⁶³ to link into national police intelligence systems, in which sex workers report crimes to a central system (see box below) • Close working with the Crown Prosecution Service

Results of the Merseyside model

Implementation of much of the good practice above has resulted in positive outcomes for sex workers and services in Merseyside. This good practice includes a dedicated Independent Sexual Violence Advisor (ISVA) for sex workers, a named Officer in Merseyside Police who oversees all cases relating to sex workers, the treatment of all crimes against sex workers as hate crimes, and an overall harm minimisation approach across all agencies. Merseyside agencies saw a 400% increase in sex workers willingly reporting violence to the police in the first 18 months of implementing the model. Furthermore, agencies achieved an 83% conviction rate for all cases going to court, compared to only one conviction achieved during the previous five years. A conviction rate of 67% for rape cases has been achieved, which compares to the national average conviction rate of just 6.5%. Merseyside is widely considered to be the lead nationally in terms of addressing violence against sex workers. The Chairman of the task group visited the police and local sex work project in Merseyside in order to understand how they work. All organisations in Merseyside conduct their work from a harm minimisation approach, meaning that the safety of sex workers is prioritised over other crimes or issues. This has resulted in a culture of trust between the local sex workers and organisations, and has improved the police's ability to identify and prosecute perpetrators of violence against sex workers.

⁵⁹ Merseyside model

⁶⁰ Boff (2012) 'Silence on violence: Improving the safety of Women – the policing of off-street sex work and sex trafficking in London'

⁶¹ Boff (2012) 'Silence on violence: Improving the safety of Women – the policing of off-street sex work and sex trafficking in London'

⁶² Merseyside model

⁶³ <https://uknswp.org/um/>

What is the National Ugly Mugs Scheme (NUM)?

Co-ordinated by the UK Network of Sex Work Projects and funded by the Home Office, the NUM scheme receives reports of violence and crime from sex workers and organisations including the Police and Sex Work Projects. Through acting as a central point of contact, the NUM scheme is able to collate national evidence regarding perpetrators, feed this into police intelligence and alert sex workers regarding dangerous punters. As a result the scheme enables earlier identification, detection and increased prosecution of repeat, mobile and dangerous offenders who target sex workers and other members of the community. For more information see <http://www.uknswp.org/news/national-ugly-mugs-pilot-scheme-is-now-live/>

6.2 Local evidence

6.2.1 Methodology

Throughout the task group's review process, evidence has been collated via engagement with a range of stakeholders, including Westminster City Council, the Metropolitan Police, NHS services, local Sex Work Projects and sex workers. Evidence has been collated via meetings, focus groups, interviews, questionnaires and a stakeholder event which brought everyone together. The overall findings of this locally based research are summarised below.

6.2.2 Evidence that violence is an issue in Westminster

Through the research of the task group, violence was repeatedly reported as an issue faced by sex workers in Westminster. Local Sex Work Projects⁶⁴ reported that whilst a significant number of sex workers in Westminster experience violence, including robbery and sexual violence, they do not report these incidents – often due to fear of authorities' responses to their status as sex workers and/or their migration status. Our interviews and questionnaires with sex workers supported this claim. The MPS Trafficking and Prostitution Unit (SCD9) reported that due to resource constraints they focus on trafficking as opposed to prostitution. This means that fewer police resources are available to support non-trafficked individuals who sell sex, who constitute the majority of sex workers in London.

This issue is compounded by the fact that many sex workers sell sex on their own, putting them at more risk. Local Sex Work projects reported that violence and robbery for off street sex workers has increased steadily over the last 15 years. They stated that the steady increase in police brothel closures in Westminster has also had the negative impact of displacing sex workers (potentially into more risky situations) and resulting in sex work projects losing their well established outreach links. Evidence suggests that the saturation of the sex industry has resulted in a significant decrease in prices. This means that many sex workers are selling sex in more risky environments in order to make enough money, putting them at more risk of violence.

Violence was highlighted by organisations to be a particular issue for transgender sex workers who are least likely to report to the police (and are an increasing cohort of sex workers in London). In line with national research, violence was reported as more prevalent amongst on-street sex workers. Violence against male sex workers is not considered to be as prevalent as violence

⁶⁴ Praed Street Project, Working Men Project, Swish and CLASH

against female and transgender sex workers; however, it still takes place and appears to be less reported⁶⁵.

There is a shortage of data about the numbers of sex workers experiencing and/or reporting violence to the police in Westminster. However, the National Ugly Mugs (NUM) scheme presents us with some indication of the scale of the issue. The NUM scheme enables sex workers, the police and others to report violence against sex workers to a central system which analyses the information and subsequently alerts sex workers to dangerous individuals and feeds intelligence to the police in order to assist with investigations. Between July 15th 2012 and February 2013, 42 serious incidents were reported in London to NUM (data is not available on a borough level), 11 of which (approximately 25%) victims were also willing to report to the police⁶⁶. These data demonstrate the low level of reporting to the police – particularly when compared to Merseyside where 70% of all NUM referrals also report to the police. The data indicates that a range of sex workers are subjected to violence – of the 42 victims recorded by NUM, ten were classed as on-street sex workers, 19 as private/independent sex workers, three as escorts and nine as working in brothels/saunas⁶⁷. Eight of the victims were male and 34 were female. The prevalence of violence experienced by sex workers in Westminster is widely considered to be significantly higher than the numbers recorded by NUM, due to sex workers' reluctance to report. Case studies are used below in order to illustrate the types of violence against sex workers taking place in London.

6.2.4 Outcomes of the Stakeholder event

On 21st November 2012 a Stakeholder Event was held in order to enable stakeholders to discuss the issue of violence faced by sex workers collaboratively. Using the 'stakeholder engagement wheel' – a tool produced by the CFPS, delegates from a range of organisations were able to discuss and record what they thought were the challenges and opportunities for a range of organisations, communities and individuals in relation to this issue. They highlighted the following key challenges and needs⁶⁸:

- Reporting procedures for sex workers who are victims of crime need improving in order to increase reports
- A multi-agency approach is needed to address violence faced by sex workers and related issues increase reports of violence
- An Independent Sexual Violence Advisor for sex workers in Westminster is needed, to encourage reporting and support victims through investigation processes
- An increased availability of services which prevent sex workers from experiencing violence is needed
- The Ugly Mugs scheme⁶⁹ needs to be utilised effectively by all relevant organisations and continued

⁶⁵ Reported by Sex Work Projects

⁶⁶ Data provided by Alex Bryce, Co-ordinator of National Ugly Mugs (Feb 2013)

⁶⁷ Data provided by Alex Bryce, Co-ordinator of National Ugly Mugs (Feb 2013)

⁶⁸ Stakeholder event 21st November 2012

⁶⁹ <https://uknswp.org/um/>



Figure 1: Stakeholder event 21st November (2012)



Figure 2: Use of the Stakeholder Engagement wheel at the Stakeholder Event

6.2.5 Feedback from local Sex Workers

Through the support of Swish, Terrence Higgins Trust, questionnaires were filled in by sex workers (male and female) and five one-to-one interviews were conducted with sex workers. The following information summarises the findings of this research. Whilst the number of sex workers engaged with is small, the task group hopes that this information highlights some of the key issues facing individuals in the sex industry and goes some way towards ensuring that sex workers' views have been considered. Indeed although a limited sample, this primary research corresponded with our other local findings.

Questionnaire findings

A questionnaire was made available to service users at Swish and was filled in by 14 respondents. The questionnaire asked about experiences of violence and crime (see *Appendix C for questionnaire*). All 14 respondents stated that they thought sex workers in London experience violence and crime. The majority referred to sexual assault, rape, abuse (verbal and physical) and robbery as the key types of violence/crime; in addition to this, some respondents referred to non-payment and blackmail. Of the 14 respondents, five stated that they had been a victim of violence or crime whilst participating in sex work. Four of these individuals referred to physical assault including sexual violence/rape. Of these five victims, four were female, and of those who had not personally experienced violence more were male, possibly suggesting that female sex workers experience more violence, though the number of respondents was too small to make a conclusive finding. Twelve respondents stated that they had heard about other sex workers experiencing crime or violence, suggesting that even if they have not been victims themselves, violence is highly prevalent.

13 out of the 14 respondents think that sex workers tend not to report violence or crime to the police. The key reasons given for this were:

- The police judge the victims for being a sex worker and don't provide them with adequate support;
- The victims feel too ashamed to report;
- The victims fear that the police will take note of their status as a sex worker or their immigration status when they report;
- The victims do not believe the police will take their allegations seriously;
- They have had previous negative experiences with the police.

Quotes from questionnaire feedback regarding why sex workers don't report violence to the police

'The case is normally dropped due to lack of evidence or the police being so judgemental and not believing us saying 'what do you expect you are a prostitute'

'Because of repercussions i.e. the crime won't be the centre of attention'

'They feel they won't be taken seriously or judged'

Nine of the respondents thought that the police could provide better support to sex workers, many of whom suggested that experienced police officers, who were non-judgemental and able to deal with issues related to sex workers would be beneficial. One respondent stated that the police should 'make it known that just because they work in the sex industry that violence, robberies etc are still criminal offences'.

Interview findings

Five interviews were conducted with sex workers in which similar questions to those in the questionnaire were asked and an opportunity was provided for the recipients to raise issues which were important to them. All interviewees were women involved in the industry in different ways; either selling sex independently, in small flats with a 'maid' or in large brothels.

In line with the questionnaire findings, all the participants stated that violence against sex workers is prevalent, citing sexual violence, verbal and physical abuse and robbery as the key crimes. All five respondents referred to the issue of gangs entering sex work establishments in order to commit robbery and attack sex workers as a growing problem. Two of the respondents said that the decrease in pricing and saturation of the market meant that many more sex workers are now engaging with more risky clients in order to make enough money, putting them at higher risk of violence. They referred to many female sex workers as desperate, meaning that they will see any clients regardless of safety risks. The participants gave varying information regarding their opinions on what forms of sex work are safest. Two participants, for example, stated that they worked independently as they considered this to be safer than working in a brothel. They stated that this is because they are able to have direct control over which clients they see whereas brothels tend to be less selective regarding which clients they accept. Another participant, on the other hand, stated that she would prefer to work independently but she doesn't because she would be scared for her safety, and finds working in a brothel to be safer as there is a support

network present. Four of the respondents stated that they had personally been a victim of violence or crime, one of whom stated that she had been raped. All five respondents had heard about or knew of sex workers who had been subject to violence, citing rape, gang robberies and violent attacks as the key forms of crime.

Four of the respondents stated that they do not and would not report crime to the police. They cited similar reasons for this to the questionnaire respondents, including a fear of being punished for selling sex, mistrusting the police, a fear of being judged and negative experiences with the police. The respondent who stated that she would report to the police explained that she had been in the industry for a long time with a long-standing relationship with the police and therefore feels comfortable reporting. She did state however that she tries not to report too often in order to avoid drawing too much negative attention to herself or the establishment she works in.

The participants presented a range of suggestions regarding how the safety of sex workers could be improved and how the reporting of crimes could be encouraged:

- The establishment of a small organisation to which sex workers become members and are able to inform the organisation when they are seeing clients. The organisation is then able to track sex workers' activity and get in touch with the sex workers if they do not update the organisation on their safety after seeing a client.
- All the participants thought that an Independent Sexual Violence Advisor (ISVA) would be a beneficial role, with one participant stating that when she was attacked she received no support and would have welcomed the help of an ISVA.
- All participants stated that they would like to be able to have assurance from the police that if they reported violence they would not be punished for working in the sex industry. They want to be able to report crimes to people who won't judge them, are empathetic and supportive.
- Three of the participants suggested that more information for sex workers on how they can protect themselves would be helpful

6.2.6 Case Studies

The following case studies illustrate the kinds of issues taking place in London relating to violence against sex workers. Some of these case studies have been used in the task group's Return on Investment (ROI) review in order to estimate the savings which could be made if these case studies were either prevented or achieved. Whilst the sex workers referred to in these case studies were not selling sex in Westminster, equivalent scenarios exist within the borough and as such the task group makes the case that similar situations to these are likely to take place in Westminster.

Case study 1: Serious physical and sexual assault⁷⁰

A service user of the Praed Street Project experienced serious assault whilst in her Working Flat. The Thai lady was working alone when a customer arrived whom she recognised as someone who had previously assaulted her. She asked him to leave the premises; however he punched her to the floor, stamped her leg, back and chest, and attempted to strangle her whilst demanding sex. She agreed to have sex with him; he sexually assaulted her. The victim presented herself to Praed Street Project for support and a health check; she had visible dark bruising on her neck, chest and legs at a level of severity the Haven had not previously seen. The victim was extremely traumatised and frightened. She submitted an 'Ugly Mugs' report to the project anonymously and a safety and support strategy was started. Due to fear of the perpetrator, fear of deportation and mistrust of the police, the victim was initially very hesitant to pass on information to the police but she agreed after receiving much support. Praed Street learnt that the perpetrator had returned to the brothel twice to attack another sex worker. Unfortunately this case remains unresolved and not investigated – the perpetrator, who demonstrates behaviours recognised in serial and fatal offenders, is potentially still committing serious offences.

Case study 2: Sexual violence against female sex workers and young females in Newham, East London (2012)⁷¹

A man followed two young females, both aged 15, on a bus in Canning Town. After departing the bus, the man followed the females and grabbed one female at knifepoint, kidnapped and raped her. The victim reported this crime to the police. Through the police's examination of the perpetrator's car, they discovered that previous reports had been made to the police regarding this perpetrator by sex workers (but had not been fully investigated). It was revealed that the perpetrator had previously attacked and raped one female sex worker during one incident and two female sex workers during a second incident. The perpetrator was convicted for seven counts of rape and sentenced to at least 11 years in prison. The Police suspect that there are other unknown victims. In response to these crimes, Deputy Chief Inspector John Sandlin, of the Homicide and Serious Crime Command (HSCC) who investigated the offences, said⁷²; "These were a series of terrifying assaults carried out by a man who actively preyed on vulnerable women. He would deliberately patrol the streets of east London and Essex under the cover of darkness to approach known sex workers or threaten lone females walking home".

Case study 3: Rape and murder of sex workers in Brighton⁷³

In 2009 Neil Macmillan was jailed for the murder of trans sex worker Andrea Waddell in her Brighton home. Six weeks prior to this incident, Neil Macmillan had raped another sex worker. Unfortunately, this rape was not reported to the police and thus went un-investigated.

⁷⁰ Case Study submitted by Praed Street Project

⁷¹ Case Study provided by Open Doors

⁷² <http://content.met.police.uk/News/A-serial-rapist-has-been-jailed-for-an-indeterminate-period/1400006184333/1257246741786>

⁷³ From Alex Bryce, National Ugly Mugs Project (2013)

Case study 4: Gang robbery across London (2012)⁷⁴

Six men were entering brothels across London in order to attack sex workers and commit robberies. Two men would enter the brothels under the guise of clients, and then enable the other four men to trespass the properties. The gang were active across London for 2.5 years, and at least two known rapes were committed. Sex workers from a brothel in East London, who were victims of these crimes, stated to Open Doors (outreach service in Hackney) that they had repeatedly reported these attacks to the police but no investigations were ever undertaken. The sex workers reported that in response to their reports the police were more concerned with the fact that they were selling sex in a brothel as opposed to their victim status. As a result of this situation, sex workers from one of the brothels put the following video link on youtube: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MyrS1Q9FMfY>

As a result of this video and subsequent media coverage, the police investigated the above crimes and the gang was prosecuted.

Case study 5: Murder of a sex worker in London (2002)

In London (2002) Anthony Hardy, known as the 'Camden ripper', murdered a sex worker named Elizabeth Valad, 29. Kinnell⁷⁵ reports that Elizabeth Valad had previously been working in brothels in Westminster and subsequently sold sex on the street. Anthony Hardy was sentenced to life imprisonment in 2002 for the murder of three women, at least two of whom were sex workers. Police have been reported to believe that Hardy was likely to also be connected to the unsolved cases of two sex workers found dismembered and dumped in the Thames, and up to 5 or 6 other murders. Hardy had a history of violence, being arrested in 1982 in Tasmania for attempting to drown his wife, and being accused of rape by a sex worker in London in 1998⁷⁶.

⁷⁴ From Open Doors (2012)

⁷⁵ Kinnell (2008) 'Violence and Sex Work in Britain' Willan:UK page 171

⁷⁶ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anthony_Hardy

7) Recommendations

7.1 Introduction

As summarised in the Findings section of this report, through the task group's research a wide range of challenges and potential opportunities for addressing violence faced by sex workers were considered. The recommendations below have been selected by the task group for the following reasons:

- They are supported by the local Sex Work Projects and other key stakeholders;
- They are held as best practice nationally;
- Their effectiveness is evidence based;
- They will result in improved health and wellbeing outcomes for both sex workers and the wider community;
- They require minimal resources and the Return on Investment Review conducted demonstrates that significant savings can be made if these recommendations are implemented.

The task group does not intend for its recommendations to be informed by any moral stance as to whether sex work should take place or not. Rather, the task group strongly advocates that violence against sex workers should not be tolerated under any circumstances, and identified systems should be put in place which uphold the safety of sex workers and avoid increasing their vulnerability. Through the work of the task group some practical initiatives have already been taken forward by partners. These include:

- Greater partnership working between the local Sex Work Projects, the Police and Westminster City Council;
- Westminster City Council and Praed Street Project are producing a directory of services for sex workers; and
- Swish, Terrence Higgins Trust are delivering five pilot training sessions on understanding sex workers' needs for front line staff from Westminster Metropolitan Police, Westminster City Council, the NHS and the voluntary sector.

It must also be noted that these recommendations are being made within a context of much good practice taking place within Westminster. This includes local partnership working regarding on street sex work in the Paddington area, a new project to support trafficked victims in Westminster and Kensington & Chelsea, and partnership working between the local Sex Work Projects and the Sapphire Unit. It is hoped that the task group's recommendations build upon and compliment the current good practice, and will enable consistency of good practice across organisations and across the borough. In order to situate the task group's recommendations within a context of current working arrangements, the task group has attempted to include some information about current practice in the recommendations below.

7.2 Recommendation 1: To Westminster City Council – Establishment of a multi-agency model

In line with local findings and national policy, it is recommended that a multi-agency partnership model is established in order that information and knowledge can be shared, strategic policies agreed, and challenges overcome holistically. The task group recommends that Westminster City Council hosts this partnership, as it is best placed in terms of bringing a range of organisations together to address violence related issues facing sex workers. It might also assist the police in their enforcement work regarding 'problem' brothels and anti social issues. This partnership should be concerned with all sex workers including female, male, transgender and trafficked sex workers.

It is recommended that the partnership includes senior representatives from the following organisations:

- Local Sex Work Projects (Praed Street Project, Working Men Project, Swish and CLASH)
- Westminster City Council: Community Safety, Safeguarding Adults, Children's Services, Public Health and Substance Misuse
- Westminster Borough Police
- Central London Clinical Commissioning Group and/or West London Clinical Commissioning Group
- Victim Support and relevant Violence Against Women and Girls organisations
- Crown Prosecution Service
- Probation service
- If capacity allows, it is recommended that representatives from the Metropolitan Police Sapphire Unit and Trafficking and Prostitution Unit either attend these meetings or are connected to the work of the partnership via alternative communication links.

The purpose of the model would be to achieve the following:

- To develop an integrated response to concerns at strategic and operational levels in relation to sex work and violence;
- To improve collaborative working between agencies with joined-up policies and shared data systems where possible;
- To agree referral pathways collaboratively in order to identify and develop integrated packages of support for service users - this will require a sensitively negotiated information-sharing agreement;
- To ensure that the national Ugly Mugs Project⁷⁷ is utilised by all relevant services;
- To agree shared minimum working standards and indicators of exploitation which could be used by practitioners;
- The partnership could refer complex cases to the existing MARAC or Safeguarding processes if they meet the relevant vulnerability criteria;
- Conduct further research where there are knowledge gaps e.g. regarding the transgender sex workers.

This borough-wide partnership approach should be aware of, and link into more local challenges and initiatives. For example, a strong partnership approach has been developed in Hyde Park Ward in order to respond specifically to on street sex work. Initiatives such as this should be linked appropriately with the work of the borough-wide partnership.

This recommendation is in line with Home Office guidance⁷⁸ which states that 'the range of complex needs and issues that need to be addressed around prostitution emphasises the need for a multi-agency approach' (p9). The Home Office states that 'multi agency partnerships will need to adhere to their duty of care for all citizens and their responsibility for public protection, including public safety and protection of people involved in prostitution' (p10). At the stakeholder event on the 21st November 2012, a number of stakeholders highlighted the need for a partnership model as a key priority, demonstrating that there is local support for this approach. The success of localities such as Merseyside where multi-agency partnerships have been established indicates that this model can result in better working relationships between organisations and, as a result, improved service provision to sex workers.

⁷⁷ <https://uknswp.org/um/>

⁷⁸ <http://www.uknswp.org/wp-content/uploads/responding-to-prostitution.pdf>

7.3 Recommendation 2: To Westminster Metropolitan Police – development of policies in relation to violence experienced by sex workers

The task group wishes to put forward a series of recommendations to Westminster Metropolitan Police. Based on the research conducted, the task group anticipates that implementation of these recommendations will result in increased reporting of crimes from sex workers and the reduced vulnerability of sex workers. These recommendations are based on a harm minimisation approach in which the safety of sex workers comes first. The task group acknowledges the difficulty which local policing experiences due to a conflicting role as both enforcers (due to the illegality of street sex work and brothels) and protectors of victims. It also recognises that the good practice outlined below is already taking place in certain parts of the police service. However, the task group wishes to ensure that this practice is consistent across the whole organisation. Many of the recommendations below are based on the positive outcomes of practices conducted in Merseyside Police. The task group acknowledges that the structure and context of the London Metropolitan Police differs greatly than the Merseyside Police, particularly in terms of size and complexity. Merseyside is a smaller force, the equivalent in size of three London Boroughs, and therefore operates on a more integrated basis. The London Metropolitan Police, on the other hand, consists of 32 individual boroughs and at least two strategic units (the Sapphire Unit and the Trafficking and Prostitution Unit) which interact with sex workers. The task group has therefore attempted to adapt its recommendations in a way which suits the organisational structures of the London Metropolitan Police.

7.3.1 Recommendation A: Increasing the prevalence of sex workers' reports of violence

Evidence strongly suggests that violence against sex workers is significantly under-reported to the police in Westminster. This results in there being a hidden problem in which victims of violence are not receiving adequate support. Furthermore, under-reporting means that perpetrators continue to commit crimes without being prosecuted, resulting in social and financial costs to victims and services. Based on the research conducted, the task group proposes that the following recommendations be implemented in order to encourage the reporting of crimes by sex workers, and ensure that they receive the support they need as victims. The task group acknowledges that many of the recommendations below are already being implemented by some police officers in Westminster, resulting in positive outcomes for sex workers. However, the task group would like to ensure that these policies and ways of working are adopted and implemented consistently with long term continuity across the whole organisation and that they are a mainstream articulated set of policies.

- It is recommended that Westminster Metropolitan Police implements **standard codes of engagement** with sex workers which all Officers in the police are aware of and follow. These codes of engagement would be developed from a harm minimisation approach, ensuring that Officers understand the potential vulnerabilities of sex workers, how to best communicate with sex workers, how to identify risks and how to best encourage sex workers to report violence. It is recommended that the local Sex Work Projects are consulted on this policy before it is finalised.
- It is recommended that a **standard method of responding to reports of crime or violence** from sex workers is agreed and adhered to throughout Westminster Metropolitan Police. This should be in line with the Sapphire Unit's policy in which **the victim status of sex workers reporting violence/crime is prioritised over lesser crimes** such as involvement in operating a brothel, migration status and petty crimes. This policy is to ensure that sex workers receive the support they need when reporting

crimes, and develop increased trust in the police to report crimes. Currently, sex workers are reluctant to report due to experience and fear of the police focusing on the fact that they work in a brothel. The reporting system should be made as easy and user friendly as possible for the sex workers.

- It is recommended that **all crimes committed against sex workers are treated as Hate Crimes**. This recommendation is based on the success achieved in Merseyside where utilisation of Hate Crime policy for crimes against sex workers meant that sex workers received the co-ordinated support many of them need when reporting crimes⁷⁹. This policy acknowledges that many sex workers are vulnerable and are discriminately targeted by perpetrators and as a group their victimisation fits within a number of the established definitions of hate crime. Clearly the structure of the London Metropolitan Police varies significantly from the Merseyside Police structure; however, the task group argues that the treatment of violence against sex workers as a hate crime would ensure that sex workers received the support they require. Please see the table below for a definition of hate crimes. It is the hope of the task group that the treatment of crimes against sex workers as hate crimes can be embedded across the Metropolitan Police and that this policy procedure is piloted in Westminster. This recommendation is in line with Andrew Boff, London Assembly Member's recommendations for the Metropolitan Police.

What is a Hate Crime?

Hate crime involves any criminal offence which is perceived, by the victim or any other person, to be motivated by hostility or prejudice based on a personal characteristic⁸⁰. Legislation has been in place for a number of years to protect victims from hate crimes, including offences for those who intend to stir up racial hatred, and those who commit racially and religiously aggravated offences or engage in racist chanting at football matches. New criminal offences have also been introduced in recent years to reflect the seriousness of hate crime, including enhanced sentencing.

The definition of hate crime is broad and inclusive⁸¹. It can take many forms, including physical attacks, threat of attack, verbal abuse, insults or harassment.

- It is recommended that **regular and consistent communication links are established between the Police and the local Sex Work Projects**. This way, intelligence will be shared more effectively between organisations, and support can be provided to each other. It is recommended that this communication includes a named Police Officer who acts as a single point of contact regarding all crimes against sex workers. This Police Officer can also act as a single point of contact for all external

⁷⁹ Campbell, R. (2013) 'Not Getting Away With It: Linking Sex Work and Hate Crime in Merseyside' in Chakraborti, N.A. & Garland, J. (eds) 'Hate Crime: Bridging the Gap Between Scholarship and Policy' The Policy Press

⁸⁰ <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/crime/hate-crime/>

⁸¹ http://www.cps.gov.uk/news/fact_sheets/hate_crime/

organisations, including regular communication with the local Sex Work Projects. This recommendation builds upon the existing partnership working between the Metropolitan Sapphire Unit and local Sex Work Projects in which named Officers work with the Sex Work Projects in order to join up support to sex workers.

- It is recommended that the Police in partnership with Westminster City Council put out **well publicised messages that crimes against sex workers will not go unpunished**.
- It is recommended that all relevant members of Westminster Metropolitan Police are aware of, and utilise where relevant, the **National Ugly Mugs project (NUM)**. This project receives reports of violence against sex workers from sex workers and a range of organisations across England. NUM collates intelligence on perpetrators and alerts sex workers to dangerous offenders. Use of NUM by Westminster Police will enable the organisation to improve its intelligence profiles, implement faster prosecutions and contribute to the prevention of crime against sex workers.

7.3.2 Recommendation B: When brothels are closed by Westminster Police

Evidence suggests that brothel closures can result in the increased vulnerability of sex workers. For example, in East London it was found that the closure of brothels in the London Borough of Newham resulted in an increase in more dangerous street based sex work in its neighbouring borough Redbridge.⁸² The task group considers that when brothels are closed by the Police, significant efforts should be made to ensure that the safety of sex workers is not compromised as a result. In order to achieve this aim, the task group recommends that Westminster Borough Police has an **agreed and embedded brothel closure policy** which incorporates the following component:

- When Westminster Borough Police close a brothel, the closure team should inform the local Sex Work Projects of the planned closure. This should be done at the same time as when consultation takes place with Westminster City Council. It is recommended that upon receipt of this information, the local Sex Work Projects should be able to conduct outreach work at the brothel in question in order to support to the sex workers to minimise their vulnerability when the brothel is closed. This needs to be done in a way which ensures that police intelligence integrity is maintained.

⁸² Reported by Andrew Boff, GLA, February 2013

7.4 Recommendation 3: to Westminster Police, Westminster City Council, Central London Clinical Commissioning Group, West London Clinical Commissioning Group and the NHS Commissioning Board: Employment of an Independent Sexual Violence Advisor (ISVA) for sex workers

'ISVAs work with victims of recent and historic serious sexual crimes to enable them to access the services they need in the aftermath of abuse. They provide impartial advice to the victim and can guide them through the criminal justice process'⁸³

The Home Office, which has taken the lead in developing the ISVA service, describes the ISVA role as 'a proactive service to victims of sexual violence through risk assessment and safety planning; enabling victims to access those statutory and other services they need; and ensuring victims are kept informed and supported as their case progresses through the criminal justice system'⁸⁴. ISVAs represent continuity for complainants as they progress through the criminal justice process – 'in some cases this is critical to keeping their confidence and ensuring they do not withdraw'⁸⁵. During the research phase of the project, the Sapphire Unit emphasised their support for ISVAs in their ability to encourage sex workers to report crimes and support sex workers through the criminal justice system. The Home Office is also supportive of the ISVA model⁸⁶.

The Stern Review⁸⁷, by Baroness Vivien Stern, makes recommendations regarding public authorities' response to rape and sexual violence. The report strongly advocates the ISVA model. In its research the report found that a number of organisations who hosted an ISVA saw a significant increase in rape victims coming forward. According to the Stern Review, an ISVA can deal with a whole range of matters that no one organisation would be able to do, including the following roles:

- Helping the victim to make sense of the criminal justice system
- Helping the police by supporting the victim throughout the investigation, allowing the police to focus on the investigation
- Help the prosecution by supporting the victim through the psychologically gruelling process of preparing to give evidence
- Providing a link between the criminal case that is under way and a range of social agencies whose help may be needed
- Providing emotional and practical support to victims of sexual violence

Open Doors (Hackney) ISVA outcomes 2010 – 2011

- 35 referrals (27 subsequent reports to the police via support of ISVA)
- 5 convictions to date (more going through the criminal justice system), one of whom was convicted for controlling prostitution, trafficking to the UK and assault for 3 years

⁸³ Lonwill et al. (2011) 'Independent sexual violence advisors: a successful outreach intervention in East London' *Sex Transm Infect*

⁸⁴ <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/crime/violence-against-women-girls/sexual-violence/isva/>

⁸⁵ http://beneaththewig.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/08/Stern_Review_acc_FINAL4.pdf (p 104)

⁸⁶ <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/crime/violence-against-women-girls/sexual-violence/isva/>

⁸⁷ http://beneaththewig.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/08/Stern_Review_acc_FINAL4.pdf

In London there are currently only two ISVAs for the estimated 5100 women working in brothels, alongside the women working on the streets of London⁸⁸. One of the ISVAs is a generic ISVA, rather than specifically for sex workers. Therefore there is only one ISVA working specifically with sex workers who are victims of sexual assault or rape for the whole of London, and she is dedicated only to three East London boroughs. She is hosted by Open Doors, an outreach organisation based in Hackney. Open Doors' service users have described contact with the ISVA as a 'life changing' experience, and the organisation have achieved significant results since employing an ISVA in 2010:

An ISVA in Westminster and potentially the wider central London area, would ensure that sex workers living and working in the City would have access to crucial support when experiencing sexual violence. The sex work projects in Westminster are fully supportive of this. Praed Street Project, for example stated⁸⁹:

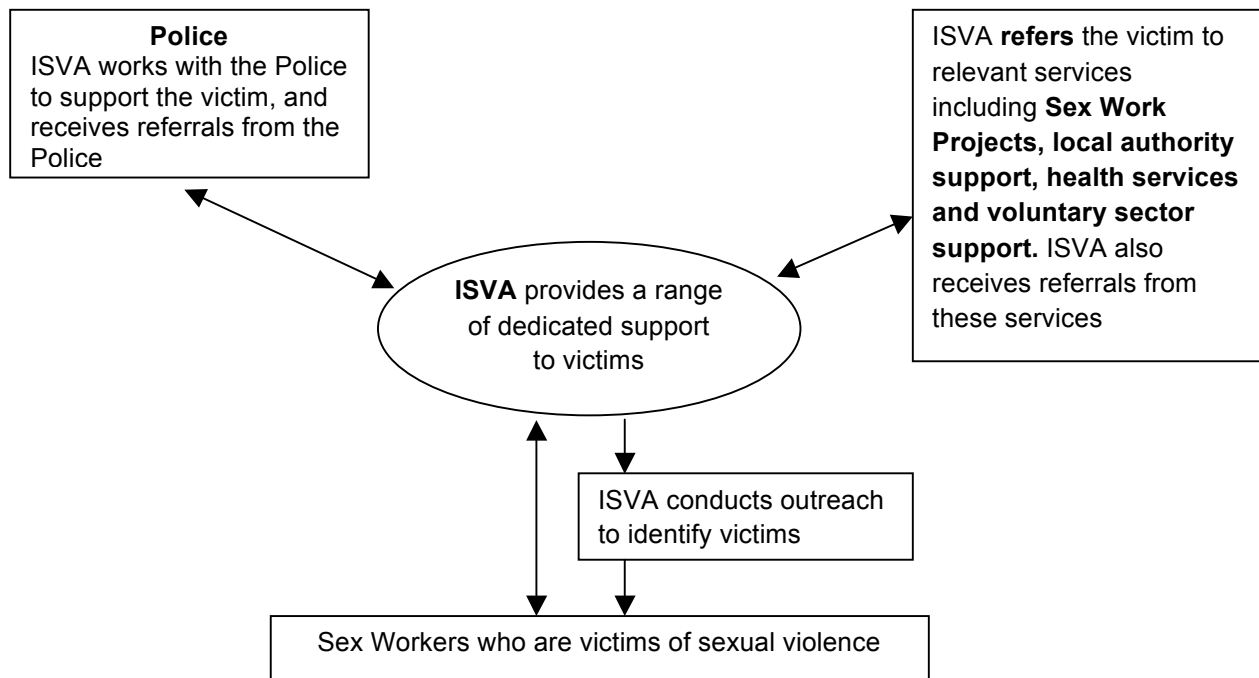
'One of the key advantages to having a dedicated ISVA is that they would have the appropriate time to support the victim and liaise with all relevant partners. We are often juggling this essential support and follow up alongside delivering the mainstream daily service to the remainder of the client group who attend in large numbers and often have their own complex albeit different issues. An ISVA could provide that key understanding and intensive work on this issue. The existence of a specialist post also highlights the problem of violence and demonstrates that Westminster takes this issue seriously.'

Alongside supporting victims of sexual violence, the work of ISVAs also contributes to tackling perpetrators and in turn safeguarding the wider community.

It is therefore recommended that an ISVA is funded to support sex workers who are victims of sexual violence in Westminster and potentially neighbouring boroughs. Part-funding of £20,000 is available from the Home Office, and therefore an additional £20,000 per annum is required to fund this position. Given the benefits and savings that an ISVA can have for the police, NHS and the local authority, the task group recommends that this post is funded through a financial contribution from all three organisations. If the ISVA is to deliver its services across more than one borough, funding could also be secured from the organisations in respective neighbouring boroughs in order to reduce costs for all. This could be suitable given the transient nature of sex workers in Westminster. It is recommended that the ISVA is hosted and managed by one or more of Westminster's local Sex Work Projects, as these organisations have a large knowledge base regarding the needs of sex workers and have established relationships with this client base. It is recommended that the Paddington Haven is also considered as an alternative or co-host of the ISVA given its skill base regarding sexual violence. The ISVA would conduct proactive outreach in order to identify sex workers who are victims of violence and would work in partnership with a range of organisations in order to receive referrals and as a result increase the reporting of incidents.

⁸⁸ Boff (2012) 'Silence on violence: Improving the safety of Women – the policing of off-street sex work and sex trafficking in London'

⁸⁹ As stated by Jane Ayres, Praed Street Project (December 2012)



7.5 Recommendation 4: to Westminster Metropolitan Police, Westminster City Council, West London Clinical Commissioning Group and Central London Clinical Commissioning Group: Training and education for staff

It is recommended that a **training and education package is provided for front line staff in order that they are able to engage with sex workers and identify and respond to risk in the best way possible**. Demand for such training has been articulated by Westminster Safer Neighbourhood Teams and other organisations at the stakeholder event. It is recommended that the training includes the following:

- Information on national legislation regarding sex work
- Information about sex work in Westminster and the associated risks of sex work
- Information about violence against sex workers and harm minimisation approaches
- Guidance regarding how to best engage with sex workers

This training should be available to all staff who might have contact with sex workers. It could be delivered on its own or in combination with Violence Against Women and Girls training in order to make best use of resources.

Five pilot training sessions have been commissioned in order to assess the benefit which they can provide to staff. These sessions have been delivered by Swish to a range of staff including Westminster Metropolitan Police, Westminster City Council and Violence Against Women and Girls organisations. 65 individuals registered to attend this training, demonstrating a strong interest.

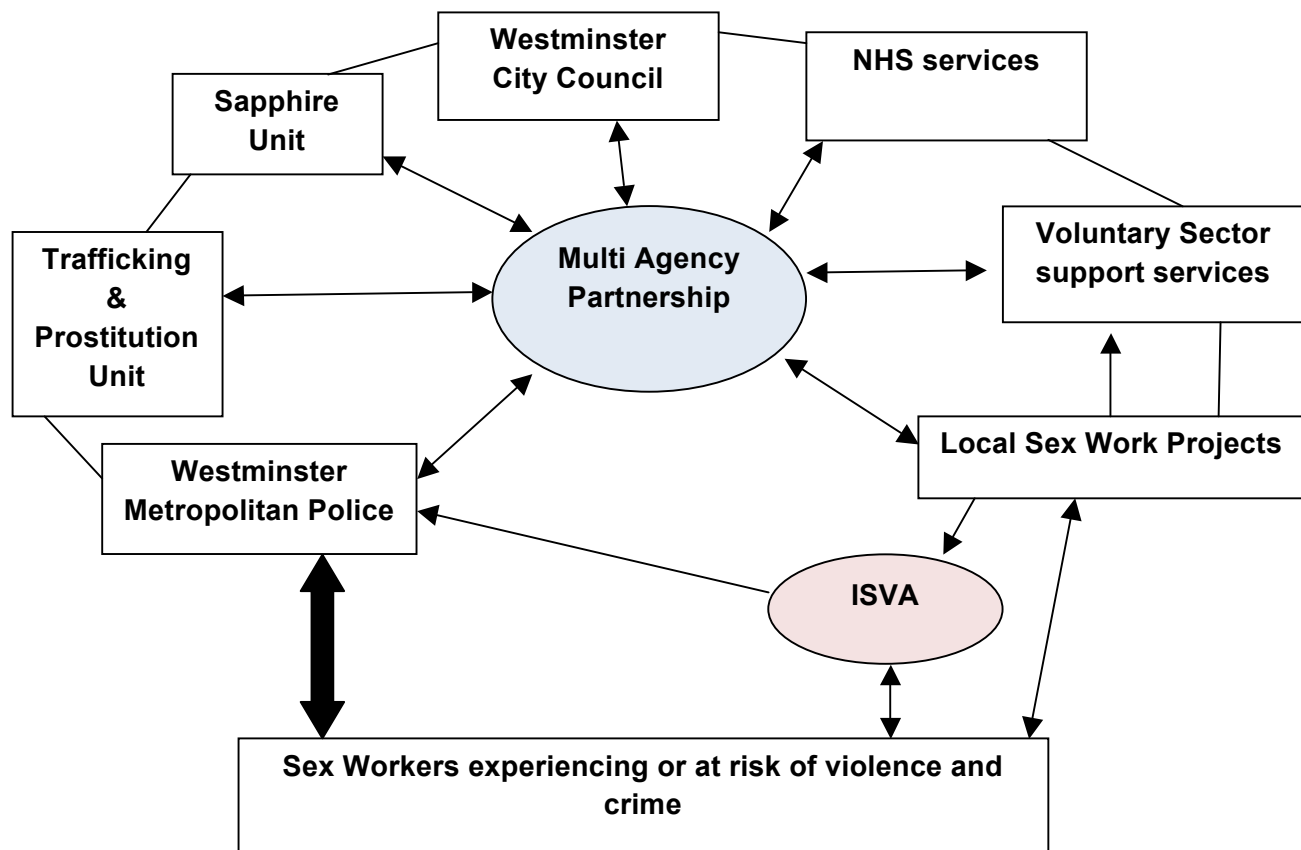
7.6 Recommendation 5: To Westminster City Council, Central London Clinical Commissioning Group and West London Clinical Commissioning Group

The services which the local Sex Work Projects provide to sex workers in Westminster (Praed Street Project, Working Men Project, Swish and CLASH (Central London Action on Sexual Health)) are recognised by the task group as crucial to improving the health and wellbeing of sex workers in Westminster. The successes of the recommendations which

have been put forward in this report are dependent on the continued presence and capacity of these organisations. All four organisations receive varying degrees of funding from Westminster City Council's Public Health Budget, Central London Clinical Commissioning Group and West London Clinical Commissioning Group. **The task group recommends that these funding contributions are continued as they stand (if not increased) to ensure that the projects have the capacity to continue providing the support to sex workers which is so vital.**

7.7 Diagram of recommendations

The diagram below illustrates how the task group anticipates its recommendations to reduce violence against sex workers in terms of improving multi agency working and enhancing support for sex workers.



8) Making the case for our recommendations: Return on Investment review

8.1) Introduction

As part of the Centre for Public Scrutiny's health inequalities programme, the task group conducted a return on investment review in order to assess the potential savings which could be made should the task group's recommendations be implemented in Westminster. This chapter summarises the key findings of the review in order to make an evidence based case for the recommendations in the previous chapter.

8.2) The return on investment (ROI) review

This Scrutiny review calculates **the return on investment of sex workers receiving better support when they are victims of crime and violence**, through implementation of the recommendations above.

Calculating the return on investment of scrutiny activity is a challenging process. This is in part because attributing a cost to social gain is not an exact process, and assessing the outcomes related to scrutiny activity, including predicting future improvements, is difficult. In order to use calculations that are evidence based and realistic, the task group has used real case studies, which could happen in Westminster, in the review with the aim of demonstrating how return on investment could be made if the task group's recommendations were implemented. These calculations are however estimates, due to limitations in the ability to access exact costings and attribute costs to prevention and long term social gain.

It is hoped however that this review demonstrates the potential for the task group's recommendations to make significant savings – both social and financial - for the public sector and communities. Most of the financial calculations are based on **direct first order gains**, which mean the **direct savings** which would be made through removing perpetrators from society. The wider long-term savings, therefore, are likely to make the total savings significantly higher. For example, the long term savings to healthcare costs and improved safety to the wider community are not factored into the review's calculations. It is worth noting that whilst this review attempts to attribute financial value to outcomes, it has been conducted using a human approach in order to reflect that not all outcomes can be given a costing, particular those of a complex and long-term nature.

8.3) Estimated return on investment

8.3.1 Estimated overall potential return on investment

Recommended Westminster model	Implementation costs ⁹⁰	Implementation savings	ROI (direct first order only)
Implementation model: estimated savings if the task group's recommendations are implemented – these are based on the findings of the 'Hackney model' which implemented comparable changes	£53,680	Approximately £1,250,546 per annum by investigating an estimated 27 more sexual offences and therefore preventing repeat offences (estimate based on the Hackney model)	£1,196,866 per annum
Case studies which exemplify potential savings	Implementation costs ⁹¹	Implementation savings ⁹²	ROI (direct first order only)
Sexual violence against female sex workers in Newham	£53,680	£288,000	£234,320
Rape and murder of sex workers in Brighton	£53,680	£1,458,975	£1,405,295
Gang robbery across London	£53,680	£192,000	£138,320
Murder of a sex worker in London	£53,680	£1,458,975	£1,405,295

⁹⁰ total costs of implementing the task group's recommendations which would result in increased reporting of violence and improved support for victims

⁹¹ total costs of implementing the task group's recommendations which would result in increased reporting of violence and improved support for victims

⁹² Costs of violence taken from Home Office calculations – please see appendix D

The 'implementation model' calculation in the table above demonstrates an overall estimated long-term return on investment should the task group's recommendations be implemented – the 'Westminster model'. These savings are based on the calculation that, through implementing the task group's recommendations, 27 more reports of violence would be received from sex workers in the first year of implementation. Of these reports, approximately 50% would be of rapes and 50% would be of other forms of sexual assault⁹³. This estimate is based on the proportion of types of crime reported to National Ugly Mugs.

In order to build on the overall ROI calculation and **demonstrate the potential wide-ranging savings which could be made by the Police, NHS and local authority, case studies have also been used in order to exemplify what sort of primary savings could be achieved.** These case studies are real scenarios which have previously occurred in London, and could potentially either be achieved or prevented in Westminster if the task group's recommendations were to be implemented. In particular these case studies demonstrate the substantial savings which would be made through preventing the murder of a sex worker. It is hoped that these case studies demonstrate that even if one violent incident was prevented, significant savings (both financial and social) could be made.

8.3.2 Implementation costs

If all of the task group's recommendations were to be implemented, the total cost for one year would be **£53,680**. Of this amount, £4,600 constitutes one-off start up costs (£2,600 in estimated officer time to Westminster City Council and £2,000 in estimated officer time to Westminster Borough Police) and £40,000 constitutes the cost of an Independent Sexual Violence Advisor (ISVA) – half of this post (£20,000) would be funded by the Home Office. This leaves the following costs:

- ISVA = £20,000/year to the NHS, Westminster City Council, Westminster Metropolitan Police and potentially other organisations (contributions to be decided by the organisations)
- Multi agency model = approximately £2,800/year in officer time for Westminster City Council
- Training for front line staff = approximately £6,000/year to the NHS, Westminster City Council and Westminster Metropolitan Police (amount of financial contributions from each organisation dependent on number of staff undergoing the training)

8.3.3 Implementation savings

If all the task group's recommendations were to be implemented, the estimated return on investment could be **£1,196,866 per year**. This number reflects the cost of implementing the recommendations subtracted from the estimated savings. These savings (an estimated £1,250,546 per year) reflect the number of sexual assaults and rapes which could be prevented through prosecuting more perpetrators, as a result of more sex workers reporting violence. Based on the achievements made in Hackney, where comparable initiatives have been implemented to those recommended by the task group, it is estimated that in Westminster 27 more reports of violence would be received from sex workers in the first year of implementation. Of those 27 reports, it is estimated that 50% would be of rapes and

⁹³ Data from Ugly Mugs supplied by Alex Bryce, Project Co-ordinator, 2013

50% would be of other forms of sexual assault. This proportion reflects the proportions of sexual violence crimes reported to National Ugly Mugs.

Please see Appendix D where the costs of various forms of violence and crime are detailed. Note that this ROI calculation **does not take into account** the following longer-term social outcomes which could also be achieved should the recommendations be implemented:

- Improved **health and wellbeing** of victims or potential victims of violence: evidence demonstrates that violence can result in physical, mental, sexual, reproductive and other health problems⁹⁴. It can also result in increased drug/alcohol dependency and reduced ability to participate fully in society. Through reporting, sex workers would receive the multi-agency support needed for such problems, and future-victimhood would be prevented through the prosecution of offenders;
- A **decrease in crime against sex workers** due to perpetrators' realisation that such forms of crime will not be tolerated by the police or victims;
- A **decrease in crime against the wider community** as a result of removing perpetrators from society. Evidence demonstrates that perpetrators of sex workers also perpetrate against other members of the community – as noted by Kinnell⁹⁵ - 'many of those who attack sex workers also have a history of violence towards people who are not sex workers, including men, women and children'; and
- A **decrease in reliance on Children's and Adult Social Services** as a result of sex workers' decreased vulnerability.

Summary of savings which could be made by different agencies:

NHS	Police	Local Government	Crown Prosecution Service
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A&E services; • Mental health services; • Sexual health services; • Sexual Assault Referral Centres (SARCs); • GP services • Hospital services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investigations which result in conviction as a result of sex workers' co-operation • Reduced community safety issues e.g. identifying repeat offenders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduced dependency on drug & alcohol services • Reduced homelessness as a result of reduced vulnerability • Reduced need for Children's Services or Adult Social Services interventions • Reduced negative impacts on the night time economy • Improved community safety • Reduced dependency on public health services e.g. sexual health 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Long term: reduced prosecutions • Short term: more effective and efficient prosecutions

⁹⁴ <http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs239/en/>

⁹⁵ Kinnell (2008) 'Violence and Sex Work in Britain' Willan:UK page 161

8.4) Case Studies

The following tables present case studies which could either be prevented or achieved (depending on the situation) in order to illustrate the potential savings which could be made by public organisations, should the task group's recommendations be implemented in Westminster. These savings reflect the first order effects of preventing violence. They do not take into account the wider social benefits (which are more difficult to quantify) such as improved wellbeing for sex workers' families, wider community safety benefits and reduced risk of HIV and other STIs.

Case study 1: Sexual violence against female sex workers and young females in Newham, East London (2012)⁹⁶

What happened?

A man followed two young females, both aged 15, on a bus in Canning Town. After departing the bus, the man followed the females and grabbed one female at knifepoint, kidnapped and raped her. The victim reported this crime to the police. Through the police's examination of the perpetrator's car, they discovered that previous reports had been made to the police regarding this perpetrator by sex workers (but had not been fully investigated). It was revealed that the perpetrator had previously attacked and raped one female sex worker during one incident and two female sex workers during a second incident. The perpetrator was convicted for seven counts of rape and sentenced to at least 11 years in prison. The Police suspect that there are other unknown victims. In response to these crimes, Deputy Chief Inspector John Sandlin, of the Homicide and Serious Crime Command (HSCC) who investigated the offences, said⁹⁷; "These were a series of terrifying assaults carried out by a man who actively preyed on vulnerable women. He would deliberately patrol the streets of east London and Essex under the cover of darkness to approach known sex workers or threaten lone females walking home".

What would the return on investment be for this scenario in Westminster?

The cost of investigations for the offences committed by the perpetrator and to the victims above amounted to **£384,000** (four rape victims). If the first sex worker's report had been responded to, investigated and resulted in conviction, at least £288,000 in investigation costs and costs to the victims would have been saved. This amount, minus the total implementation costs which would result in early intervention (£53,680), results in a saving of **£234,320**. This saving does not include the wider community safety and public health savings.

⁹⁶ Case Study provided by Open Doors

⁹⁷ <http://content.met.police.uk/News/A-serial-rapist-has-been-jailed-for-an-indeterminate-period/1400006184333/1257246741786>

Case study 2: Rape and murder of sex workers in Brighton⁹⁸

What happened?

In 2009 Neil Macmillan was jailed for the murder of trans sex worker Andrea Waddell in her Brighton home. Six weeks prior to this incident, Neil Macmillan had raped another sex worker. Unfortunately, this rape was not reported to the police and thus went un-investigated.

What would be the return on investment of this scenario in Westminster?

If this were to happen in Westminster following implementation of the task group's recommendations, it is hoped that the sex worker who was raped would have felt comfortable and known how to report the incident to the police. The police would have been able to investigate the crime and through prosecution, prevent Neil Macmillan from murdering Andrea Waddell.

A murder amounts to an average of £1,458,975 in costs to the police, NHS, other services, the victim and their family/social network. This amount minus the implementation costs (that would hopefully result in the sex worker reporting the rape) of £53,680 results in a considerable ROI of **£1,405,295**.

Case study 3: Gang robbery across London (2012)⁹⁹

What happened?

Six men were entering brothels across London in order to attack sex workers and commit robberies. Two men would enter the brothels under the guise of clients, and then enable the other four men to trespass the properties. The gang were active across London for 2.5 years, and at least two known rapes were committed. Sex workers from a brothel in East London, who were victims of these crimes, stated to Open Doors (outreach service in Hackney) that they had repeatedly reported these attacks to the police but no investigations were ever undertaken. The sex workers reported that in response to their reports the police were more concerned with the fact that they were selling sex in a brothel as opposed to their victim status. As a result of this situation, sex workers from one of the brothels put the following video link on youtube:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MyrS1Q9FMfY>

As a result of this video and subsequent media coverage, the police investigated the above crimes and the gang was prosecuted.

What would be the return on investment of this scenario in Westminster?

If the two rapes alone had been prevented through an improved police response following the initial report from a brothel, £192,000 would have been saved in terms of investigation costs and costs to the victims. This amount minus the implementation costs which could have enabled prevention, results in **£138,320** in savings.

⁹⁸ From Alex Bryce, National Ugly Mugs Project (2013)

⁹⁹ From Open Doors (2012)

Case study 4: Murder of a sex worker in London (2002)

What happened?

In London (2002) Anthony Hardy, known as the 'Camden ripper', murdered a sex worker named Elizabeth Valad, 29. Kinnell¹⁰⁰ reports that Elizabeth Valad had previously been working in brothels in Westminster and subsequently sold sex on the street. Anthony Hardy was sentenced to life imprisonment in 2002 for the murder of three women, at least two of whom were sex workers. Police have been reported to believe that Hardy was likely to also be connected to the unsolved cases of two sex workers found dismembered and dumped in the London Thames river, and up to five or six other murders. Hardy had a history of violence, being arrested in 1982 in Tasmania for attempting to drown his wife, and being accused of rape by a sex worker in London in 1998¹⁰¹.

What would be the return on investment of this scenario?

Clearly a multitude of risk factors contributed to the horrific crimes above, the main one being the serious criminality of this perpetrator. Had it been possible to prosecute and convict Hardy at an earlier stage then a number of murders could have been prevented – saving not just money but also people's lives. It is possible that more sex workers were assaulted by Anthony Hardy who did not report to the police. Had more sex workers reported, it is possible that the police would have been able to prosecute Hardy earlier due to improved intelligence. If Elizabeth Valad's life had been saved, approximately £1,458,975 would have been saved in costs to the police, NHS, other services, the victim and her family/social network. This amount minus the implementation costs of £53,680 results in a considerable saving of **£1,405,295**.

8.5) Summary

It is hoped that this review demonstrates the significant savings, both financial and social, which could be made by public organisations, sex workers and the wider community should the task group's recommendations be endorsed. Whilst the ROI calculations in this review are not exact it is hoped that they illustrate the savings that investment and prevention can bring.

¹⁰⁰ Kinnell (2008) 'Violence and Sex Work in Britain' Willan:UK page 171

¹⁰¹ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anthony_Hardy

9) Conclusion

This report has made the case that violence against sex workers in Westminster, and indeed across London, is a serious issue. This is because there is a high level of under-reporting to the police, and evidence suggests that when sex workers do report violence, they do not always receive the support they need. This report seeks to recognise and build upon the good work of many organisations and individuals in Westminster who are already working towards improving support to sex workers who are victims of violence. The task group hopes that as a result of its recommendations being implemented, Westminster will experience an increase in sex workers reporting violence, and in turn more sex workers who are victims will receive the support they need and perpetrators will be prevented from re-offending.

10) Acknowledgements

The task group would like to thank all stakeholders involved in this review for their extremely valuable contributions. In particular this includes the local Sex Work Projects which worked very closely with the task group and were very supportive in the collation of evidence, and the individuals involved in the sex industry who gave up their time to provide the task group with evidence. The task group also wishes to express its thanks to the Metropolitan Police (including the Sapphire Unit, SCD9 and Westminster Metropolitan Police); Westminster City Council Councillors and Officers; the NHS and the Voluntary sector for their invaluable support and information. Finally, the task group wishes to give thanks to colleagues in Merseyside, at Open Doors in Hackney and to the Centre for Public Scrutiny for their invaluable advice and guidance.

Appendix A: Summary of findings regarding the health and wellbeing needs of sex workers in Westminster

The table below summarises the key health and wellbeing needs of some sex workers in Westminster. This information is primarily based on the feedback of a range of organisations in Westminster. It was collated via meetings with stakeholders and circulating a questionnaire to all relevant organisations. Due to limitations in data most information is anecdotal, and a number of gaps in knowledge exist. It must also be noted that sex workers are an extremely diverse group of people, and we must avoid homogenising them since their health and wellbeing needs vary significantly¹⁰².

Violence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Female street sex workers tend to be at very high risk of violence from clients, pimps or other individuals • The risks of violence associated with male sex work are less known, but anecdotally organisations reported that male sex workers are at times subjected to violence but tend not to experience coercion. • Swish reported that violence and crime is very high amongst transgender sex workers because they are least likely to report crime to the police and they are discriminated against on the basis of both their gender and for sex working • The associated risks of violence are commonly lower for off street female sex workers than for on street sex workers; however violence and assault is grossly under reported by sex workers and in addition it is much less visible than with on street sex work • Incidences of violence are also reported to be particularly high for trafficked sex workers <p>Key risks include robbery and sexual assault; organisations reported that today many women work on their own without a receptionist, which puts them at more risk. It was reported that violence and robbery for off street sex workers has increased steadily over the last 15 years.</p>
Trafficking and migration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trafficked sex workers have been coerced, using violence or other, into selling sex. The police reported that suspected trafficking victims often do not engage with the police either through mistrust of the police or due to fear of the consequences on the part of the trafficker. Between March 2003 and March 2010 the Poppy Project received 1496 referrals, with 703 from London, and 112 specifically from Westminster (7.5% of total)¹⁰³ • A number of off street sex workers came to the UK on a debt bondage and as such must sell sex in order to repay their debt¹⁰⁴ •
Substance misuse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A large proportion of street sex workers have high drug/alcohol dependencies. Drug/alcohol misuse was reported by Substance misuse services to be less prevalent for off street sex work, although it was reported that a number of women involved in 'high-end' off street sex work report problematic alcohol and cocaine use¹⁰⁵. It was reported that transgender sex workers tend to have high drug use.

¹⁰² Meeting with Working Men Project and Praed Street Project (August/Sept 2012)

¹⁰³ Human Trafficking: Possible affects of the London 2012 Olympics on Westminster June 2011

¹⁰⁴ Meeting with PSP (August 2012)

¹⁰⁵ Meeting with PSP (August 2012)

Sexual health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It was reported by officers that anecdotally, street sex workers tend to have the poorest sexual health, often due to not using protection when selling sex¹⁰⁶ • For off street sex work, the market has saturated and as a result some sex workers are more willing to engage in sexual activity which can present more health risks. The degree of empowerment that sex workers have affects their ability to negotiate sexual activity which is safe and which they are comfortable with¹⁰⁷. It was reported, however, that overall sex workers tend to practice safe sex, and therefore the risks of STI transmission for many are low¹⁰⁸ • The Working Men Project (WMP) reported that male sex workers experience a slightly higher prevalence of STIs compared to the general population, but the prevalence of HIV is low
Mental health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mental health services do not have any information regarding whether any of their clients are involved in sex work; therefore it is difficult to assess the extent of sex workers' mental health needs in Westminster. Anecdotally, however, it was reported that street sex workers tend to have mental health needs due to their chaotic lifestyles. For off street sex workers, their needs vary greatly; some will have no mental health needs whilst others may need some degree of support. Sex workers who experience violence were reported often to experience Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. It was reported that trafficked sex workers tend to have significantly high mental health needs due to the trauma caused from trafficking. • The number of sex workers in London has increased significantly since 2002 (due to the migration of sex workers into the UK). As a result the market has saturated, and many sex workers travel a lot in order to meet clients. This means that networks between the sex workers have been broken up, and many are now isolated. Additionally, the increasingly prevalent form of selling sex via the internet means that sex workers do not receive the social support and interaction which they may have had in the more traditional 'walk up' brothels. This social isolation can result in mental health needs.

¹⁰⁶ Meeting with ASSET team (August 2012)

¹⁰⁷ Reported by Praed Street Project (February 2013)

¹⁰⁸ Meeting with Working Men Project (WMP) (August 2012)

Appendix B: Participating organisations

Representatives of the following organisations contributed to the work of the task group:

- Praed Street Project, Imperial College Healthcare NHS Trust
- Working Men Project, Imperial College Healthcare NHS Trust
- Swish, Terrence Higgins Trust
- CLASH (Central London Action on Sexual Health), Central and North West London (CNWL) NHS Foundation Trust.
- North Westminster Drug and Alcohol Services (NWDAS)
- South Westminster Drug and Alcohol Service (provided by Turning Point)
- Westminster City Council including representatives from Substance Misuse services, Adult Social services, Children's services, Licensing, Housing, Community Safety and Public Health
- London Metropolitan Police including SCD9, Sapphire Unit and Westminster Metropolitan Police
- NHS practitioners including those providing mental health services, sexual health services and GP services
- Westminster Victim Support
- Open Doors, Homerton University Hospital NHS Foundation Trust
- Merseyside Police
- Armistead Centre, Merseyside
- Centre for Public Scrutiny
- English Collective of Prostitutes (ECP)
- Greater London Assembly (GLA)
- Eaves
- UK Network of Sex Work Projects (UKNSWP)
- UK Border Agency
- Advance Advocacy Project

Appendix C: Copy of the questionnaire research conducted with sex workers

Questionnaire: Violence and Crime

Westminster City Council are researching violence faced by sex workers in order to consider how sex workers could be better supported and protected from crime and violence. We would be most grateful if you could answer the questions below in order to help us with our research.

- 1) Do you think that violence or crime is something which sex workers experience in London?

YES / NO

- If yes, please list what sorts of crime/violence? E.g. burglary, sexual assault

.....

- 2) Have you ever experienced crime or been a victim of violence or crime while participating in sex work?

YES / NO

- If yes, please could you write what sorts of violence or crime took place?

.....

- If no, have you heard about other sex workers experiencing crime or violence?

YES / NO

- 3) Do you think sex workers tend to report violence or crime to the police?

YES / NO

- If yes, why do they report?

.....

- If no, why don't they tell the police?

.....

- 4) Do you or other sex workers tell any other organisations or people about violence/crime?

YES / NO

➤ If yes, who?

.....

5) Do you think the police could provide better support to sex workers?

YES / NO

6) What kinds of support (if any) do sex workers need?

.....

7) Do you have any additional comments?

.....

Many thanks for your help.

Appendix D: The costs and savings of violence and crime

The tables below outlines the costs of the main types of violence and crime committed against sex workers, and the savings which could be made through prosecuting more offenders as a result of increased offending. Currently, due to low reporting rates amongst victims, offenders are able to re-offend. Evidence (such as the case studies in this report) demonstrates that offenders will re-offend against both sex workers and other members of the community. The table below demonstrates the savings which could be made through preventing re-offending (by encouraging sex workers to report violence and as a result convicting criminals) – these calculations are based on the Home Office's average re-offending rates for all crimes (unfortunately statistics are not available on re-offending rates for different types of crime). The costs in this table are **low estimates** since the Home Office estimates are out of date (and therefore do not account for inflation) and because investigations regarding sex workers tend to take a longer amount of time.

The costs in the table reflect a total of all the costs of the incident to both organisations and the victim¹⁰⁹.

	Type of violence and cost per victim					
Breakdown of key (approximate) costs¹¹⁰	Homicide: £1,458,975	Rape: £96,000	Sexual assault: £24,885	Violent assault: £10,407	Robbery: £7,282	HIV/AIDS: £66,000
Physical and emotional impact	£860,380	£61,440	£17,447	£5,472	£3,188	HIV: £18,000 in treatment costs and impact on the victim AIDS: £48,000 in treatment costs and impact on the victim
Lost output	£451,110	£9,965	£3,362	£1648	£1011	
Health services	£770	£2082	£748	£1347	£483	
Criminal Justice System	£144,239	£14,345	£3,298	£1928	£2600	

¹⁰⁹ <http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20100413151441/http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/pdfs05/rdsolr3005.pdf>

¹¹⁰ Note that only significant costs are included in this breakdown and therefore they do not necessarily equate to the total cost

Breakdown of costs and savings from preventing offending:

Incident	Average cost per incident per person ¹¹¹	Expected value of savings through early intervention prosecution (in a 12 month period) ¹¹²
Homicide	£1,458,975 ¹¹³	There have been at least 26 murders of sex workers in London between 1990 and 2006 ¹¹⁴ , equating to an average of at least 3 murders every two years in London. Even if one murder was prevented this would save approximately £1.5 million in costs to the police, other statutory organisations and in social impact.
Rape	Over £96,000 ¹¹⁵	If one rape offender was convicted (due to a sex worker reporting the incident) and the perpetrator's potential to re-offend was prevented, an average of £73,564 would be saved in a 12 month period (this could be greater if the offender re-offended in subsequent years). <i>Calculation:</i> <i>If 10 people committed rapes, this would cost £960,000. 2.67 of these people are likely to commit 2.87 more rapes in a 12 month period, so $(2.67 \times 2.87 \times £96,000 = 735,638.4/10 \text{ people}) = \text{average of } £73,564 \text{ per offender}$</i>
Sexual assault	£24,885 ¹¹⁶	If a sexual assault offender was convicted (due to a sex worker reporting the incident) and therefore their potential to re-offend was prevented, an average of £19,069 would be saved in a 12 month period. <i>Calculation:</i> <i>If 10 people committed sexual assault, this would cost £248,850. 2.67 of these people are likely to commit 2.87 more sexual assaults in a 12 month period, so $(2.67 \times 2.87 \times £24885 = 190,691/10 \text{ people}) = \text{average of } £19,069 \text{ per offender}$</i>
Violent assault	£10,407	If a violent assault offender was convicted (due to a sex worker reporting the incident) and therefore their potential to re-offend was prevented, an average of £7,975 would be saved in a 12 month period. <i>Calculation:</i> <i>If 10 people committed violent assault, this would cost £104,070. 2.67 of these people are likely to commit 2.87 more sexual assaults in a 12 month period, so $(2.67 \times 2.87 \times £10407 = 79,748/10 \text{ people}) = \text{average of } £7,975 \text{ per offender}$</i>
Robbery	£7,282 ¹¹⁷	If a robbery offender was convicted (due to a sex worker reporting the incident) and the perpetrator's potential to re-offend was prevented, an average of £5,580 would be saved. <i>Calculation:</i> <i>If 10 robberies were committed, this would cost £72,820. 2.67 of these are likely to commit 2.87 more robberies in a 12 month period, so $(2.67 \times 2.87 \times £7282 = £55,801/10) = \text{average of } £5,580 \text{ per offender}$</i>

¹¹¹ These include the emotional and physical impacts of injuries and illnesses and estimates of the associated costs to health services and of lost output from time spent at less than full health.

¹¹² Calculations based on Home Office average re-offending rates: the sums are based on the probability of the offender re-offending (26.7%) and the average number of re-offences that re-offenders commit in 12 months (2.87)

¹¹³ <http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20110218135832/rds.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/pdfs/hors217.pdf>

¹¹⁴ Kinnell (2008) 'Violence and Sex Work in Britain' Willan:UK

¹¹⁵ <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/publications/crime/call-end-violence-women-girls/government-stern-review?view=Binary>

¹¹⁶ <http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20100413151441/http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/pdfs05/rdsolr3005.pdf>

¹¹⁷ <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/publications/crime/reducing-reoffending/IOM-phase2-costs-multipliers?view=Binary>