



For organisations working with  
**women in prostitution**

A good practice guide

# Acknowledgements

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We are very grateful to Patricia Holmes and the Franki Project for permission to adapt and reprint the Guide. Thanks also to Anna Travers for permission to use her poems which appear throughout the Guide.

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# Contents

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<b>Forewords</b>	2
<b>Introduction</b>	4
<b>Section 1: Policy Guidance</b>	
• Safety	8
• Harm reduction	10
• Confidentiality	11
• Self esteem	12
• Choices and decisions	14
• Case studies	17
<b>Section 2: Working with Women</b>	
• Strategies for workers	22
• Key principles	23
• Establishing a protocol	24
• Working with young women	25
• Developing support groups	26
• Setting up a support group	27
• Current legal situation	28
• General information gathering	29
<b>Section 3: Resources</b>	
• Routes Out of Prostitution Social Inclusion Partnership	32
• Resources available	34
• Resource list: Prostitution and Pornography	37
• Glasgow City Council Prostitution Policy Statement	40
• Information from research	41
• Men Create the Demand: Women are the Supply. Article by Donna M. Hughes.	43

# Foreword

by

## Fiona Broadfoot

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At present prostitution is commonly known as “the oldest profession in the world”, whilst it is seen by many ‘working’ and ‘ex-working women’ as ‘oppression’ and not a ‘profession’.

We need to develop a good working practice and an understanding of the realities and consequences of prostitution for these women and children, instead of colluding with the abusers, disempowering the women and normalising the ‘profession’. Therefore, it is crucial that workers within both statutory and voluntary organisations are given constructive guidelines along with relevant training and information.

For many years I was abused in prostitution, after being exploited at the age of fifteen by a ‘brutal pimp’.

So from a personal perspective I acknowledge the work of ‘Franki’ in developing this good practice guide as I feel very strongly about the lack of support and compassion there is for women and children involved in this trade of human misery. These guidelines assist in defining professional boundaries and developing effective multi-agency work which will enable workers to empower ‘working women’ to exit prostitution.

**F. Broadfoot**  
**EXIT**

# Foreword

by  
Dr. Liz Kelly

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As debates about whether prostitution should be understood as a form of sexual exploitation or legitimated as a form of work range around the globe, and academics, policy makers and activists quarrel about whether and how to construct clear boundaries between ‘child’ and ‘adult’ prostitution, ‘free’ and ‘forced’ prostitution, it is refreshing to read something which begins from a different starting point. These good practice guidelines are grounded in the experience of working with women in prostitution. They are respectful of women who are frequently marginalised, whilst also refusing to glamourise the dangerous and dispiriting reality of street prostitution. What reading them made clear to me was that working with this group of women demands particular kinds of commitment and creativity, and that anyone who expects to be able to apply simplistic models should probably not take on this work. For those of us who have not been directly involved in the sex industry, to do good work with women in prostitution requires: a clear mind; a willingness to think beyond ones own life and experience, whilst at the same time making links and connections with common threads in women’s lives; an ability to hear and contain accounts of horrific abuse; an

openness to a perspective on the world (and men’s behaviour in particular) which is not pleasant; and a readiness to confront the complexity of women’s behaviour in adverse situations.

Feminism in its complex and open forms can be a resource in this work, but feminism as an inflexible ideology will undoubtedly be a hindrance. What is clear is that the work of Franki involved being open to what could be learnt from women who give their lives ‘on the front line’, who cannot afford themselves of many of the strategies most of us use in our daily routine to limit our vulnerability to violence and abuse. I hope that what has been learnt can be used in other contexts to create more meaningful and effective services for women who are all too frequently left on the margins, and that as a result more women will find support services which enable them to achieve what the majority of women working in street prostitution say that they want – to get out of prostitution and create lives which increase rather than diminish their sense of worth and belonging.

**Dr. Liz Kelly**  
**Director**  
**Child and Woman Abuse Studies Unit**  
**University of North London**

# Introduction

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Although we recognise that there are other areas and environments where women are involved in prostitution, this Good Practice Guide will primarily focus on women involved in street prostitution. The guide has been written after consulting nationally with agencies involved with women in prostitution. These agencies have been various and have included both the statutory and voluntary sectors. However the analysis and philosophy reflected in this guide are entirely the views of the Franki group. It is not intended to be a prescriptive, step by step programme for working with women in prostitution. Indeed this would not be possible, as there is no guaranteed single approach for enabling and empowering women to make the changes to take control of their lives. The two forewords reflect this approach, both an academic and a personal response from women who have been involved in prostitution are vital to the understanding of the dynamics involved in these discussions.

Communication, though vital, can be problematic. Workers and women will find themselves coming from very differing stances. For a worker one of the main difficulties is to recognise and accept their own limitations. There is often a desire to ensure that ‘something can be done’ when often there is little, or on occasions nothing, to be done. This can make this area of work daunting and at times depressing. However, there are women who do leave prostitution, sometimes against all odds. The catalyst for this may be something external – the birth of a child, the death of a relative, or sometimes the woman is impelled by something internal which she may not even be able to explain herself. Certainly in our experience ‘leaving the life’ is something that women talk about constantly and something that they aspire to. As workers, campaigners and activists it is our responsibility to be as well prepared as we can be to help them do that.

We hope that this guide will encourage you to look at the practices within your organisation, to start to ask some questions about how you view the women, the work and yourself and to start to think in imaginative, pro-active, flexible and creative ways about supporting women in prostitution and developing exit strategies.

# GOOD PRACTICE GUIDE

## for organisations working with women in prostitution

Prostitution is an occupation that is fraught with danger. Women working in street prostitution are subject to systematic violence of every description – physical, sexual and emotional. The myth of the ‘happy hooker’ has become so pervasive in the last few decades, reinforced through popular media representations such as the film ‘Pretty Woman’ that the discussions that have taken place around prostitution have become polarised between those who want to legalise prostitution and those who do not. This has led to the focus moving away from the issues and sanitising the debate as one of occupation and employment rather than one of violence against women. Many leaflets and information sheets have been directed to agencies and the women themselves, cataloguing methods whereby women can work safely without addressing the reality that for these women ‘safety’ has a different meaning than it would in any other paid work.

Though the safety of women is vital, this guide will primarily address the issues surrounding working with women and girls in street prostitution, within the context of the violence they experience as a routine part of their ‘working’ day. What other job has as part of its job description the possibility that you could be raped, beaten or murdered? Where at the very least you may be reviled or even spat on by members of the community where you are working? There is an assumption that the payment of money somehow negates and denies the validity of the women’s experience of violence.

A recent survey on street prostitution found that 70% of the women had been sexually

abused as children, more than 80% had suffered violence at the hands of their pimps, 60% had been raped and sexually assaulted by punters and 40% had experienced a physical assault, (Jalna Hamner (1998) KCRP). In Glasgow there has been six murders and one suspicious death of women involved in street prostitution since 1991. In the year 2000/2001 Strathclyde Police recorded 1174 offences relating to prostitution, a 6.4% increase on the previous year.

Many women in prostitution have come through or are presently within the care system. Many young women are ‘runaways,’ all situations that make women vulnerable to being coerced into prostitution by pimps who are unscrupulous and violent men. The links between the drug trade and prostitution are well documented and are a prominent feature in these women’s lives. What other job necessitates an extensive use of drugs or alcohol to be able to face the working day? It is of the essence then, that when working with women there must be a recognition that it is within a context of the violence she has and will be experiencing. When working with women in prostitution you are working with women who are being abused. It is therefore essential that agencies examine their working practices within this context. Methods of working have to be modified in a whole range of ways that address the background and context of women’s life histories, and which support exit strategies.

This Good Practice Guide will address issues relating to women in street prostitution, and issues for workers and agencies. Though we recognise many of the issues for women in

prostitution are common to all there are issues specific to young women and girls. The extent of involvement of children in prostitution is difficult to gauge, however anecdotally many women relate their experience of starting work pre 16, some as young as 10. Whilst writing this document we have realised how many problems there are with descriptive phrases regarding the age of young women, descriptive that can become prescriptive. 'Girl', 'young woman' or 'woman' have been words that one can find oneself shifting between, often in the same sentence when describing a situation. This relates very often to our perceptions of them as well, often to their detriment. A 'girl' of 14 engaged in prostitution one would want to describe as a young woman by the very nature of what she has experienced and has to endure, but at the same time would not want to detract from the fact that she is a child. There is a blurring of boundaries both real as well as semantic which is often reflected in the work done with 'girls' and 'young women', compounded and confused by the punter's desire to see young women as children. Indeed many 'women' will dress and act as 'young women' or 'girls' to service a considerable demand from men wanting sex with children.

Confusions about sexuality, choice, culpability and vulnerability make it difficult to make clear distinctions in documenting our work. In this guide we have used what we consider to be appropriate language in the context of the discussion. You may disagree with the terminology, which may mean that you will disagree with the analysis of a particular situation. This can only serve to highlight the difficulties that abound in this work. We have used the word 'work' to define the act of prostitution, which we recognise as contentious. Defining the abuse of women as 'work' can seem as though prostitution is a legitimate activity that women can 'choose' to engage in. An industry that makes

respectable the men engaged in it as employers, rather than abusers and exploiters of women. This is not the view of this guide but reflects the difficulties of finding appropriate language. This guide will examine ways for workers to work safely on the streets, and show examples of good practice of women centred work, discuss resources, through case studies and examples and examine prostitution as a child protection issue. It will also suggest strategies to support women to exit prostitution, involving a multi-agency approach.

The guide has been produced in three sections. **SECTION ONE** explores general good practice under specific policy headings. This should be used to review agencies' existing policies or put in place new policies. It is recommended that this framework of policies should be in place before any work is started with women working in prostitution. **SECTION TWO** offers detailed guidance on developing work with women and goes through each stage in the development of face to face support work with women working in prostitution. **SECTION THREE** provides information on resources and services available.

### *We're Not Unstoppable*

*How come you cannot stop us?  
You could if only you tried.  
And perhaps if you had made an effort,  
One less prostitute would have died.*

*How come you cannot stop us?  
Just charge us and send us to court.  
You seem to favour the punter, laugh,  
joke, oh and then file a report.*

*How come you cannot stop us?  
While you claim you're doing your best,  
the only time you appear to make an  
effort,  
is when you have a new strategy to test.*

# SECTION ONE

.....

*This section explores general good practice under specific policy headings. This should be used to review agencies existing policies or put in place new policies. It is recommended that this framework of policies should be in place before any work is started with women working in prostitution.*

## *Policy Guidance*

- *Safety*
- *Harm Reduction*
- *Confidentiality*
- *Self Esteem*
- *Choices and Decisions*
- *Case Studies. To be used for formulation of policies*

# GOOD PRACTICE GUIDE

## for organisations working with women in prostitution

Patricia Holmes, a former project worker in prison and a member of Franki, notes;

*‘Initially I was horrified to hear staff being extremely directive in their advice to, and support of, young women. I had been used to asking non directional questions and exploring with women their various options. Hearing women being ‘told’ what to do was more than just a culture shock; it felt downright offensive.*

*As time went by though I came to appreciate that for many young women there is a feeling of relief at having some of the onerous responsibility taken off them, of having some boundaries set for them. Many young women’s boundaries have been so blurred by their abuse that setting parameters for themselves and for other people’s behaviours can seem impossible. So some of my politically aware ‘counselling’ went by the way at times.*

*My rule of thumb was that I always told the woman as far as I could my honest view of the situation and that she was clear that it was my personal opinion. I always made sure that she had all the information that I could supply her with, and was aware of what areas I had no knowledge of. Though she would know that I would always support her she also knew that there would be times that I could not support or agree with some of the decisions she might make, which I felt would either harm her or someone else’.*

### **Safety**

What is the definition of safety for girls and women in prostitution? ‘Safety’ when only limited to condom use, strategies for working ‘safely’ such as working in pairs etc. is simply colluding with the abusers. The emphasis should be on prevention and intervention to ensure that women and girls are not placed in vulnerable positions. There is an increasing recognition that there are child protection issues related to prostitution and that there needs to be some kind of child protection policies as an integral part of the work. However, there is a danger that women over the age of 16 do not have the same regard paid to their safety. Most women in prostitution have started work when they were girls (defined as being 16 years or younger).

Women over the age of 16 are also entitled to having concerns for their safety extended beyond the limited model of safety that is current. Much more emphasis needs to be placed on women’s mental health and their well-being, this must involve a multi agency approach that understands the issues involved and that must be centred on addressing the issues that make the woman vulnerable in the first place.

Obviously this does not mean that the woman’s safety on the streets is of no consequence. It is important to remember though that the strategies that women can develop for keeping themselves ‘safe’ can only be marginally useful as the extent of violence that women experience will testify to. There are connections between the experiences of violence that in other contexts

women and girls encounter, and that women in prostitution experience, which are useful to explore. Whilst precautionary strategies can be effective this effectiveness diminishes when the man has a clear intent to assault or abuse, and especially when the parties are known to each other. The strategies that women use in public places, eg avoiding eye contact or keeping to well lit areas, are not available to women in prostitution: they have to take substantially more risks. Prostitution itself makes them vulnerable to violent men, who are well aware of this, which is why they frequently target prostitutes for physical and sexual assault, which all too often results in murder.

It is important then to realise the extent of the danger that women are placed in when they are on the streets.

Talk through with your colleagues what you think are the issues around safety

- Do you have discussions about violence with the women and if so what issues arise?
- Do the women complain to the police about assaults?
- Do you have a good relationship with the police in terms of the way they treat women's complaints about violence?
- If there are problems could you help to facilitate increased reporting and improved responses?
- In discussions with women are links made between the violence they experience from punters, the violence they experience from 'boyfriends' and other experiences of violence?

**A useful exercise would be to use the two case studies at the end of this section and**

**explore/discuss the issues they bring up for you and your agency. These questions might help structure your thinking.**

- Does your agency have relevant procedures and protocols?
- How would you and your agency respond to these young women professionally?
- Do you have enough information to be able to help?
- Are you aware of multi agency working on this issue, and of how you and your agency can contribute?
- Are there things you would like to do, but cannot because there are gaps in provision/resources locally?
- What additional resources/kinds of provision are needed to ensure a meaningful intervention in cases like these? (see case studies)
- How might these resources be developed locally?

**Mary was a Prostitute**

***Mary was a prostitute,  
who destroyed her self respect,  
and whenever she got a punter,  
with heroin she would inject.***

***But Mary went to work one day,  
and finally found her fate,  
if only someone had stopped her,  
before it became too late.***

## Harm Reduction

The definition of harm which is most often used in relation to prostitution refers to women's drug use and physical health concerns. Whilst these are clearly of concern, in our experience women working on the streets are usually fully aware of health risks and the necessity of safe sex practices. Younger women are however at risk from men who will pay extra for unprotected sex and have forcibly demanded this from women on occasions.

As workers it is imperative to have information about relevant organisations that deal with health issues, for example addiction services, voluntary agencies, and health projects, and to ensure that the woman you are working with does have all the relevant information she needs. Many organisations will be giving out information about how to 'work' safely and whilst harm reduction is important it is also essential to recognise that inevitably this can only be a short term measure. It is all too easy to fall into the trap of thinking that if you are addressing safety issues related to women working on the streets then you are working with the woman. At all times the possibility of exiting for women should be the paramount concern, working with the woman only considering safety issues related to her work will not begin to address her safety as far as her long term mental well being is concerned.

- Explore your definitions and understandings of harm
- Provide an 'open' women only space for women to talk together
- Treat women with respect
- Recognise your commonalities with women and use them in your work
- Gather information about relevant subjects and display

- Be prepared to talk about difficult things –child sexual abuse, rape...
- Sort yourself out, she is not there to listen to your difficulties

By all means provide women with appropriate information about working safely, but never forget your main priority is to help her leave prostitution. This obviously does not mean that at every opportunity you are lecturing the woman about the way she is dealing with her life, but you should be ever vigilant to provide her with the space and understanding so she can discuss the issues that led her into prostitution.

### To the Punter Who Attacked Me

*To the punter who attacked me,  
what made you hate me so much?  
I was only offering you a service,  
the chance of a woman's touch.*

*To the punter who attacked me,  
did you know I had just given birth,  
I was providing for my kids who I'm proud  
of,  
then you took away all my self worth.*

*To the punter who attacked me,  
did you plan it all in advance,  
it seemed as though you wanted to kill me,  
the fact you didn't, was purely by chance.*

*To the punter who attacked me,  
did you know whether or not I was dead,  
and do you carry on regardless,  
with the thought of this in your head.*

*To the punter who attacked me,  
you left me face down in the rain,  
and now I'm detached from my children,  
I daren't get close in case it happens again.*

*To the punter who attacked me,  
you left me stinking of your scent,  
and that's the only memory I have,  
cause it was so bad the rest just went.*

*To the punter who attacked me  
"I SURVIVED AND I HATE YOU"*

## Confidentiality

Different agencies will have very different restrictions placed upon them. Statutory agencies will have a duty to report abuse when a girl is under the age of 16, whilst voluntary agencies may not. This in itself leads to difficulties: an agency who will be actively involved with an under age girl can on the morning of her sixteenth birthday totally redefine its responsibilities to her. Many times there are difficulties between agencies because of this. Statutory agencies will argue that it is right that a child should not be left in a position where she is being abused and of course who would want to? However, for some voluntary agencies their argument would be that a girl needs to have some opportunity to talk through what will happen when the abuse is reported.

Many girls are involved with their abusers in ways that mean that they are totally dependent on them emotionally as well as economically. Coercion into prostitution is a complex and confusing situation for young women, which can involve parents and boyfriends; children may be economically/emotionally dependent on the coercer and may co-operate for the 'sake of love.' Although it may be clear to the worker that this is not a voluntary choice it may require a lengthy process in order for the girl to recognise the relationship as abusive. She cannot be considered as a 'small' adult with the same capacity to make informed decisions about her life style however apparently mature she appears to be.

A worker in a statutory agency knows that when a girl starts to disclose abuse there will come a time when the worker has no option but to report. At the earliest stage that is practical as well as sensitive in the developing contact, they should tell the girl that this is what they will have to do, whilst recognising that this may effectively stop her from being

able to go on with the disclosure. This is why it is so important that statutory and voluntary agencies should work together.

Women will need time to trust the people who are working with them and they need time to work through some of the issues that have involved them in prostitution in the first place. They also deserve to be involved in any decision making processes. It is of fundamental importance that confidentiality is very clearly defined as being between the relevant parts of an agency and the woman and not between individual workers and her. Dealing with very difficult issues and carrying the burden of some confidences can only be draining to workers and ultimately non-productive for the woman.

The woman you are working with must be very clear that this is the case. This means that you must have some system to feed information into your organisation without appearing that you are 'gossiping' about her, and also preserving her confidentiality with other agencies. Sharing information with other agencies can obviously be done with her permission, and there may be times in extreme circumstances when it has to be done without her permission, and it is important that you as a worker and an agency, particularly a voluntary agency, agree what these circumstances may be. For example you may not be able to keep a confidence when a woman has told you that she has overdosed. A worker will need to rely on their own judgement at these times, and that is why it is so vital that you as a worker has someone to support you whose opinion you respect. If there is no one in your agency that answers this description it will be worth going outside it to find one.

**To develop confidential approaches to working, agencies should review their relevant policies. Questions which can help include:**

- Do you and your colleagues fully understand the need for girls to be able to discuss their abuse without pressure to report?
- Does your agency need training or discussion with voluntary agencies with experience in this area?
- What is your policy on confidentiality? What are the confidential policies of other services you work with?
- Does this clarify that confidentiality is between a client and the agency and not between individuals?
- Are you clear about the circumstances in which you would be required to break a confidence? What are they?

Working with women who are defined as being over the age of consent means that you may feel freed from some of these moral dilemmas, but it is still important to keep constantly in the forefront of your work that women in prostitution are being abused whether they are 15 or 55.

## **Self Esteem**

*‘At the end of the day I felt like a spittoon for semen’*

**(A woman formerly in prostitution, at a conference on prostitution)**

Self-esteem is the word which, thanks to television chat shows, is now on everyone’s lips. Workers frequently work on ‘issues’ related to self-esteem without taking into account that for the women they will be working with, the idea of self esteem means something very different. All women have problems with their self esteem, we are all too fat, too thin, too whatever, but it does women no favours to assume that our feelings about ourselves are ‘the same’ as working women. Of course there are commonalities, but the reality of the repetitive, degrading and repellent acts that prostituted women are systematically subjected to are beyond most of our comprehension.

Recent research (Promise, San Francisco) shows that the 43% of the women currently working in prostitution experienced childhood physical abuse, 41% child sexual abuse, 59% childhood emotional abuse, 52% of them reported rape as an adult woman, 23% multiple rapes and 48% assault as an adult. These typical reports make simplistic approaches to self- esteem problematic. Experiences in Rape Crisis Centres have shown that typically women ‘blame’ themselves for the rape. To understand why they have been so hideously attacked, to make sense of such a senseless violent assault they rationalise what has happened in terms of *‘If only I hadn’t asked him in for coffee’*, *‘If only I hadn’t accepted a lift home’* ... How then can prostituted women rationalise what has happened to them? For them there isn’t even the doubtful refuge of **‘If onlys’** they are very well aware of the dangers they risk, they are also too aware of the opinion of society if they dare to report it. The assumptions will be

that they have somehow made a deliberate and calculated choice to engage in behaviour which had this result.

When asked how he felt about women being faced with violent assault, rape and even murder as an occupational hazard a punter replied “*So what? Every job has its drawbacks, there’s things about work I don’t like either, they know what they’re getting in to*” (Kerb Crawlers Rehabilitation Programme February 1999). Working with issues related to these matters involve workers in establishing a level of trust that is probably higher than with other clients. Recognition and an acceptance of the basic level of abuse of women in prostitution are the only viable positions that a worker can start from.

In addition it is important also to acknowledge that the life that women lead is not necessarily conducive to behaving as a pleasant person. It can be very difficult for a worker to confront the fact that many women have developed unpleasant, abusive and violent personalities as part of their coping strategies that are displayed not only to their clients, but also to each other and on occasions to you. There is a certain cachet about working with women in prostitution, a spurious ‘glamour.’ Your friends will be interested and thrilled to hear what you are doing; you are working on the cutting edge with women who are the ‘other.’ (The ‘other’ being defined by the women themselves as a society and culture that exists sometimes seemingly autonomously outside ‘normal’ society, which they perceive and experience as totally rejecting and critical). You may get a sense of satisfaction from being seen as close to women on the street, there may be a feeling of kudos that you are working with a ‘sex worker.’ If you are out at night and a woman greets you who is obviously prostituting, your friends may get a buzz from it, and so may you. Be aware of these

tendencies, working on the streets is not a glamorous occupation, the violence and abuse she suffers are real.

Perhaps what we should be discussing is self worth rather than self-esteem. For there to be any possibility of change there has to be some idea for women that they are worth more than the life on the streets provides. It is very easy not to look beyond the streetwise tough front that women can present, because they appear on the surface to be very confident. However, confidence and the ability to make meaningful decisions can only come from self worth. As a worker it is your task to maintain her sense of self and perhaps in some cases begin to build it. Building self worth is a delicate balance, as part of coping with her life she may have invested a sense of herself as being what the stereotypes present us with. “*During the time I was in prostitution I had to tell myself I was enjoying it, that I wanted to do it, I couldn’t admit to anyone particularly myself how much I hated it*” (Fiona Broadfoot of EXIT, in conversation). Criticising prostitution can seem as though you are criticising the individual woman. There is no easy answer to this other than to treat women with respect and to constantly affirm your belief in their capacity to gain control of their lives.

- Remember that ‘self esteem’ will mean different things to her.
- Do not discuss with other workers in front of her, your new car, holiday in Greece, trouble with your mortgage ...
- Do remember that you are her worker not her friend.
- Do not put your attitudes upon her, she will not necessarily want to lead your life style.
- Do not collude with statements about

how her violent boyfriend is really a nice bloke.

- Do remember that working and living on the streets can have caused her to develop coping strategies which mean that she will not necessarily be pleasant to work with, or grateful for your support.

### Why, Why, Why

*One punter left his sweat all over me,  
while another told me I belonged in a  
butchers.  
A cheap bit of flesh, bought to satisfy a  
hunger.*

*One punter beat me up and left me for  
dead,  
while another squeezed me like a stress  
ball.  
I felt every anxiety leave his body and  
enter mine.*

*One punter asked me to marry him,  
while another told me I was good for  
nothing.  
Being told day after day, struggling not  
to believe.*

*One punter wanted me to bind him,  
while another tied me down with his  
control.  
Released only when the door closed  
behind him.*

*On top of all this I get called names,  
I need to stop and find my place in life.*

## Choices and Decisions

*'It is hard to imagine another form of work that is similar in which the sign of a social group's inferior status is the centre and meaning of the "work" ... in which workers are required to receive the contempt appropriate to an inferior position in the political hierarchy to the extent of possible brutal death'*

(Sheila Jeffreys (1998) 'The Idea of Prostitution' page 195)

There is a pervasive and ultimately extremely damaging myth that women 'choose' to be prostitutes. Within that myth there is also a tacit acceptance of the concept of a deviant sexuality. Women are portrayed in the media as 'sexy' 'kinky' 'vice girls' 'ladies of the night': all descriptions that imply that prostitution is a consensual and somehow mutually satisfying sexual experience. Women may themselves depict it as such for very obvious economic reasons. However the consensuality they accept is that of an exchange: sex for money. The consensuality that popular myth assumes is that of a reciprocal sexual experience. This is a common view held by punters, illustrated by a remark made by a punter at a Kerb Crawlers Rehabilitation Programme session; "whatever you say, a woman always comes away from me satisfied in every way and I mean every way". Anecdotally over the seven years Franki has spent working with women involved in prostitution we have only met a handful of women who has said anything other than that they hate what they do and hate the men they do it with.

It has been suggested that identifying women's lack of choice is to eternally cast women in the role of 'victim' thereby reducing them to passive ciphers. However if during the course of her working day as say a

check out assistant or lawyer, a woman was subjected to slaps, punches, kicks, verbal abuse ... she would be recognised as a victim of violent crime. Because a woman is paid for a sexual act does not mean that she is any less the 'victim' when she is subjected to the same abuse. Toby Summers, who was herself abused in prostitution, comments that the hardest thing for women in the sex industry to do is to confront the extent to which they have been hurt: 'One cannot be hurt and not be a victim to the perpetrator' (Liz Kelly (1999)'Trouble & Strife' no.38). Once a woman recognises that she is the 'victim' of a violent crime then she can begin to demand that some attention is paid to that fact.

For women involved in street prostitution the fact that their choices are limited is self-evident. Addiction to drugs, chaotic life styles, a history of abuse and poverty and violence does not generate a context where women can even begin to make a rational choice. There is the accepted wisdom that to come off drugs and to leave prostitution is the way 'out.' Out of a lifestyle which she may have been involved in for a long time and automatically into a 'normal' way of living, normality very often being defined as a close approximation to the lifestyle of the worker currently working with her.

Of course leaving addictions and prostitution is desirable and what we should all be working towards, but what is not necessarily recognised is that when women make choices they are frequently choosing between unpleasant options. There is no 'good' choice that will automatically mean that they will have a wonderful life or 'bad' choice that means they will not.

To choose to come off drugs and to leave prostitution is to choose to leave a life style, a partner who you may love, even if the partner is pimping you, a world that even if it does not give you love and support at least gives

you a sense of belonging, of being part of something, even if that something was to be the 'other'. To leave your drugs means to give up the reason you get up in the morning, the thing that motivates your every action, the thing that protects you at times from the memories that threaten to rush in and overpower you.

- Certainly give women choices, ask any street prostitute what she would prefer to be, a prostitute or a doctor?
- Do not put your attitudes upon her, she will not necessarily want to lead your life style, and do not expect her to find the prospect of being 'drug free' necessarily an enticing one.
- Get the information for her to be able to consider her options, and provide a realistic assessment of how much you will be able to help her achieve them.
- Give her an opportunity and a space to discuss her options.
- Be honest and recognise that these may be limited.
- Do not expect her to make the choice you want her to.
- Recognise that she may tell you what she thinks you want to hear.
- Do not take this personally.
- Accept that you are working to a long term goal, and that this may be interrupted by a crisis or her disappearance.
- Fully accept that she will need to have the opportunity to deal with issues of violence.

- Be aware that exactly as for women leaving any violent situation it may take her several attempts to be successful.
- Remember whatever work you have done, she may choose to do something else ultimately.
- Involve other relevant agencies – you are not this woman’s rescuer.
- Do not assume that salvation lies in heterosexual partnership and that all she needs to do is to find the right man, or even that her perceptions of a partnership will be the same as yours.
- Disabuse yourself of the notion that women will be having a meaningful sexual and emotional relationship with their boyfriends/pimps.

**A Lack of Understanding**

*You see me standing on a corner,  
and you think you know it all,  
but the fact of the matter is,  
you don't really know me at all.*

*Where do I live? What is my name?,  
Better still what is my favourite meal?,  
Do I take drugs? Have I got kids?,  
What's more do you know how I feel?*

*To you I'm a "slag" or a "slapper",  
but to me I'm a young mum of 3,  
and while you're discussing my lifestyle,  
I'm cosy at home cooking their tea.*

*While you glare at and insult me,  
I force myself to give you a smile,  
because to glare back and make you my  
enemy,  
just wouldn't be worth my while.*

*Some of you laugh and throw things at  
me,  
there's nothing about that I can do,  
with some of you it's eggs, others urine,  
but remember I have feelings just like  
you.*

*I'm not ashamed of who I've become,  
but I do hope to change what I do,  
and now that I've learnt to understand  
myself,  
I only wish now you can too.*

## **Case Study A. Barbara.**

Barbara is in her early forties. She is a single parent with three school age children.

Around ten years ago she left an abusive partner, and she has since been on Benefits. She has contact with her family, but they are not in a position to offer financial support. She has never received any financial help from her ex-partner (children's father).

After a couple of years as a single parent on Benefit, Barbara found herself struggling to manage financially and debts were mounting up. One of her friends was working in a sauna, and she often stressed how much money she got for this, compared to any other work she could find. Barbara decided that prostitution might be the only way of resolving her financial problems.

She went to Base 75 for health advice, then started work in street prostitution. Initially she only worked occasionally, usually when a bill was overdue. Gradually her working increased: she almost felt she "ought" to work more so as to be able to provide more for her children. During her time in street prostitution she got several convictions for soliciting. After about three years on the street she moved to working in saunas. She has now been involved in prostitution for around seven years. She usually works five days a week.

Barbara has begun to feel that if she doesn't get out soon, she will be in for life. She is also concerned about her children finding out that she is involved in prostitution since they are now old enough to be asking more questions about her "work".

The money earned through prostitution has brought some benefits. Barbara feels she is able to give her children a better life. However Barbara still has debts. She worries about how she will manage if she were to leave prostitution. She feels she would be depriving her children of things they have been used to getting.

## **Case Study B. Jeannie.**

Jeannie is 23 and has been involved in street prostitution since she was 15.

Jeannie survived a very abusive childhood with a violent father. Both her parents drank heavily. On several occasions Jeannie and her siblings spent periods of time in local authority care. Her schooling, as well as her friendships, were very disrupted and she does not have a family or social support structure, apart from other women involved in prostitution.

Whilst in care as a teenager Jeannie met a number of young people who were involved in prostitution. At the same time she was taking drugs, mainly cannabis and Valium, but was not a heavy user. She found it very difficult to engage with support workers, and she often viewed attempts to help her as unwanted restrictions. For example she hated the thought of supported accommodation.

Jeannie began to view prostitution as a way of gaining her independence and some control over her life. She was encouraged in this to some extent by other young women friends who were already involved. Once on the street her drug use increased sharply, to the extent that she had to work longer and longer hours in order to meet her drugs needs, and still have some money for other needs. Within months she was injecting heroin. She attends Base 75 occasionally, mainly for health services, but has never taken up opportunities for further support, her main attitude still being that anyone who wanted to help only wanted to control you or get something out of you.

For the past two years Jeannie has had a boyfriend, also a drug user, and she regularly provides him with money for drugs. Jeannie views this boyfriend as being protective towards her. She believes that it is difficult for him to put up with what she does, and that this explains why he is sometimes violent.

Jeannie's health has deteriorated. She has just been released from hospital after treatment for a chronic abscess. She feels that if she doesn't get out soon she will die.

### **Case study C. Lily.**

Lily is 38. She has been involved in prostitution for 14 years. She has three children who have been adopted.

Lily was married when she was 16 years old. Her husband, who was a considerable number of years older than her, was very controlling and possessive. He became increasingly abusive and violent, in particular he constantly undermined her opinions and beliefs and called her “stupid”, “crazy” and “mad”. It was her husband who first coerced her into prostitution, telling her that it was the only way she could be of any use. At the same time he abused her physically and verbally for “being a slut”. She developed mental health problems, including depression. She was unable to take care of her children: they were taken into care, fostered, and then adopted.

When she was 32 Lily managed to get away from her husband. She was offered temporary accommodation through a friend. Lily saw this as a new start and during this time she stopped working in prostitution. However the accommodation arrangement quickly broke down. She had to sleep rough, during which time she drank heavily, and resumed prostitution. She then took a place in a hostel and has remained in temporary or hostel accommodation ever since. Her health is poor, both physically and mentally. She takes prescribed drugs (anti-depressants), which she “tops up”, especially when working.

Lily desperately wants to make changes but cannot see any way to escape her situation.

**These case studies can be used as an individual exercise, or as a team or multi agency activity. Suggested discussion points:**

**‘Prevention’:**

- What factors contributed to each woman becoming involved in prostitution?
- What, if anything, could have made a difference to the woman becoming involved?
- Why did these things not happen? Would they happen now?
- What are the implications for personal practice, agency policy, local resources and multi agency working?

**‘Effects’:**

- What do you see as being the main issues for each woman now?
- Which of these issues would you be able to address through your work?
- Would you expect the woman to identify the same main issues as you have? If not, how might you approach work with her?
- What effect has involvement in prostitution had on each woman?

**‘Supporting women to leave’:**

- What do you think are the barriers to leaving prostitution, for each woman?
- What kinds of support/ intervention/resources would be needed to enable each woman to exit prostitution now.
- What are the implications again, for personal practice, agency policy, local resources and multi agency working?

## SECTION TWO

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*This section offers detailed guidance on developing work with women and goes through each stage in the development of face to face support work with women working in prostitution.*

- *Strategies for Workers*
- *Key Principles*
- *Establishing a Protocol*
- *Working with Young Women*
- *Developing Support Groups*
- *Setting Up a Support Group*
- *Current Legal Situation*
- *General Information Gathering*

## Strategies for Workers

*“You need to look for other ways of engaging with a child and building up trust. It can take as long as a year for a child to disclose the abuse and by then the child protection inquiry might have been closed down”*

**Sue Gregory (Child Protection Services Manager, Nottingham Social Services) finds standard child protection procedures don't fit well with children engaged in prostitution. (Community Care February 1999)**

Many agencies have responded to work with women in prostitution, however not necessarily from the same understandings. Multi agency work is a complex issue; policies, priorities and different analysis of the issues result in different responses to the work, which can have implications for resources. Police may be concerned to gather evidence, social services may be concerned with harm reduction, youth and community workers with rights based work, probation with reduction of offending.

Multi agency work is fraught with a history of difficult relationships: when an issue is viewed on the one hand as offending and on the other as abuse it is not surprising that conflict arises. Current government policy emphasises multi- agency work through a co-ordinated approach, citing the school as the main focus of access to working with young people.

This in itself denies the reality of the difficulties of accessing young women working in prostitution on a number of levels. For instance building up a relationship that allows young women to reveal their abuse through work in schools is unrealistic when other young people in the group are present

because of non-school attendance, or exclusion.

It may be more appropriate for work to be done with young women who have abuse as the common factor, but at some stage young women working in prostitution will need their own space.

### *I Struggle to Get Ready*

*At the moment I'm sat down relaxing,  
but some things bugging my mind.  
The need to get up and get ready,  
cause some money I must find.*

*I get dressed up in my stockings,  
and put on a short black skirt.  
Last of all I put on my brave face,  
that will make me a bit harder to hurt.*

*On my bed I place some covers,  
then I head off down the road.  
I don't need to buy any condoms,  
because I made sure that I had a load.*

*I stroll slowly down to my corner,  
straighten up my dress, then I stand.  
Hoping that I look enticing,  
and that I'm in popular demand.*

## Key principles

**This section offers a checklist of issues to be considered at the early stages of working with women.**

- Safeguarding of worker's welfare – good supervision, informal support groups, links with key workers in other agencies, clear systems for crisis support.
- Worker's differing roles to be understood and taken into account.
- Access to relevant information, training and resources.
- Clear guidelines on professional boundaries must be developed.
- Accessing relevant information relating to legal and statutory responsibilities.
- Specific guidelines for appropriate working with under 16's.
- Guidelines on defining the areas of work e.g. confidentiality.
- Relevant literature and posters of appropriate agencies to be displayed prominently.
- A positive approach to encouraging participative working – in terms of inclusion of young people, women and other agencies.
- Training opportunities at all levels including volunteer training, peer education, exit strategies, anti oppressive working should be programmed into work plans.
- Problems that women have should be recognised.
- Women should be treated as a victim of abuse NOT as an offender.

- Develop a multi agency approach to develop exit strategies.
- Develop strategies to identify young women at risk which includes strategies to prevent young women being coerced into prostitution.
- Establish a commitment to assessing, monitoring and evaluating work in partnership with young people/women, and to adapting the work in the light of this.

### An Urn on a Shelf

*Prostitute, prostitute, leaning against a wall,  
selling her body for not much at all.*

*Prostitute, prostitute, selling her sex,  
gets out of the car of one punter and into the  
next.*

*Prostitute, prostitute, you're somebody's child,  
stop living this life that's dangerous and wild.*

*Prostitute, prostitute, you're some child's  
mum,  
providing in a way that isn't much fun.*

*Prostitute, prostitute, caught in a trap,  
cause you can switch off your mind, like you  
switch off a tap.*

*Prostitute, prostitute, being regularly arrested,  
sad stories to the judge, but he's not  
interested.*

*Prostitute, prostitute, watch the time fly  
while you're stuck in a rut, life's passing you  
by.*

*Prostitute, prostitute, come off the street,  
into a safe place, with company and heat.*

*Prostitute, prostitute, make a move, protect  
yourself,  
because your place in life, is not  
"IN AN URN UPON A SHELF"*

## Establishing Protocol

This section deals with general protocol. There is additional information in the Working with Young Women section that is relevant to dealing with the work with underage girls, usually legally defined as under 16 year olds, though this can be extended to under 18s, as we have done in this document.

Women in street prostitution have the kind of chaotic life style that makes it difficult to do sustained and structured work with them. They may make appointments that they will not keep. They may continually present themselves in crisis situations; they may disappear for weeks at a time and in some cases for ever. Motivation to get to appointments or to make regular commitments is hard for them and why wouldn't it be?

However, having some organised strategy for responding to situations either ongoing or crisis driven will help workers to feel less helpless in the face of what can seem at times overwhelming feelings of powerlessness. There can be confusion about issues of confidentiality particularly for new workers. Women will often ask you not to tell anyone what she has told you, you need to be clear, as does she, that you have a joint confidentiality within your organisation, and if you do not you should.

The burden of what workers have to listen to and deal with can be incredibly wearing and stressful. Struggling on your own or feeling in some way that you have to cope without help can be immensely draining. For many workers the 'brave face' can conceal even from themselves how painful this work is.

The first step in establishing protocols and systems is always to look at what you already have in place and whether you consider it

adequate, and if not in what ways can it be improved.

- Do you, with the woman's permission, make notes on her visits?
- If so, what sort of notes and how useful are they to her/you?
- If not why don't you? Are they thought out reasons with her best interests in mind?
- Do you have a policy on the use of drugs/alcohol within your project?
- Do you have a policy on self-injury within your project?
- What is your policy on suicide threats?
- What about violence? What do you consider to be violence?
- When would you think it appropriate to call in outside agencies e.g. police?
- Do you have an exclusion policy and how do you maintain it?
- Do you have any provision for women only space?
- Do you have a policy that offers you as a worker some support?

There are no prescribed policies for agencies, obviously they will differ from project to project according to the work they are doing. The most important thing is to make sure that the policies are geared to the needs of both workers and the women.

## Working with Young Women

In this section a child is understood as anyone under the age of 18. Different agencies will have different access to young women at different times, and can have differing perceptions as to what is happening in her life. Too often a young woman has been coerced into prostitution because the various agencies have only seen part of the picture. It's only when her behaviour has become defined as difficult that attention is drawn to the full extent of the problem.

Strategies to then 'rescue' her become an incredibly difficult task and one that may continue for a very long time. Education is vital – young people, girls and boys, would benefit from education that included discussion of the issues that lead children into prostitution and lead young men to assume that it is all right to buy sex. This is, of course, talking about a perfect world in which very few of us work, but as individuals and agencies we can involve ourselves in campaigning for and facilitating this type of education within our own particular spheres.

In Glasgow information on prostitution is included in the City Council's "Action Against Abuse" pack, which is aimed at secondary school pupils. In addition the Glasgow Child Protection Committee has produced interagency guidance on "Children and Young People Sexually Abused and Exploited Through Prostitution". The document sets out a strategic inter-agency framework for responding and includes information on core principles, the Glasgow context, legal context, agency responsibilities and resources.

It should be noted that:

- Relevant workers will be able to observe patterns of behaviour of children living in residential homes.

- Young women who are regularly being picked up by older men in cars, or being met by men loitering outside the home should be reported to senior staff and the police informed. This is a child protection issue.
- Young women who are absconding either from home or from school are very often engaging in paid sex with punters to obtain money for food. At this point they would not identify themselves as prostituting.
- Teachers can also be vigilant in watching out for these patterns. It would be useful for outside agencies to come into the schools and talk to the children about the realities of prostitution.

### *"It's Not That I Don't Like You"*

*"It's not that I don't like you,  
I just dislike what you do".  
But if you would just get to know me,  
you would probably change your view.*

*I think if you could get to know me,  
you might even start to like me for me.  
And the more time you spent in my  
company,  
a whole new person I guarantee you will  
see.*

*So put aside the things that I'm doing,  
if it helps you, pretend that you're blind.  
Just listen to the things that I'm saying,  
and that I'm ordinary I think you will  
find.*

*Once you've discovered that I'm ordinary,  
I'd feel glad that you gave me the chance.  
and who knows, next time you see  
something off putting,  
you may think twice about judging in  
advance.*

## Developing Support Groups

Much of the work done with women in street prostitution is related to their physical health. Health projects tend to concentrate on women's sexual health, drug agencies on drug issues, etc. Difficulties that women experience in relation to violence, past or present, is sometimes dealt with, but usually on an individualistic basis. The crisis is dealt with, the woman does get sympathy and concern, but very rarely are the issues of male violence dealt with on a systematic and sustained level.

There are serious and far reaching impacts to be dealt with that relate to the mental health and well being of women. If they are only given the opportunity to view their abuse as a specific circumstance relating to their own particular situation at the time then inevitably their feelings of self blame and guilt will be reinforced. Support/discussion groups aimed at addressing issues in as non threatening a way as possible can be not only a useful tool to safely introduce topics relating to violence, but enjoyable as well. A joint project run between Franki (WSP) and Greater Manchester Probation Service till early 1997 was based on this philosophy. The group was run as a women only drop in, the initial philosophy was not to give out condoms or needles, not to give practical advice, but to afford a safe place for women to start to discuss the issues that underlie their view of themselves and the world they occupy.

The group, which became immensely popular with women working in the area, discussed domestic violence, sexual abuse, parents, children, loss, death, life, men, relationships and a host of other subjects. These were introduced usually by a discussion about the latest soap opera, over a cup of tea in an informal setting. The aim of the group was to establish the importance for women of being able to talk things through

without the always prevalent underlying agenda about 'normal life' and to start to make the connections between the issues of sexual violence they had experienced. We also wanted to engender some support for the women from the women themselves. It is hard when you are working on the streets to sustain or develop meaningful friendships. As one woman said to our worker "*friendship is a luxury that you lot can afford – we can't*" and unfortunately she was right on many occasions.

Chaotic life styles punctuated by incidents of horrific violence and heavy drug and alcohol use are not conducive to close friendships. Of course there are relationships amongst the women but these tend to be of a transitory nature. This is probably not a popular view to express, there is a great deal of emphasis placed on the community of 'working women' looking out for each other. Television programmes such as 'Band of Gold' depict this as the norm, but the reality is mostly very different, though older women have reported that this was once not the case. As workers it is tempting to close one's eyes to this reality and to buy into the myth that presents life on the street as somehow a reasonable place for women to be.

## Setting up a Support Group

- Decide what you want the group to be. A discussion group? A formal group? Structured/unstructured?
- Venue is of prime importance, the room itself doesn't have to be perfect in terms of decoration etc. but the location is fundamental, ideally near where women are working. Perhaps another agency could provide one if you can't.
- How will you structure the sessions?
- The Manchester group operated from 4 – 6 p.m. as a drop in.
- Will you have a group leader/worker?
- Have you worked out a policy on violence, drug/alcohol use in the group?
- Will you have an exclusion policy?
- If so how will you implement it?
- Will you have a policy re racist, homophobic, disablist statements?
- How will you deal with these issues?
- Are you comfortable that the worker will be able to deal with the issues that will be raised?
- Have you got support for the worker?
- Will you be documenting any of the work and if so what for?
- Will you be including any social occasions within the remit of the group?

These are just some examples of the questions you may want to address before starting a group, obviously again each agency

will have its own concerns and ways of doing things. The Manchester group eventually included representatives from other groups but these were on an invitation only basis. At the start of the group it was over staffed by workers from many agencies who felt that it would be a useful place to be. These workers very often spent the time there talking to each other, and quite quickly it was necessary to devise a policy that if any agency wanted to attend a session they applied in writing and the women gave their permission for them to attend. The group was the women's group and the women eventually became very protective towards it, particularly its woman only status.

### *Watching the World*

*As I watch the world around me  
crumble,  
people doing nothing but groan or  
mumble.*

*As I watch the world around me fall,  
the politicians seem to do nothing at  
all.*

*As I watch the world around me  
break,  
some of us living just for livings sake.*

*As I watch the world around me fail,  
no time for youth, just send them to  
jail.*

*As I watch the world around me  
advance,  
without education you don't stand a  
chance.*

*As I watch the world around me at  
war,  
I need to make an impact, and sit back  
no more.*

## Current Legal Situation

At present, the law discriminates against women involved in prostitution in the following ways:

Soliciting is an offence under the Civic Government (Scotland) Act 1982, Section 46(1). The section states that:

*“a prostitute (whether male or female) who for the purposes of prostitution:*

- a) loiters in a public place*
- b) solicits in a public place or in any other place so as to be seen from a public place or*
- c) importunes any person in a public place*

*shall be guilty of an offence”*

In practice, women only are arrested for soliciting. They are initially given a street caution, which is logged on the police computer. An office caution follows at which point Polaroid photographs are taken and details are fed into the police computer. This caution system is only used for soliciting and offences involving juveniles.

It is necessary for the police to issue two cautions to a woman before her involvement in prostitution is established in law. The woman is thereafter referred to as a ‘common prostitute’. If the woman is apprehended a third time, she can be charged with soliciting and taken to court. Once at court, she is automatically identified as a ‘common prostitute’.

This is a complete reversal of the basic principle of British Justice i.e. being seen as innocent until proven guilty. In other types of legal cases, reputation of past offences are strictly not allowed as evidence in court under the Judges Rules. It would be inconceivable for someone to be presented to the court as a

common thief and then be accused in court of common theft. Evidence is only permissible after conviction and before sentencing. Yet where prostitution is concerned this process is reversed.

A woman cannot be sent to prison for soliciting, which is a civil offence. Instead, she can receive a fine of up to £500 and if she is unable to pay then she can be sent to prison as a custodial alternative.

In Scotland, soliciting is categorised under the auspices of a sexual offence. This does not mean that women are placed on the sex offenders register however, it has more to do with the law associating prostitution with acts of a sexual nature. As a consequence of this categorisation, the offence of soliciting is exempt under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act, which means in practice that woman is required to declare any conviction for prostitution on an application form for a job. Effectively, this situation debar women from assessing a wide range of training and employment opportunities.

Thus, to summarise, the law currently discriminates against women on the basis that:

- i) In practice, women only are arrested for soliciting and can be jailed for non-payment of fines.
- ii) Women are denied the basic principle of British Justice by being presented in court as a ‘common prostitute’.
- iii) Soliciting is classified as a sexual offence and thus exempt under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act. This, in turn, restricts a woman’s capacity to exit prostitution and access employment, even if the offence is many years old.

The number of women being arrested for soliciting and jailed for non-payment of fines has risen steadily over recent years, e.g. During a six month period in Glasgow, in 2000, approximately 500 women were arrested for soliciting, with the majority of these arrests taking place in the east end residential area of the city. In contrast to this, although we know that men are perpetrators of violence against women in prostitution, the law currently serves to maintain men's invisibility within this context. Furthermore, women are often discouraged from reporting crimes of violence enacted against them to the police because they themselves have outstanding warrants. Therefore, if a woman reports experiencing a crime of violence, it is likely that the woman, not the perpetrator, will be arrested.

- Inform yourself about relevant legislation.
- Insist that children and women cannot "consent" to their own abuse, and convey this to the women you are working with.
- Insist that adults who abuse and exploit women and children should be held accountable for their behaviour by the criminal justice system, and again convey this to the women.
- Explore opportunities for inter-agency working.
- Ascertain the extent of the help you can offer a woman if she receives a custodial sentence.

## General Information

The most important person to inform is yourself. As a worker it is your responsibility to make sure that you seize any opportunity to gather information, go on training courses and to talk to other relevant agencies. Making yourself an expert on drugs can be useful, but most importantly inform yourself about the realities of the connections between child sexual abuse and the sex industry, the prevalence of violence against woman whilst working, the connection with drugs, and what as far as you are able 'working' really means.

### Recommended reading:

Barnados (1998) 'Whose Daughter Next? Barnados.

Barrett D. (ed) (1997) 'Child Prostitution in Britain', Children's Society.

Dominelli L. (1992) 'Masculinity, Sex Offenders and Probation Practice' in Senior and Woodhill (1992).

Jeffreys S. (1998) 'The Idea of Prostitution', Spinfex.

Lerner G. (1987) 'The Creation of the Patriarchy', Oxford University Press.

Pateman C. (1998) 'The Sexual Contract', Polity Press.

Potts D. (1996) 'Why do men commit Most Crime?' West Yorkshire Probation Service.

Senior P., Woodhill D. (eds) (1992) 'Gender, Crime and Probation Practice', Pavic Publications.

Another fruitful area to explore is that of looking at men's participation in these transactions. Talk to men who are working with violent men, and acquaint yourself as far as possible with the issues relating to their violence. Obviously time and money will prescribe how much information and training you can hope to receive. It can be useful to have staff sessions or brain storm to pool information and knowledge and establish the gaps so as to prioritise the areas you feel you need to know more about. Issues relating to women involved in street prostitution are far ranging and multi faceted. Areas that would be useful to know more about or to establish links and contacts with other agencies that can give you specialised information will include:

- D.S.S. and benefit system

- Housing departments
- Refuges
- Sympathetic solicitors
- Sympathetic G.P.s
- Drug/alcohol agencies
- Voluntary organisations such as Rape Crisis
- Probation services
- Mental health projects
- Youth projects
- Projects helping women to exit prostitution

There will be more agencies that you will be able to identify in your own area that specifically deal with issues for women. Establishing which these are and evolving your own information pack would be invaluable, particularly for workers who may be new to this area of work.

## SECTION THREE

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*This section contains information on resources and services available.*

- *Routes out of Prostitution Social Inclusion Partnership.*
- *Services available*
- *Resource List: Prostitution and Pornography*
- *Glasgow City Council Prostitution Policy Statement*
- *Information from Research*
- *Men Create the Demand: Women are the Supply. Article by Donna M. Hughes.*

**The Routes Out Social Inclusion Partnership (SIP) aims to prevent young women becoming involved in prostitution and to assist women to leave prostitution.**

The experience of women involved in street prostitution reveals high levels of sexual violence, drug dependency, poverty, homelessness and involvement in the criminal justice system. This in turn serves to support the Partnership's view of prostitution as survival rather than sexual behaviour.

### **Partnership Vision**

The partnership recognises the harm done to women involved in prostitution and the damage resulting from previous sexual abuse, experience of care, homelessness and lack of prospects and opportunities. Prostitution involves women engaging in sexual activity in order to make a living and/or feed a drug habit – often supporting a partner.

As partners, we acknowledge that a combination of factors leads to women's involvement in prostitution, to their ongoing entrapment in a way of life, which is dangerous to the point of violence and death and one which ensures their continued social exclusion.

**The SIP aims to prevent further harm and social exclusion by:**

Preventing women, particularly vulnerable young women, becoming involved in prostitution.

Providing viable alternatives to women who wish to leave prostitution, supporting them to access services such as safe housing, childcare support, drug programmes, training and employment opportunities.

Changing public and agency perceptions of prostitution.

Involving women themselves in shaping and developing services.

### **Core Elements of the SIP**

A city wide Partnership supported by a Partnership Manager and Administrative staff, which will develop and implement a strategic approach to the issue of prostitution.

A small Intervention Team which will have a role to support women to leave prostitution.

A commitment from all partners to reviewing and adjusting current services in the light of the citywide strategy and the experience of the Intervention Team.

### **Partnership Board Membership**

Strathclyde Police  
Greater Glasgow Health Board  
Glasgow City Council  
Voluntary Sector

### **Key Partnership Objectives**

#### **Partnership Working**

- Establish an effective partnership to prevent women's entry into prostitution and to assist women to leave prostitution.
- Establish and promote models of good practice at local and national levels.

#### **Consultation and Information**

- Involve all communities of interest in the work of the partnership.
- Gather information on the nature of women's involvement in prostitution to inform current and future policy and practice.

## **Prevention**

- Prevent women, particularly young women becoming involved in prostitution.
- Prevent further harm to women already involved in prostitution by supporting them to leave.

## **Public Awareness**

- Raise awareness in relation to various forms of women's inequality within society e.g. sexual violence, poverty and discrimination within the criminal justice system.
- Devise and implement a media strategy.

## **Monitoring and Evaluation**

Develop a framework for monitoring and evaluating all aspects of the SIPS's work, including the impact of the Intervention Team.

## **Community Involvement**

The government has stated that in designating Social Inclusion Partnerships that communities must be at the heart of the process. In view of this, we are committed to fully involving women in the decision making processes of the SIP. We recognise that there may be barriers to women's involvement due to lack of confidence and self-esteem and given this, we will develop flexible ways of consulting with women to ensure that their voices are heard

## **Contacts**

### **Liz Curran Partnership Manager:**

Routes Out of Prostitution SIP, 3rd floor, 93  
Candleriggs, Glasgow, G1 1NP  
Tel: 0141 572 0535

### **Routes Out Intervention Team:**

Sandyford Initiative, 2 Sandyford Place,  
Sauchiehall Street, Glasgow, G3 7NB  
Tel: 0141 211 6716

# Resources available in Glasgow

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Following below are details of agencies in Glasgow who specialise in providing services for women who are involved in prostitution.

## ● **Barnardo's Street Team**

Address: 243 St Vincent Street, Glasgow, G2 5QY  
Tel: Office 0141 243 2393, Helpline 0800 0852704  
Fax: 0141 243 2693

### **Aims of organisation:**

- Provide a crisis responsive service to vulnerable young people on the streets in Glasgow City Centre.
- Provide support, information, advice and advocacy to young people, especially young people at risk of sexual exploitation.
- Link young people into mainstream services and advocate on their behalf.
- Enable young people to access the services and support they need.

## ● **Base 75 ( Drop-in Centre )**

Address: 75 Robertson Street, Glasgow, G2 8QD  
Tel: Office/Helpline 0141 204 3712  
Fax: 0141 221 3498

### **Aims of organisation:**

- To provide an easily accessible and self-referring support and healthcare service to women in prostitution. The work of the Centre is confidential and non-judgemental, meeting the needs of women in prostitution in a safe place, where information and advice is given alongside a healthcare service.

## ● **Police Street Liaison Groups**

Tel: 0141 532 3231

### **Aims of organisation:**

- A first point of contact to provide women involved in prostitution with information regarding support agencies
- Reduce violent crime associated with street prostitution
- Contribute to the personal safety of women working in street prostitution
- Ensure children engaged in prostitution are not treated as offenders
- Enable Share appropriate and relevant information for women in prostitution and other concerned agencies.

## ● **Rape Crisis Centre**

Address: PO Box 53, Glasgow G2 1YR  
Tel: Office 0141 331 1955, Helpline 0141 331 1990  
Minicom: 0141 331 1990  
Fax: 0141 331 1922

**Aims of organisation:**

- To provide a free and confidential service for women and girls who have experienced rape or sexual assault. Practical advice and emotional support to women, their friends, relatives and workers. Support offered for women raped or assaulted in prostitution.

**● Routes Out of Prostitution Intervention Team**

Address: Centre for Women's Health, The Sandyford Initiative, 2 Sandyford Place, Glasgow, G3 7NB

Tel: Office/Helpline 0141 211 6716

Fax: 0141 211 6702

**Aims of organisation:**

- Work with women who feel they are ready to leave prostitution.
- Advocate with our Partners in the Routes out of Prostitution Social Inclusion Partnership for better, more integrated access to existing services which will assist women who want to stop their involvement in prostitution.
- Offer practical assistance and support to women leaving prostitution.
- Promote and disseminate information on our work and the view of the project and the partnership that involvement in prostitution is survival not sexual behaviour.

**● Routes Out of Prostitution Social Inclusion Partnership**

Address: 93 Candleriggs, 3rd Floor, Glasgow G1 1NP

Tel: Office/Helpline 0141 572 0535

Fax: 0141 572 0552

E-mail: [liz.curran@routesout.org.uk](mailto:liz.curran@routesout.org.uk)

**Aims of organisation:**

- To develop and implement a strategic approach to the issue of prostitution. Aims include to:
  - Prevent young women becoming involved in prostitution
  - Provide viable alternatives to women who wish to leave prostitution
  - Change public and agency perceptions of prostitution
  - Involve women themselves in shaping and developing services

**● Say Women**

Address: Floor 3, 30 Bell Street, Glasgow, G1 1LG

Tel: General enquiries: 0141 552 5803,

Accommodation enquiries: 0141 778 4777 (Also Qwertyphone)

Fax: 0141 552 9751

E-mail: [saywomen@saywomen.fsnet.co.uk](mailto:saywomen@saywomen.fsnet.co.uk) (Accommodation enquiries)  
[saywomen@globalinternet.co.uk](mailto:saywomen@globalinternet.co.uk) (General enquiries)

**Aims of organisation:**

- Provide safe housing for young homeless women, aged 16-25 years, who are survivors of childhood sexual abuse and rape/sexual assault;
- Provide appropriate support, through a keyworker and careplan system, on the trauma of child and adult sexual abuse and associated issues which can include self harm, substance misuse, prostitution, low self-esteem and general mental health and well being.

### ● Turnaround

Address: 123 West St, Glasgow, G5 8BA  
Tel: 0141 420 6784  
Fax: 0141 429 5338

#### **Aims of organisation:**

- Encourage women, involved in the criminal justice system, to address drug problems.
- To reduce the number of women being sent to jail by working with the procurator fiscal's office to provide an alternative to prosecution.

### ● Young Women's Project

Address: 44 South Portland Street, Glasgow, G5 9JJ  
Tel: 0141 429 5831  
Fax: 0141 429 7569

#### **Aims of organisation:**

- To provide intensive support within the community to young women who are at significant risk of being accommodated within residential or secure placements.
- To provide intensive support to young women who are looked after away from home and who are at significant risk of being accommodated within residential or secure placements.
- To support young women to remain in or to return safely and successfully to the community of their choice.
- To prevent young women becoming involved in the Criminal Justice System and to reduce the risk of custody.
- To prevent young women becoming involved in prostitution.
- To minimise further harm to young women by offering a range of supports and interventions.

### ● Women's Support Project

Address: 31 Stockwell Street, Glasgow G1 4RZ  
Tel: Office/Helpline 0141 552 2221  
Minicom/Qwerty: 0141 552 9979  
Fax: 0141 552 1876  
E-mail: info@wsproject.demon.co.uk

#### **Aims of organisation:**

- To raise awareness of the extent and effects of male violence, and work towards improved and consistent services for abused women and children.
- Key themes have been highlighting links between different forms of male violence and promoting an interagency response to the abuse of women and children.
- Written resources are available on prostitution and other forms of commercial sexual exploitation. Reading list available on request.
- Training offered on prostitution and on working with women abused through prostitution.

The "Register of Services for Violence and Abuse", a national guide to all agencies who provide services on violence and abuse against women and children is available from the Women's Support Project, cost £7.00.

## RESOURCE LIST: PROSTITUTION & PORNOGRAPHY

Please note we are not a 'drop in' service. For more information about the library, or to arrange to borrow materials, please phone, or write to Isabell Robertson at the following address:-  
Women's Support Project, Granite House, 31 Stockwell St, Glasgow, G1 4RZ.  
tel:(0141) 552 2221 fax:( 0141) 552 1876 qwerty (text phone for deaf people): (0141) 552 9979  
email: isabell@wsproject.demon.co.uk

### A. Information on Prostitution

#### 1. Sex work on the streets: prostitutes and their clients

**By Neil McKeganey & Marina Barnard**  
**Pub. Open University Press, England , 1996**

A detailed description of street prostitution, based on work carried out in Glasgow. Includes direct quotes from women working on the streets.

#### 2. Fiona's Story: a tragedy of our times

**By Irene Ivison**  
**Pub. Virago, London, 1997**

A powerful and important book, written by Irene Ivison whose daughter was prostituted and murdered. Describes her struggle to protect her daughter after she had been 'targeted' by the man who prostituted her.

#### 3. Child prostitution in Britain: dilemmas and practical responses

**By David Barrett (Ed)**  
**Pub. The Children's Society, London, 1997**

Collection of articles considering practice and practical issues in relation to child prostitution. Includes information on current initiatives, suggestions for future approaches, recent research.

#### 4. The Idea of Prostitution

**By Sheila Jeffreys**  
**Pub. Spinfex 1997**

Sheila Jeffreys argues that "prostitution is a choice for the men who abuse, rather than for the prostituted woman". An important book which explores the questions: is prostitution legitimate work for women, or is men's use of prostitution a form of sexual violence? Highly recommended.

#### 5. The traffic in women. Human realities of the international sex trade

**By Siriporn Skrobaneck, Nattaya Boonpakdi and Chutima Janthakeero**  
**Pub. Zed Books, London, 1997**

Explores the nature, extent and reasons for the global traffic in women. Includes case studies of trafficked women.

#### 6. One way street. Retrospectives on child prostitution.

**By Margaret Melrose, David Barrett & Isabelle Brodie**  
**Pub. The Children's Society, London, 1999**

Interviews with 50 people who became caught up in prostitution as children. They describe how and why they first became involved, and what enabled them to leave or forced them to continue. Many took up prostitution as a means of survival, but once involved found themselves trapped in a way of life which was hard to escape. Includes recommendations for the voluntary sector, education and social services, policing and the law.

#### 7. Compelled to Crime. The gender entrapment of battered black women.

**By Beth E. Richie.**  
**Pub. Routledge 1996.**

Beth Richie works with women in prison and in this important book she tells the stories of battered African American women. She highlights how male violence, and the injustices of the legal system affect women, and how desperation leads them into illegal activities, including prostitution.

#### 8. Backstreets: Prostitution, money and love

**By Cecilie Hoigard & Liv Finstad**  
**Pub. Polity Press**

Interesting book, based on the experience of tackling prostitution in a Norwegian town.

**9. For organisations working with women in prostitution: a good practice guide  
Produced by Women's Support Project, 2002**

This pack has three sections the first section - policy guidance has information on safety, harm reduction, self esteem, confidentiality, choices and decisions and case studies . The second section deals with guidance for developing support work , with information on strategies for workers, establishing protocols, developing support groups, legislation etc. The third section gives information on resources and services

**10. Whose Daughter Next?; children abused through prostitution  
Pub: Barnardos, 1998**

In addition to examining the current attitudes and legislative responses, this report conveys the reality of extreme abuse and offers the reader a clear picture of the level of control and coercion imposed on children by adults.

**11. Where is She Tonight?; Women, Street Prostitution and Homelessness in Glasgow”  
by Audrey Stewart  
Pub. Base 75, 2000**

An interesting report on research carried out with women involved in prostitution. Addresses issues such as health, housing and addiction. Includes extensive quotes from women which are particularly helpful.

**12. Some Mother's Daughter. The hidden movement of prostitute women against violence.**

**by International Prostitutes Collective  
Pub. Crossroads, 1999**

Collection of writings from a 'prostitutes rights' stand point, from England and the USA.

**B. Information on Pornography**

**1. Making Violence sexy: feminist views on pornography**

**By Diana E.H. Russell (ed)**

**Pub. Open University Press, London 1993**

This book presents in Part I testimonies of six different women working in the pornography industry. In Part II five more theoretical essays are presented from men and women. Part III presents the feminist research on pornography and violence against women. The concluding Part IV describes various initiatives and actions against pornography. A very interesting and comprehensive book on the subject.

**2. Children who don't speak out: about children being used in child pornography**

**By Carl Goran Svedin & Kristina Black  
Pub. Scandbook, Falun, Sweden, 1996**

The researchers interviewed ten children identified from the Huddinge (1992) and Norrkoping (1993) operations when German police seized pornography produced with Swedish children. Looks at the effects of the abuse and the police investigation on the children.

**3. Take back the night: women on pornography  
By Laura Lederer (Ed)s**

**Pub. William Morrow and Co Inc. USA, 1980**

A collection of articles, interviews , research and calls for action. includes articles on child pornography, racism, women's action against pornography. A very important book.

**4. Pornography: men possessing women**

**By Andrea Dworkin**

**pub. The Women's Press, London, 1981**

Andrea Dworkin looks at the meaning of pornography, and the power of men in pornography. Shows clearly that the question is not "Does pornography cause violence against women?" Pornography **is** violence against women. A very important book. Highly recommended.

**5. Pornography and sexual violence: evidence of the links**

**Pub. Everywoman, London, 1988**

The complete transcript of public hearings on pornography held in Minneapolis in 1983. Looks at the evidence for links between pornography and acts of sexual violence and abuse. Interesting.

**6. Pornography, feminism and the individual**

**By Alison Assiter**

**Pub. Pluto Press, 1991**

Argues against censorship of pornography, and critical of feminist theory and campaigning on pornography

**7. Pornography: women, violence and civil liberties**

**By Catherine Itzin (Editor)**

**Pub. Oxford University press, 1993**

A collection of articles on: pornography and power; pornography and evidence of harm; the law; censorship; and civil liberties. Very powerful, and recommended for anyone seeking information on the harm caused by pornography.

### **8. Pornography and difference**

**By Berkeley Kaite**

**Pub. Indiana University Press, USA, 1995**

Analyses the visual code of images used in pornography and asks questions about masculinity and masculine sexuality.

### **9. The problem of pornography: regulation and the right to free speech**

**By Susan M. Easton**

**Pub. Routledge, London, 1994**

Evaluates feminist and liberal arguments in the debate on pornography and censorship. Includes a review of American and English laws on obscene materials.

### **10. Power surge: sex violence & pornography**

**By Susan G. Cole**

**Pub. Second Story Press, Canada, 1995**

A collection of writings surveying the movement against pornography and sexual violence.

### **11. Policing the Internet: combating pornography and violence on the Internet – a European approach. Conference report.**

**Pub. Association of London Government, 1997**

The biggest area of internet use is for pornography. Its growth has been helped by difficulties in controlling the transfer of information across national boundaries and keeping up with the pace of technological change. This report brings together a range of technological, political and legislative approaches to internet regulation in Europe. Contributors include Liz Kelly (University of North London) and Donna Hughes (University of Rhode Island USA), who argues that 'sexual exploitation starts with real people and the harm is to real people'.

### **12. Dangerous Relationships. Pornography, Misogyny and Rape.**

**By Diana E. H. Russell.**

**Pub. Sage 1998**

"An original, powerful, cohesive, compelling, and smart theory of the ways pornography causally promotes sexual abuse". Includes: defining pornography; pornography as woman hatred; pornography as a cause of rape.

### **13. Pornography Related Sexual Violence: A Review of the Evidence.**

**By Dr Catherine Itzin**

**Pub. University of Bradford, 1991.**

One of a series of very useful papers by Dr Itzin, this includes information on sexual violence in the production of pornography, how pornography influences attitudes to women, links between pornography and rape, recent research.

### **14. The Evidence of Pornography – Related Harm and a Harm-Based Equality Approach to Legislating Against Pornography Without Censorship. A Briefing Paper.**

**By Dr Catherine Itzin.**

**Pub. University of Bradford, 1992.**

Outlines the evidence of pornography related harm, and a new harm based legal definition of pornography.

### **15. Home Affairs Committee Inquiry into Computer Pornography. Memorandum of Evidence.**

**By Dr Catherine Itzin**

**Pub. University of Bradford, 1993.**

Outlining the effects of pornography, and legislative possibilities for challenging pornography

### **VIDEOS.**

#### **Hardcore**

**By Principal Films**

**1 hour**

A film about an English girl Felicity, who went to Los Angeles to realise a dream of becoming a porn star. The reality was very different. A very harrowing film.

## **Glasgow City Council Prostitution Policy Statement**

Glasgow City Council recognises street prostitution as a significant problem in Glasgow, which affects women, families and communities. As with other social problems the Council has a lead role to play in tackling the causes and the impact of prostitution. The Council is therefore publicly stating its commitment to taking action on this issue, which has blighted the lives of so many Glasgow women for so long.

The majority of women involved in prostitution are citizens of this city who find themselves socially excluded and unable to participate in the life of the city. Their views are not heard and their needs are not addressed. This Council is determined to take a proactive and radical approach to women involved in prostitution and to social exclusion. This Council will support the development of a strategic, long term approach in the context of the Council's Objectives and other policies such as Social Inclusion, Equality, Community safety and Violence against women.

Violence, experience of abuse, homelessness, poverty and drugs are at the root of street prostitution in Glasgow. The Council absolutely rejects the view of prostitution as work, which merely requires legalising and regulating. The Council absolutely rejects the argument that prostitution is a civil right – no woman wants the right to be sexually exploited, abused and demeaned.

Women are often involved in prostitution because of their need to fund drug use and because they have no other viable or legitimate means of earning the amount of money which they require. There is overwhelming evidence that the money which women make in prostitution primarily goes straight to those supplying drugs and that women themselves do not benefit apart from ensuring their own and their partner's drug supply.

The Council is particularly concerned that it is the women involved in prostitution who are

consistently blamed for the existence and continuation of prostitution. Women's accounts of involvement in street prostitution are harrowing and involve a range of abusive behaviour by men. The Council calls for the men who use women in prostitution to be called to account and that these men's actions be recognised as and social and consequently diminishing the quality of life in the city.

The Council is committed to working towards eliminating street prostitution in the city whilst providing support to, and opportunities for, women involved in prostitution and their children. It is the view of the Council that prostitution is one form of commercial sexual exploitation.

The Council will seek to minimise the harm done to women involved in prostitution and their families whilst also seeking to reduce the number of women entering prostitution and increase the number who leave. The Council recognises and acknowledges the complex issues surrounding prostitution and the need for public agencies to work together in addressing the situation in Glasgow. The key elements of this approach will be

- Respect for women involved in prostitution
- Concern for women's safety and well being
- Recognition of the harm done to women and their families through prostitution
- Recommending that the Council services take a non-judgemental and confidential approach to women involved in prostitution and ensure that attitudes to prostitution do not adversely affect the service which women receive e.g. child care, housing allocation
- Preventative strategy, particularly aimed at young women which recognises that young women are victims of sexual exploitation
- Concern about men's use of prostitution and other forms of commercial sexual exploitation
- Interagency working with other public, private and voluntary sector agencies.

May 2000

# Information from research

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## **‘Where is she tonight?’**

### **Women, street prostitution and homelessness in Glasgow by Audrey Stewart. Pub. Base 75, 2000**

Based on information from 827 women who have used Base 75, the average age women become involved in street prostitution in Glasgow is 21 years (range 13 to 52 years).

A significant number of women (24.5%) indicated that they had become involved in prostitution aged 18 or under:

<b>Age</b>	<b>Number of women</b>
13	4
14	6
15	15
16	43
17	66
18	69

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Based on interviews with 99 women.

81 out of 99 women indicated that they owed money to a range of agencies or individuals.

<b>Money owed to:</b>	<b>Number of women</b>
Benefits agency/crisis loan	50
outstanding fines	38
borrowing from friends	37
drug dealers	34
rent arrears	29
catalogues	9
money lenders	7

**Melissa Farley of “Prostitution Research and Education” carried out interviews with one hundred and thirty people who were working in prostitution in San Francisco. Findings include;**

57% reported that they had been sexually assaulted as children  
49% reported that they had been physically assaulted as children

**As adults in prostitution:**

82% had been physically assaulted  
88% had been physically threatened  
83% had been threatened with a weapon  
68% had been raped while working in prostitution  
48% had been raped more than five times.  
46% of those who reported rapes stated that they had been raped by customers. 8% reported physical attacks by pimps and customers which had resulted in serious injury (for example, gunshot wounds, knife wounds, injuries from attempted escapes).  
49% reported that pornography was made of them in prostitution  
32% had been upset by an attempt to make them do what customers had seen in pornography.  
84% reported current or past homelessness.

**Current Needs of Interviewees:**

88% stated that they wanted to leave prostitution.

**They also voiced a need for:**

- a home or safe place (78%)
- job training (73%)
- treatment for drug or alcohol abuse (67%)
- health care (58%) peer support (50%)
- self-defense training (49%)
- individual counselling (48%)
- legal assistance (43%)
- childcare (34%)
- physical protection from pimps (28%).

**‘Prostitution, violence against women, and post traumatic stress disorder’.**  
Melissa Farley, Ph.D., PhD, Box 16254, San Francisco, CA 94116-0254, USA.  
Email: mfarley@prostitutionresearch.com

# Men Create Demand: Women are the Supply

## Donna M. Hughes

### University of Rhode Island. 2000

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Prostitution is not the world's oldest profession, as is commonly said, although it is probably one of the world's oldest forms of men's violence against women and girls. It seems old because men's sexual exploitation of women and children is ancient and defended as a part of men's natures that they have to have sex, even if it is purchased, forced or with a child.

Prostitution is not natural or inevitable; it is abuse and exploitation of women and girls that results from structural inequality between women and men on a world scale. Prostitution commodifies women and girls and markets their bodies for whatever acts men have sexualized and want to buy. Rarely are adult men treated this way.

Prostitution and trafficking in women and children are global phenomena. They occur all over the world and the activities are carried out transnationally. There is a global culture of sexual exploitation in which women's bodies are used to market consumer products and where women and girls themselves are products to be consumed. Currently, the global sex industry is estimated to make US\$52 billion dollars a year. To keep the sex industry in business, women are trafficked to, from and through every region in the world. The value of this global trade in women as commodities for sex industries is estimated to be between seven and twelve billion dollars annually.

The global sexual exploitation of women and girls is a supply and demand market. Men create the demand and women are the supply. Cities and countries where men's demand for women in prostitution is legalized or

tolerated are the receiving sites, while countries and areas where traffickers easily recruit women are the sending regions.

The rape-like sex acts of prostitution cause harm to women and girls' bodies and minds. Women contract sexually transmitted and other infectious diseases, such as tuberculosis. They suffer from post-traumatic stress, depression and anxiety. Under these conditions women make the best choices they can. Rarely do these choices approach true consent. With few options, women comply in hope that eventually they will earn enough money to buy their way out of debt bondage or find a way to escape. When escape is not possible, they use drugs and alcohol to numb themselves from the emotional distress and assaults to their dignity and bodily integrity.

Most women and girls emerge from prostitution ill, traumatized, and as poor as when they entered. For increasing numbers of women and girls, prostitution is a death sentence when they contract HIV. In some regions, more than fifty percent of prostituted women have HIV/AIDS.

There is a double battle to be fought against the abuse and control of women and girls' sexuality. The first is against the repression of women and girls' sexuality; the second is against the exploitation of women and girls' sexuality. In the case of prostitution, the challenge is to end the discrimination for being in prostitution, while at the same time, ending the oppression of being used in prostitution. To do this we need to decriminalize prostitution for women, so the state is no longer punishing women for being exploited and abused. We need services that

assist victims who are suffering from trauma, poor health, and physical injuries. States need to provide assistance to women and girls in the form of shelters, hotlines and advocates.

At the same time, we have to oppose the legalization and regulation of prostitution and trafficking, which allow women to be exploited and abused under state determined conditions, and the decriminalization of pimping, trafficking and buying women in

prostitution. We must focus more attention on the legitimacy of the demand by men to sexually exploit women and girls. We have to hold the criminals and perpetrators accountable for the harm they do.

**Men Create Demand:  
Women are the Supply**

**Donna M. Hughes  
University of Rhode Island. 2000**

# Notes/Local Contacts



Produced by the Women's Support Project, 31 Stockwell Street, Glasgow, G1 4RZ.  
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