



For organisations working with

# women in or vulnerable to involvement in prostitution

A Good Practice Resource



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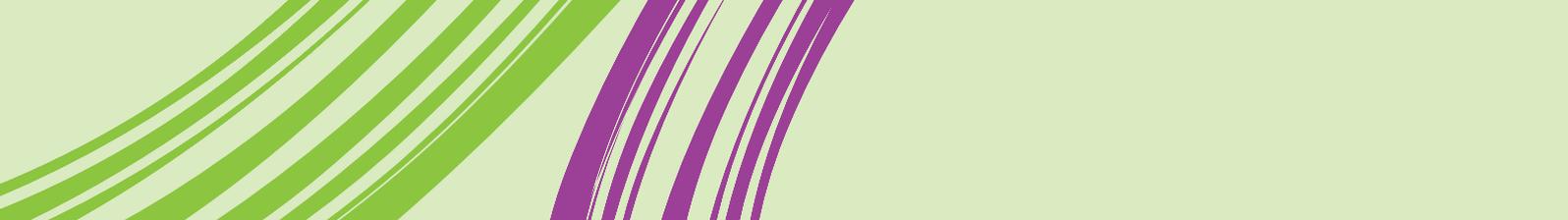
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This latest Scottish edition of A Good Practice Guide for organisations working with women in prostitution has been produced by Grace McVey, Women’s Support Service, Criminal Justice Social Work, West Dunbartonshire which is financed by the Scottish Government’s Violence Against Women Fund. This edition adapts and extends the first Scottish Edition of the Good Practice Guide produced by Dawn Brennan and Jan Macleod of The Women’s Support Project and enables recent developments and a local dimension to be introduced. The original Guide was developed by Patricia Holmes of the Franki Women’s Support Project, a voluntary organisation based in Bolton with funding from Comic Relief, the National Lottery Charities Board and the Allan Lane Foundation. It is anticipated that this publication will be a valuable resource for individuals and organisations working with women within West Dunbartonshire, as well as providing a helpful starting point for organisations wishing to make their services more appropriate and accessible for women involved in prostitution or vulnerable to commercial sexual exploitation.

I am grateful to Jan Macleod and the Women’s Support Project for advice on the adaptation of the Practice Guide, to the authors of the Franki Project Guide and to Anna Travers for permission to reproduce her poems in Scottish Editions. Additional material included in this edition acknowledges the work of Routes Out of Prostitution Intervention Team, Glasgow and their learning from the women they have supported over 10 years, the article “Men Create Demand” by Professor Donna Hughes, research by the Women’s Support Project in relation to understanding men’s demand and guidance produced by the Scottish Government. The original draft of this resource was reviewed and edited by members of the West Dunbartonshire Commercial Sexual Exploitation Working Group and the Violence Against Women Partnership.

This resource acknowledges all the organisations and individuals who have relentlessly pursued justice and equality for women. Their persistence, in the face of opposition, has enabled progress within a Scottish context to have women’s involvement in prostitution recognised as a gender based violence issue and as a human rights violation.

Most of all recognition goes to the women who contribute to practice knowledge by bravely sharing their experiences from which we can all learn and develop service responses that support them and other women to escape exploitation and abuse.



## Foreword

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As Chair of the West Dunbartonshire Violence Against Women Partnership, I am delighted to present this new Practice Resource for workers supporting women involved in (or vulnerable to involvement in) prostitution. The Scottish Government acknowledges that prostitution is a form of violence against women. All work which addresses violence against women in West Dunbartonshire has been identified as a priority within the area's Single Outcome Agreement by all agencies concerned for the physical and emotional safety of women, children and young people. This resource forms part of the area's contribution to the Scottish Government/COSLA's national strategic approach to violence against women outlined in Safer Lives Changed Lives.

I am proud of West Dunbartonshire's record of successful partnership working since 2000 and take this opportunity to pay tribute to the energy and commitment of all our agency partners and funders in this challenging area of work. The publication of this valuable resource is another important stage in the continuing development of West Dunbartonshire's coordinated community response to all forms of violence against women.

I feel certain that this publication will contribute significantly to our understanding of this difficult issue and build our capacity to support those surviving its impact.

**Moira Swanson**

**Chair**

**West Dunbartonshire Violence Against Women Partnership**

**March 2011**

## Introduction

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Women are involved in prostitution in many environments including street, so called “saunas”, organised flats, informal settings such as their own or a partner’s tenancy, hotels, lap dancing venues, the internet and in the making of pornography. This good practice resource is based on previous guides that focussed on street prostitution. However, within Scotland it is recognised that whilst street prostitution is primarily an issue that affects major cities, prostitution is an issue within all localities (see COSLA Local Authority Guidance on Street Prostitution). The principles and guidance contained in this edition have been developed to address the impact of involvement in prostitution on women, irrespective of the setting. The information contained in this resource is based on the principle that involvement in prostitution is harmful to women in and of itself. Harm is the result of the adverse impact of emotional, physical, financial and sexual abuse on women involved in prostitution combined with the impact of engagement in the repeated, unwanted sex and sexualised activity demanded by men who exploit women through prostitution.

The Franki Practice Guide was written following national consultations with both voluntary and statutory sector agencies working with women in prostitution. This resource further develops that valuable contribution by including current research evidence and by providing a local perspective to those supporting women choosing to make changes to their lifestyle. However, this Resource is not a prescriptive step-by-step programme for working with women involved in prostitution.

The aim of this Resource is to encourage you to:

- look at your own practice, and the practices within your own organisation
- consider ways to identify women involved or vulnerable to involvement in prostitution and increase confidence in supporting disclosure
- start to think in imaginative, pro-active and flexible ways about supporting women vulnerable to commercial sexual exploitation, women in prostitution and in developing exit strategies from prostitution
- explore the links between prostitution and other forms of violence against women
- challenge the demand for women’s bodies to be commodities

The scale and complexity of the issues involved and being witness to the impact on women of sexual exploitation can make this area of work daunting and at times depressing. Acknowledging the intrinsic harm of prostitution and recognising that you can not provide support alone are crucial first steps in undertaking work of this kind. There is now a great deal of practice and research evidence which indicates that, despite the many challenges, many women successfully leave exploitative relationships and prostitution. The catalysts for change are as individual as the women themselves. As workers, campaigners and activists it is our responsibility to recognise that leaving prostitution is something many women aspire to and it is our responsibility to be as well prepared as we can be to help them do that. This resource is intended for use by workers providing services to women who are vulnerable to involvement in prostitution as well as those who are living with its realities or aftermath. It is also aimed at those working with women who are in contact with the services we provide but for whom this form of abuse is a hidden issue.

## Definitions Of Violence Against Women

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Although debate continues politically about the nature of prostitution and in how best to tackle it, leadership on the issue is provided for through the Safer Lives: Changed Lives approach which was launched in 2009. This approach aims to provide a shared understanding to guide the work of all partners to tackle violence against women in Scotland.

Within this approach violence against women is defined as:

“Actions which harm or cause suffering or indignity to women and children, where those carrying out the actions are mainly men and where women and children are predominantly the victims. The different forms of violence against women- including emotional, psychological, sexual and physical abuse, coercion and constraint- are interlinked. They have their roots in gender inequality and are therefore understood as gender based violence.”

The Safer Lives: Changed Lives approach is informed by the definition developed by the National Group to address violence against women and is based on the United Nations Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women (1993) which says:

“Gender based violence is a function of gender inequality, and an abuse of male power and privilege. It takes the form of actions that result in physical, sexual and psychological harm or suffering to women and children, or affront to their human dignity, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life. It is men who predominantly carry out such violence and women who are predominantly the victims of such violence. By referring to violence as ‘gender based’ this definition highlights the need to understand this violence within the context of women’s and girls subordinate status in society. Such violence cannot be understood, therefore, in isolation from the norms, social structure and gender roles within the community which greatly influence women’s vulnerability to violence.”

Safer Lives: Changed lives states that violence against women encompasses but is not limited to:

“Physical, sexual and psychological violence occurring in the family, within the general community or in institutions, including: domestic abuse, rape, incest and child sexual abuse; sexual harassment and intimidation at work and in the public sphere; commercial sexual exploitation such as prostitution, pornography and trafficking; dowry related violence, female genital mutilation, forced and child marriages, honour crimes.”

The shared approach states that:

“Activities such as pornography, prostitution, stripping, lap dancing, pole dancing and table dancing are forms of commercial sexual exploitation. These activities have been shown to be harmful for the individual women involved and have a negative impact on the position of all women through the objectification of women’s bodies. This happens whether individual women claim success or empowerment from the activity. It is essential to separate sexual activity from exploitative sexual activity. A sexual activity becomes sexual exploitation if it breaches a person’s human right to dignity, equality, respect and physical and mental well being. It becomes commercial exploitation when another person or group of people, achieves financial gain or advancement through the activity.”

If violence against women is to be addressed then commercial sexual exploitation needs to be addressed as part of that.

*Reference: <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/publications/2009/06/02153519/5>*

# Section One

# 1

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 involved in prostitution.

## Policy Guidance

- Safety and Harm Reduction
- Self Esteem
- Choices and Decisions
- In House Training
- Case Studies. To be used for formulation of Policies and Practice.

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.*

*...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 and Harm Reduction

The Franki Project questioned the definition of safety for girls and women in prostitution? Suggesting that, 'Safety' when only limited to condom use and strategies such as working in pairs etc. was simply colluding with the abusers. They noted that woman's safety on the streets (or other venues where women are exploited) is of course of consequence. However, it is important to remember that the strategies women can develop for keeping themselves 'safe' can only be marginally useful. Whilst precautionary strategies can be effective this effectiveness diminishes when the man has a clear intent to assault or abuse. Moreover, the strategies that are generally used by women in public places to promote their safety, e.g. 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 women in prostitution for physical and sexual assault and murder.

It is important to realise that both the impact of involvement in prostitution and the extent of the danger that women are placed in when they are involved in prostitution means that they can never be safe.

The Scottish Government has recognised prostitution as part of the spectrum of violence against women, however there is not yet national consensus on this. The argument proposed in this document is that practitioners and society has a choice to make. Either the harm that prostitution causes to women is recognised and found to be

unacceptable or that we legitimise and accept the use and abuse of a group of marginalised women for sexual purposes as defined by the men who use them. This document refutes the later and promotes and takes leadership from the Scottish Government Safer Lives: Changed lives approach that states that prostitution is violence against women.

This position is supported by greater evidence of the links between prostitution and the impact on mental health and of increasing drug use due to involvement. These issues not only make escaping prostitution notoriously difficult but demonstrate the extent of harm to women. Prostitution is not only unsafe for women but is in itself harmful.

In recognising the harm to women involved in prostitution responses to women have evolved. These continue to include traditional interventions such as precautionary strategies during involvement in prostitution and harm reduction strategies including safer drug use/sexual health education etc. However, these interventions have become embodied, for many practitioners and organisations who take a feminist analysis of prostitution, within the context of supporting the woman to exit prostitution acknowledging that no area of prostitution can be safe for women and that harm reduction is inevitably only a short term measure. The emphasis for safety therefore has become, for some leading organisations and/or practitioners, more focussed on three areas. Prevention, which seeks to address the route causes of entry into prostitution, intervention, which seeks to address the issues that make the woman vulnerable and support to enable her to leave prostitution.

### GOOD PRACTICE GUIDELINES

Developing operational consistency in responses to safety and harm.

How do individual workers define safety and harm?

What differences exist and what impact does that have on the consistency of response?

To what extent has national definitions been incorporated into practice and organisational policy?

When working with women, how do you identify those who are involved in prostitution within your organisation?

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?

How do you plan safety with women that enables a focus to be on exiting prostitution?

Do women complain to the police about assaults?

Do you have good relationships with the police that would enable women to be supported through reporting violence against them?

Discussing with a woman her right to report the violence that she experiences is intended to promote an environment that lets her know that violence towards her is unacceptable and not a "hazard of the job". However, women should be supported to make their own decisions and not put under pressure to report.

### **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"**

## Self Esteem

Self-esteem is a word that is recognised widely. However, when working with women exploited through prostitution it needs to be recognised that the common understanding of self-esteem may be very different for women being prostituted. Media presentation and societal expectations of women makes most women have problems with their self-esteem particularly with body image. But it does women, involved in prostitution, no favours to assume that our feelings about ourselves as women are 'the same' as theirs. Of course there are commonalities; women in prostitution are exposed to societal pressures like we all are. However, the reality of the repetitive, degrading and repellent acts that prostituted women are systematically subjected to, is beyond most of our comprehension.

Moreover, women in prostitution are well aware of how they are judged and mistreated by other members of the public and of how they are blamed and treated unsympathetically for the abuse they experience. The impact of this on self-esteem and more significantly on self-worth should not be underestimated or assumed.

Furthermore simplistic approaches to self-esteem should be guarded against when viewed within the context of the childhood experiences of women in prostitution. Recent research (Promise, San Francisco) shows that the 43% of the women involved 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.

When subjected to repeated violence and disregard how can prostituted women rationalise the abuse and assaults that have happened to them? How can they maintain a sense of self? Or hold themselves with regard? They are very well aware of the dangers they risk, they are also very aware of the opinion of society if they dare to report it. They fear that assumptions will be made that they have somehow made a deliberate and calculated choice to engage in behaviour that had this result.

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

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

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 are things about work I don't like either, they know what they're getting in to"* (Kerb Crawlers Rehabilitation Programme February 1999).

Perhaps when working with women involved in prostitution what should be considered is self-worth rather than self-esteem. Working with issues related to these matters involves workers in establishing a deep level of trust that can take a long time to build. Boundaries of your relationship with her need to be clear and consistent. The worker must convey respect even when you disagree with decisions the woman makes.

For there to be any possibility of change there has to be some idea for women that they are worth more than a life in prostitution provides. You must express your belief in her capacity to gain control of her life and communicate that the violence she has or is experiencing is unacceptable. As a worker, this needs to be repeatedly conveyed to her. It is very easy to be misled by the streetwise tough front that women can present and assume that this shows she has confidence or can handle the situation. Indeed some women may have developed unpleasant, abusive even violent behaviours as part of their coping strategies which means she will not necessarily be pleasant to work with, grateful for support or understanding of your concern.

However, in reality true confidence and the ability to make meaningful decisions can only come from self-worth. As a worker it is your task to promote her sense of self and perhaps in some cases support her to build it. Building self-worth is a delicate balance, because 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).

Women can develop distortions that help them cope. On occasions the woman’s self-worth becomes entangled with the belief that she is “wanted”. In your criticisms of prostitution and in your promotion of exiting always put across that your criticism is of prostitution because it is harmful and abusive. Affirm that this view is not a criticism of the woman herself.

The coping strategies she has developed, the normalisation and minimisation of the violence she experiences makes this work with her a slow process.

- Remember that ‘self -esteem’ can mean different things to women who have been abused in prostitution. Do not assume to know her definition; explore.
- Do remember that you are her worker not her friend. Consistent boundaries are the cornerstone of building trust
- 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, abusive boyfriend is really a nice bloke or good dad.

*“I’ve felt suicidal because of my past with prostitution. I’ve felt dirty, I’ve felt so low and I just feel as if I am worthless because I’ve sold my body to so many men and what they have done and what I have had to do for drugs and things, you know my self-esteem, I still find it hard to pick myself up and I’ve been away from it for years.”*

Woman Exiting Prostitution, 2007

## 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 are two elements to choice that can be recognised when considering women's involvement in prostitution. The first is the pervasive and ultimately extremely damaging myth that women 'choose' to be prostitutes.

In reality women become involved in prostitution because of a lack of choice. Many enter prostitution before the age of 18 and homelessness, poverty and drug misuse are well known to be part of the life experience of many of the women involved in prostitution. It is the men who buy sex and abuse women in prostitution who are exercising a free choice.

Within the myth of women choosing to be involved in prostitution however, there is also a tacit acceptance of the concept of a deviant sexuality and reciprocal sexual experience.

Women in prostitution 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.

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".*

Although some women may themselves depict it as such for very obvious economic reasons, the only consensuality they accept is that of an exchange: sex for money. Moreover, many women involved in prostitution state that this is at odds with how they would describe their daily experience.

Further arguments acknowledge the vulnerability and violence associated with street prostitution whilst other forms such as lap dancing, so called "sauna", internet and pornography is seen as a choice in which "women can

make lots of money". However, many services working with women involved in prostitution claim to have met only a handful of women who said anything other than that they hate what they do and hate the men they do it with no matter where it has taken place.

The abundance of evidence showing the harm to women should point us to the fact that prostitution can no longer be accepted as a legitimate career choice for women. 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 in which you are working? What other job necessitates an extensive use of drugs or alcohol? There is an assumption that the payment of money somehow negates and denies the woman's experience of violence, abuse and degradation.

The second element in discussing choice is those choices and decisions the woman needs to make in order to get out of prostitution. What is not necessarily recognised is that when women make choices they are frequently choosing between unpleasant options. The task of exiting prostitution is an extremely difficult one. 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.

*I never ever liked prostitution, most or the majority of girls don't like it. I felt like I was being abused every day and I felt like I was abusing myself.*

Woman Exiting Prostitution, 2007

### GOOD PRACTICE GUIDELINES

#### Supporting women with choices:

- Provide her with information which will enable her 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 for long periods.
- Fully accept that she will need to have the opportunity to deal with issues of violence and trauma.
- 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.
- Remember her involvement in prostitution and the money she gets may be used as an excuse for violence/abuse from her partner/pimp.
- Do not assume her involvement in prostitution is reflective of her sexuality
- Involve other relevant agencies – you are not this woman's rescuer.

#### *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.*

## In house Training

There is training locally in relation to VAW and Commercial Sexual Exploitation. However, at times less formal arrangements may be more suitable for your organisation. In-house training is also an extremely useful team and practice development technique. The following is a helpful exercise to begin to develop responses to the needs of women involved in and/or exiting prostitution. Use the three case studies and explore/discuss the issues they bring up for you and your agency. These questions might help structure your thinking. Section two may be helpful reading for participants to prepare for the group discussions.

Read through the case studies and use the questions that follow to develop upon your own agency and professional response.

### 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 benefits, Barbara found herself struggling to manage financially and debts were mounting up. One of her friends was prostituted in a brothel, which advertised itself as 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. Her friend introduced her to the owner of the brothel, gave her advice and showed her what she would need to do.

Initially she was involved in prostitution occasionally, usually when a bill was overdue. Gradually her involvement increased: she almost felt she ought to earn more so as to be able to provide more for her children. Pressure was also put on her to be more available to the brothel to cover shifts and because she was needed to be available for certain punters when they wanted her to be there. She has now been involved in prostitution for around seven years. She is usually in the brothel five days a week, sometimes up to 12 hours in a day. 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. Barbara's mental health has suffered. She has anxiety, anorexia and obsessive compulsive disorder that is mostly associated with keeping things clean. Barbara feels dirty.

### GOOD PRACTICE GUIDELINES

#### Developing consistent practice:

- Does your agency have relevant procedures and protocols?
- How would you and your agency respond professionally to these young women?
- 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?
- How might these resources be developed locally?

### 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 was very disrupted and she still 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 female friends who were already involved and who would travel together into Glasgow. Once on the street her drug use increased sharply, to the extent that she had to be out for 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 has been arrested several times for soliciting and has a criminal record.

Outreach workers have approached her. However she has always refused to take up any support, her main attitude still being that anyone who wanted to help only wanted to control her or get something out of her.

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: **Maggie**

Maggie is 34. She has been involved in prostitution for 14 years. She has three children who have been adopted. Maggie was married when she was 16 years old. She was desperate to get out of the house where she was subjected to physical and emotional abuse. 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. Initially he would sell her to his friends, which moved onto a combination of involvement in local flats and pimping her in street prostitution. She was pregnant with her third child when she became involved. Her husband 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 fostered and then adopted.

When she was 28 Maggie managed to get away from her husband. She was offered temporary accommodation through a friend. Maggie saw this as a new start and during this time she stopped her involvement in prostitution. However the accommodation arrangement quickly broke down. She got temporary accommodation through homeless housing, during which time she drank heavily, and resumed prostitution. She has had difficulty sustaining tenancies and has moved around from hostels and temporary accommodation ever since. Her health is poor, both physically and mentally. She takes prescribed drugs (anti-depressants), she "tops up" with street drugs, especially when involved in prostitution.

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

These suggested discussion points can be used as an individual exercise, or as a team or multi agency activity.

The proposed learning outcomes from participating in this training activity are:

- developing an understanding of risk factors to involvement in prostitution
- developing an agency and multi-agency framework for working with and in challenging risks
- develop understandings of the impact of involvement in prostitution
- develop an understanding of service limitations and effective multi-agency working to meet identified needs and barriers to exiting

### '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 2

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 involved in prostitution or vulnerable to exploitation.

- Key Principles
- Trauma Model of Intervention
- Prevention and early Intervention
- Risks
- Recruitment process
- Prevention
- Working with young women
- Demand
- Legislative Context

## Key principles

This section outlines the key issues to be considered at the early stages of working with women and in developing protocols.

- 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.
- Given the principle reason you are working with the woman may not be because of her involvement in prostitution familiarise yourself with protocols in place for sensitive/routine enquiry regarding abuse she may be experiencing including involvement in prostitution.
- Offer a non-judgemental response when a woman discloses her involvement in prostitution.
- Women should be treated as a victim of abuse NOT as an offender.
- Your own and other worker's differing roles need to be understood and taken into account.
- Be clear about resources that you can refer her on to or work in collaboration with to offer her support.
- Clear guidelines on professional boundaries must be developed to offer consistency in responses across organisations.
- Access relevant information relating to Legal and statutory responsibilities.
- Develop strategies to identify young women at risk which includes strategies to prevent young women being coerced into prostitution.
- Ensure you have a working knowledge of child protection procedures and policies within your organisation.

### 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.

- Ensure the needs of vulnerable young women for example 16 – 18 year olds are specifically catered for.
- Ensure your organisation has guidelines for defining areas of work e.g. confidentiality.
- Relevant literature and posters of appropriate agencies to be displayed prominently.
- Training opportunities at all levels including volunteer training, peer education, anti –oppressive working could be addressed through training consortium, Violence Against Women Partnership and/or individual organisations.
- Establish a commitment to service user involvement in assessing, monitoring, evaluating and developing services for women and young people.

## Section Two

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.

Safeguarding of worker's welfare is paramount— good supervision, informal support groups, links with key workers in other agencies and clear systems for crisis support are useful strategies for supporting workers. Supervision should give opportunity to talk about feelings as well as practice issues.

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. Where possible interagency protocols can create a useful framework for sharing communication and offering support to women. However, bare in mind that multi-agency work is a complex issue. Policies, priorities and different analysis of the issues can often result in different responses to the work.

Developing skills that enable you to work with professionals from a variety of sources is vital. Coming from a sound knowledge base of the issues involved, knowing that you cannot do this work in isolation and a willingness to understand differing demands and perspectives in order to co-operate is far more beneficial to women. It enables the provision of a network of integrated planning and 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.

## GOOD PRACTICE GUIDELINES

- 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?
- Are members of staff clear on child protection implications and referral procedures?
- Do you have a policy that offers you as a worker some support?

## Trauma Model of Intervention

Women in prostitution often 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. The trauma model is recommended as it enables an organised framework on which to base interventions.

Within West Dunbartonshire the use of the trauma model for providing support to women who have experienced violence and abuse in their lives is promoted by the Violence Against Women Partnership. This model is also widely used in organisations across Scotland when working with women who have also been abused through commercial sexual exploitation. If this model is new to you, reading the original source may be useful to familiarise yourself and work with the model competently. The Scottish Government website also offers a good source of guidance in working with women involved in prostitution, including summaries by Routes Out of Prostitution Intervention Team. Do you think your organisation could implement this model consistently when working with women? What issues would arise? How might issues be overcome? Do workers in the area have access to training regarding prostitution and/or trauma training? Could your organisation provide/facilitate such training?

Your role and level of engagement with women will determine the work you do and determine the relationship your work has with the trauma model.

The three stage trauma model was developed by Judith Herman, a psychologist who developed the model from her work with people who experienced complex post traumatic stress disorder (trauma which resulted from sustained abuse and repeated exposure to traumatic events over a period of time). Bullets summarise suggested outcomes at each stage.

### Stage 1- Establishing Safety

- Assess impact and prioritise short term goals.
- Abstinence from illicit drug misuse and/or alcohol abuse.
- Engaging drug stabilisation programme.
- Safe housing/living situation.
- Relearning and/or skills development to manage tenancy.
- Management of mental health symptoms (such as anxiety, depression) and engaging supports to stay safe e.g. Grounding Techniques, cognitive behaviour therapies.
- Developing crisis management and problem solving skills.
- Addressing basic physical health needs including sexual health needs.
- Promoting self protection and safety, engaging safety plan.
- Develop responsibility for active engagement with supports available.
- Promoting self care physically and emotionally including adequate sleeping, eating patterns and exercise.
- Engaging routines such as keeping appointments.
- Addressing financial issues such as budgeting and debt.
- Identifying and engaging support networks.

### Stage 2- Dealing with and Healing from Trauma

- Continue with issues from stage one, safety remains paramount.
- Relapse prevention.
- Building confidence and self esteem.
- Extending healthy coping techniques.
- Exploration of woman's route into prostitution.
- Address trauma from involvement in prostitution and from experiences of abuse through specialist counselling.
- Reframing woman's experience.
- Development of longer-term goals.

### Stage 3 – Moving On

- Recovering aspirations.
- Discovering ambitions.
- Seeking mutual friendships and developing new healthy relationships.
- Engaging more actively within community.
- Developing autonomy.
- Renewing family contact.
- Accessing training, education and employment.

The outcomes suggested give an indication of the difficulties that some women may be experiencing. This is not to say that all women who have been exploited through prostitution will exhibit these issues. A thorough assessment is required before commencing any work with women. Do not make any assumptions. Women's experiences have some commonalities however, how they have been affected should be understood and addressed individually for every woman. Women should be supported to identify priority issues and SMART goals. Moreover, do not expect recovery to be a linear process. Women can move forward and backward across the stages and take their own pace. Indeed some women may choose not to look at deeper issues and how they proceed must always be their choice. Empowerment needs to be at the heart of intervention to enable women to build their confidence in themselves and regain their self-worth. Some research has suggested that exiting from prostitution may take on average 7 years.

#### 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.

## Prevention and Early Intervention

It is self-evident that, if an effective, lasting impact is to be made on reducing the numbers of women involved in prostitution in Scotland, not only must those who are currently involved be successfully helped to move away from prostitution-and stay away- but ways must also be found to stop progress of that nature being thwarted by more women becoming involved. The preventative activity necessary to disrupt recruitment into prostitution should be informed by what is known about factors that influence the likelihood of women's entry into prostitution.

### Risks:

The characteristics of "social exclusion" are associated with the risks of involvement in prostitution and remain risks well into adulthood:

- Untreated mental illness/distress.
- Family breakdown and experiences of being "looked after" outside the family- in particular, not being included in the decisions that affected them, not being given opportunity to discuss issues confidentially, inconsistency in placements and staff contact.
- Experience of childhood sexual and physical abuse - In particular not knowing who to tell, not being believed, being physically assaulted when disclosing to a family member, no action taken against the abuser.
- Parental drug and alcohol misuse, mental health problems and/or involvement in prostitution.
- Underachievement at school and lack of employment skills/unemployment.
- Criminality as the norm.
- Insecure housing/homelessness.
- Communal living space for women vulnerable to sexual exploitation and those young women already involved in prostitution.
- Poverty- in particular lone parenting and lack of familial, financial and structural supports which afforded women other options.

Some women have suggested risks resulting from:

- A lack of knowledge about prostitution and not knowing what they were getting themselves involved in particularly not knowing the mental health impact of involvement.
- The belief that they had freely chosen to become involved and did not associate their experiences, which led to involvement, as exploitation. Exploitation and abuse was recognised once involved but by then it was difficult to get out and/or stay out of prostitution.

Perhaps to consider the combined issues of risks, recruitment processes and men's demand will enable local policy and intervention to implement a sustained effort to reduce the abuse of women in prostitution.

### Recruitment process

There are differing opinions about the "process" of becoming involved in prostitution. Some women have described 4 stages that include a general awareness of prostitution activity around them, followed by an introduction to prostitution (sometimes by other women), desensitisation to overcome women's initial objections (exposure to activity, shadowing others involved) and mentoring by women already involved during initial contact with punters.

Barnardos' research has looked at young women's involvement. They conclude young women's exploitation follows a process of "grooming" which involves predatory older men targeting young vulnerable women.

Others suggest young women "drift" into prostitution (see Melrose et al on reading list).

## Section Two

### Prevention

Preventative measures are required to both provide for a generic response which will benefit communities as a whole including those vulnerable to involvement in prostitution and a targeted response which focuses specifically on those identified to be most at risk. Being Outside: Constructing a Response to Street Prostitution, outlines measures at strategic and operational levels. It emphasises the incorporation of responses within existing Local Services Plans and the importance of collaboration to provide a holistic network of support with the young woman.

Women exiting prostitution provide an additional, practical perspective borne from their own experience and in-depth first hand knowledge. Women's suggestions include:

- Women who have been exploited in prostitution are involved in the development and delivery of awareness raising training to challenge myths particularly that prostitution is glamorous, educate on "how to keep yourself safe" from being commercially sexually exploited and gender specific issues relating to drug use.
- Peer support for young women vulnerable to involvement from those who have exited
- Challenging prostitution as a taboo subject and raising awareness of harm to women involved through media and national campaigns
- Pro-active detection and discussion with vulnerable women about whether she is considering prostitution from any or all agencies women have contact with.
- Continuity of support and recognition of the barriers that make engaging with services difficult for young women is required to enable perseverance from staff and the recognition of windows of opportunity. Women frequently state that when support was found helpful, it was often on reflection.

### Working with Young Women

In this section a child is understood as anyone under the age of 16. Disclosure of involvement in prostitution by anyone under the age of 16 should be responded to within child protection procedures and policies. Any worker suspecting a child is being sexually exploited through prostitution should proceed likewise. The Protection of Children and Prevention of Sexual

Offences (Scotland) Act 2005 amended previous legislation to criminalise taking, possessing or distributing indecent images of anyone up to 18 and removed the statutory time limit for prosecution of the offence of unlawful intercourse with a girl between 13 and 16.

In working with young women the Franki Project pointed out that agencies failed to prevent young women being coerced into prostitution because the various agencies involved with her either have had different perspectives about what is happening in her life or have only seen part of the picture. They argue that it is only when the young woman's 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. They propose that education is vital and that young people, girls and boys, would benefit from education that included discussion of the issues that lead young women into prostitution and lead young men to assume that it is all right to buy sex. They suggest that as individuals and agencies we can involve ourselves in campaigning for and facilitating this type of education within our own particular areas.

In Glasgow for example, 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. In West Dunbartonshire, the Violence Against Women Partnership has set an agenda to challenge commercial sexual exploitation. A multi-agency sub group meets to address the specific needs of vulnerable young women and those young women where offending behaviour increases their vulnerability. The Reduce Abuse Project in West Dunbartonshire works with young people within schools and challenges gender inequality and abuse. They propose to introduce issues of commercial sexual exploitation in their educational programme. How might your organisation contribute to or become involved in partnership and/or CSE working group objectives? How might lessons learned, actions taken and progress made in other areas help shape future strategy and action planning in relation to prostitution as a form of gender based violence?

## GOOD PRACTICE GUIDELINES

### Developing preventative strategies

- Relevant workers will be able to observe patterns of behaviour of children living in residential homes or young people in supported accommodation.
- Workers should be alert to young women who are regularly being picked up by older men in cars or being met by men loitering outside the accommodation. These men should be reported to senior staff and the police informed. This is a child protection issue for those under 16.
- Workers should be aware of the vulnerability of young women who are absconding either from home or from school who are vulnerable to engaging in sex to obtain money for food. At this point they would not identify themselves as prostituting. “Running away” significantly increases the risks for young people of being “befriended” for commercial sexual exploitation.
- Teachers can also be vigilant in watching out for these patterns. It has been shown to be useful for outside agencies to come into the schools and talk to the young people about the realities of prostitution.
- Maximising financial and social supports for young women is vital including promotion of educational and employment opportunities before substantial financial hardship becomes the catalyst that makes involvement in commercial sexual exploitation such as lap dancing, associated with introductions to prostitution, an attractive option.
- Detection and gathering evidence of proof of involvement is not the same as prevention.
- Those under 16 involved in prostitution should always be responded to as a child protection issue no matter how mature the teenager may present as.

### Further considerations:

- What training would be required within your organisation that would enable those considering or exposed to prostitution to be identified?
- Are there protocols for inter-agency working to highlight “high risk” young women? How might communication protocols be developed across agencies in light of confidentiality issues?
- Parental drug misuse is well known as often affecting parenting capacity, which increases children’s vulnerability in general. However, is the link between parental drug misuse and the increased risk to young women of involvement in prostitution addressed in supports offered? If not how might this be addressed?

### Demand

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The ability to reduce the exploitation of women through prostitution also requires robust measures to tackle the demand. Men who abuse women in prostitution see themselves as privileged and having the right to have sex at any time they choose. This ultimately creates the demand for the availability of women to provide sex. Within Scotland a recent study (2008) published by the Women's Support Project sought to contribute to an understanding of men's demand for prostitution and of strategies for challenging this demand. This research as the first of its kind in Scotland is recommended as a useful start in exploring this issue further and informing local strategies that seek to eradicate violence perpetrated against women in the form of prostitution. The men who volunteered for the research were asked about their views on what would stop prostitution.

In summary men stated demand could be challenged by:

- Prostitution being treated legally as a sex offence and/or having greater criminal penalty.
- Naming and shaming (local paper, internet, billboard, informing partner/family).
- Required to attend educational programme.

How might you and/or your organisation contribute towards challenging men's demand?

#### **"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.

## Legislative Context

Prostitution itself, within Britain has never been illegal but has been legislated against through civil and criminal legislation in relation to surrounding activities. Activities are legislated against such as loitering or soliciting in public places to supply sex (Civic Government (Scotland) Act 1982) and brothel keeping and/or benefiting from the earnings of prostitution (Criminal Law (Consolidation) (Scotland) Act 1995, The Proceeds of Crime Act 2002). The Criminal Law (Consolidation) (Scotland) Act 1995 has sections providing for procuring, abduction and detention of women and children and prevention of exposure of children to prostitution. In addition, trafficking is specifically dealt with in Criminal Justice (Scotland) Act 2003 and child protection has been specifically provided for, more recently, through The Protection of Children and Prevention of Sexual Offences (Scotland) Act 2005 and is also generally covered in the Social Work (Scotland) Act 1968 and Children (Scotland) Act 1995.

Until 2007 it was not illegal for men to solicit for prostitution and only those selling sex were charged under the Civic Govt Act Section 46. However the Prostitution (Public Places) (Scotland) Act 2007 criminalised loitering or soliciting for the purposes of obtaining the services of someone engaged in prostitution. Please note that Section 46 of the Civic Government (Scotland) Act 1982 remains in place, i.e. soliciting to sell sex remains an offence. Essentially this means that the law continues to criminalise women in prostitution even although the Scottish Government has recognised prostitution as ‘survival behaviour; and part of the spectrum of violence against women. It does this in the following ways:

The Civic Government (Scotland) Act 1982, Section 46(1) 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”*

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 offering support to women it needs to be acknowledged that having to pay substantial fines can discourage exiting from prostitution as women need to earn the money to pay the fines or risk imprisonment.

Criminalising women for their involvement in prostitution has an ongoing impact on them and can often itself be a barrier to exiting prostitution.

A consequence of criminalising is that it can affect future employment opportunities especially if the woman applies for a job that is exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act.

Disclosure of their past involvement and the stigma that is often associated seriously affects many women’s confidence in being viewed as equal to others when they are attempting to move their lives forward.

# Section Three 3

This section gives general references to guide you in furthering your understanding of the violence against women analysis of women's involvement in prostitution. Local resources are identified to aid the initiation of appropriate support strategies (though this is not an exhaustive list of all services available in West Dunbartonshire).

- General Information
- Local Resource Information
- Men Create Demand
- 8 Myths
- Statistics
- Recommended Reading

## General Information

The most important person to inform is you. 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. Having a working knowledge of drugs misuse can be useful. But most importantly:

- Inform yourself about the realities of the connections between child sexual abuse and the sex industry.
- Gain knowledge of the prevalence of violence against woman whilst being commercially sexually exploited.
- Inform yourself about the intrinsic harm of prostitution.
- Understand the connection of involvement in prostitution with drug use and supply.
- Understand the impact of involvement on the woman's mental and physical health in relation to both support with prevention and exiting.
- Develop an understanding, as far as you are able, about what women's involvement in prostitution, really means.
- Understand the issues surrounding men's demand for prostitution.

There are agencies in West Dunbartonshire that specifically deal with issues for women such as Women's Aid, Women's Support Service, CARA and Rape Crisis (see contact details).

Moreover, West Dunbartonshire Violence Against Women Partnership has developed two directories of services. Although based on experiences of domestic abuse they are none-the-less helpful guides for gaining knowledge and accessing support for women and children who are experiencing violence including sexual exploitation and involvement in prostitution. Given the links between domestic abuse and prostitution these guides would provide a very useful starting point. These are available from Violence Against Women Partnership, Council Offices, Rosebery Place, Clydebank. Additional information is included in this resource about local services accessible to women and other useful contacts

which, may be used for consultancy to help you to develop your awareness of the issues.

Unlike Glasgow, who developed specialist services to respond to visible street prostitution, West Dunbartonshire does not have a specific service for women. This means that women involved in or vulnerable to prostitution are accessing generic services either on a voluntary or compulsory basis. This is how women will become known. For this reason all individuals and organisations need to have a good level of understanding of the issues faced by prostituted women and work in collaboration with one another to ensure that all her needs are being addressed from an informed, genuine regard for the traumatic impact of her experiences. Moreover, generic services need to be equipped to identify women at risk and women who are involved and be skilled in exploring and responding to the issues she is experiencing as a result.

To be able to support women exploited through prostitution:

- 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 mby 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.

The principles expressed by Glasgow City Council (Policy on Prostitution) are useful to underpin your work with women both operationally and strategically.

**It's not women's free choice.  
It's not men's right  
It's not inevitable.**

Please note: Open Road provides services for men exploited through prostitution and referrals can be made for West Dunbartonshire men to this service.

### Resources Available in West Dunbartonshire and Beyond

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The most important person to inform is you. 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. Having a working knowledge of drugs misuse can be useful. But most importantly:

#### Alternatives

Provides counselling, information and advice, group work and complementary therapies for individuals living with substance misuse problems. A young people's service supports individuals up to 21.

Telephone: Clydebank 0141 951 2420 or Alexandria 01389 7345000

#### CARA (Challenging and responding to Abuse)

Is a free and confidential service for women experiencing (or have experienced) Domestic Abuse, Childhood Sexual Abuse, Rape and Sexual Assault or any other form of violence against women throughout West Dunbartonshire.

For support and/or counselling telephone: Irene 01389-738595 or Karen 01389-738278

#### CARA Children's Service

Katrina Cunliffe provides counselling, 1:1 support and advocacy to children and young people throughout West Dunbartonshire. This is a Free and Confidential Service.

Telephone: 01389 738664

#### CEDAR (Children experiencing domestic abuse recovery) Group work Programme

Cedar is a therapeutic group work programme designed for children to better understand their experiences of domestic abuse and identify and express feelings. The aim of the project is to improve outcomes for women and children. A mum and children's group will run in parallel. Mothers can therefore reflect on their children's needs to support them.

Referrals accepted from all agencies and self-referral from Mothers

Kirsty Calderwood: Leven Valley Enterprise, 01389 772216 Mob: 07903010551

#### Citizens Advice Bureau

Citizens Advice can offer free, confidential, impartial and independent advice on issues such as housing, legal system, benefits, employment, debt, family and consumer affairs. They can be contacted at:

|            |                    |
|------------|--------------------|
| Alexandria | Tel: 01389 604705  |
| Clydebank  | Tel: 0141 951 1778 |
| Dumbarton  | Tel: 01389 765345  |

#### Community Addiction Teams

Offer support to individuals with substance misuse issues:

|                         |                    |
|-------------------------|--------------------|
| Leven Addiction Service | Tel: 01389 812018  |
| Clydebank               | Tel: 0141 562 2311 |

#### Criminal Justice Social Work Team

Provision of statutory social work service to offenders within the community including female offenders who have experienced gender based violence and male offenders who are perpetrators of violence against women.

Tel: 01389 738484

### Dumbarton Area Council on Alcohol (DACA)

Some of the services offered at DACA include: -

- One-to-one counselling for the individuals own drinking or for support with a family member's alcohol misuse.
- Ontrack@daca – this is the Young Person's Project that provides a wide range of activities for young people, families and carers affected by alcohol. These include group sessions, healthy living drop-ins, stress management clinics, alcohol education and one-to-one support for 9 – 25 year olds.
- Women's Group – meets weekly in both our Clydebank and Dumbarton premises. A health and beauty therapist provides a range of beauty treatments and complementary therapies.

To find out more about the services or make an appointment call 01389 731456 or 0141 9520881

### Homeless Persons Team

Homelessness services are available to everyone throughout West Dunbartonshire. Their aim is to ensure that survivors of domestic abuse are treated with respect and sensitivity. Temporary accommodation will be made available to women survivors and their children. They can be contacted at:

|            |                   |
|------------|-------------------|
| Alexandria | Tel: 01389 608999 |
| Clydebank  | Tel: 01389 608999 |
| Dumbarton  | Tel: 01389 608999 |

24 hour standby service Tel. no. is  
0800 197 1004

### Housing Services

For information, advice and support regarding your tenancy contact:

|            |                   |
|------------|-------------------|
| Alexandria | Tel: 01389 608910 |
| Clydebank  | Tel: 01389 738282 |
| Dumbarton  | Tel: 01389 608910 |

### Police

|                        |                    |
|------------------------|--------------------|
| Alexandria             | Tel: 01389 823000  |
| Clydebank              | Tel: 0141 532 3300 |
| Dumbarton              | Tel: 01389 822 000 |
| Family Protection Unit | Tel: 0141 532 3400 |

### Police Domestic Abuse Unit (DAU) Clydebank Police Office

DAU ensures that all domestic incidents are dealt with appropriately, consistently and in accordance with Strathclyde Police Policy ensuring that the highest quality of service is delivered to victims and their families. They offer:

- Information and advice.
- Personal Safety Information/Alarms/Crime Care Survey's.
- Contact information for relevant Support Agencies.

They also:

- Identify any Child Protection Issues and liaise with the relevant agencies.
- Fully update victim's on the progress of the enquiry and legal issues.
- Send a follow up letter to all victim's including any relevant telephone numbers.

Strathclyde Police have recently formed a Domestic Abuse Task Force (DATF). Its remit is to target "high tariff" offenders who are defined as those who present the greatest risk of harm to victims and their families.

They can be contacted at 0141 532 3325

### Prep4life

The project aims to provide emergency short-term accommodation for young (16-21 years), single, homeless people from throughout West Dunbartonshire for up to a maximum of 26 weeks depending on assessed support needs.

For further information and referral process telephone:  
01389 757822

## Section Three

### Rape Crisis

Rape Crisis Scotland provides a national rape crisis helpline for anyone affected by sexual violence, no matter when or how it happened. The helpline is open from 6pm to midnight, 7 days a week, and offers free and confidential initial and crisis support and information. The helpline can also give information about local rape crisis centres or other services for ongoing support.

Helpline: 08088 01 03 02

Rape Crisis offer free, confidential support to all female survivors of sexual violence aged 13 and above in locations across West Dunbartonshire. Face-to-face support can be offered in Clydebank, Dumbarton and Alexandria, as well as a drop-in service at Clydebank College. If it is more convenient or anonymity is a concern, women can also come to the Rape Crisis Centre in Glasgow City centre. Structured telephone support is also available, in addition to support for friends, family and partners.

Survivors and referring organisations can contact through the helpline number:  
0141 553 3200

### Reduce Abuse Project

Provides prevention sessions and awareness raising of gender-based violence, sexual bullying issues and impact of domestic abuse on children and young people within West Dunbartonshire schools and youth settings.

Telephone: Shona Bruce or Anne Louise Maher 01389 602216

### Social Work

Social Work can offer unbiased, sympathetic, practical and emotional support in a safe and confidential setting. Concerns about child protection should also be referred.

|                      |                    |
|----------------------|--------------------|
| Alexandria Area Team | Tel: 01389 608080  |
| Clydebank Area Team  | Tel: 0141 562 8800 |
| Dumbarton Area Team  | Tel: 01389 608118  |

Emergency Out of Hours Service:  
Tel: 0800 811 505

### Time for change

This is a dedicated intensive support service for high-risk young women aged 15-18 years involved with or on a path to involvement in the criminal justice system. To enquire about the service or to make a referral contact:

|                |                  |
|----------------|------------------|
| Olive Arens 0  | 7870 223 500,    |
| Carly Scott    | 07966 778 379 or |
| Hayley Farrell | 07966 778 660    |

### Victim Support

Victim Support works with West Dunbartonshire Council and Strathclyde Police to provide emotional support, information and practical assistance to the victims of crime and antisocial behaviour.

Tel: 0141 952 2095 (daytime) or  
0845 603 9213

### Welfare Rights

Welfare Rights service can provide support and advice on benefit maximisation as well as appropriate referrals to other services/agencies therefore avoiding the need to make more than one telephone call. They can be contacted at:

|            |                    |
|------------|--------------------|
| Alexandria | Tel: 01389 608080  |
| Clydebank  | Tel: 0141 562 8800 |
| Dumbarton  | Tel: 01389 737048  |

## Women's Aid

Women's Aid is run by women for women. They offer a daily drop-in counselling service to women who are abused including information and support about legal rights, housing options and entitlement to benefits. They provide information on custody and access to children.

Temporary accommodation is available, space permitting, to women and children who are escaping abuse. Initial counselling to women who have been sexually abused is also offered.

Women's Aid now have dedicated outreach workers who provide support to children and young people on a one to one or group work basis. This service can be provided in school or in a suitable venue in the community, and is to help children and young people cope with the damaging effects of living with domestic abuse. Outreach workers can be contacted by phoning a local women's aid group.

### Clydebank Women's Aid

Tel: 0141 952 8118

### Dumbarton District Women's Aid

Tel: 01389 751036

## Women's Support Service

For women who are experiencing or have survived domestic abuse.

- if the offence has been referred to court; or
- if the woman or her partner are receiving a criminal justice social work service

Women who have experienced any form of gender based violence (including prostitution) who are receiving a criminal justice service are also supported.

Internal referrals from the Criminal Justice Team only. However, information, training and advice are provided to other agencies.

Contact Grace or Lorraine on

Tel: 01389 738484

To find out more information about support and advice for women experiencing gender based violence, including commercial sexual exploitation within West Dunbartonshire, please contact:

## Violence Against Women Partnership

Anni Donaldson

West Dunbartonshire Violence Against Women Partnership

Room 5 Council Offices

Rosebery Place

Clydebank G81 1TG

Tel: 01389 738680

## Some more useful contacts:

### Broken Rainbow LGBT Domestic Violence (UK)

Offer advice, support and referral services to LGBT people experiencing homophobic, trans-phobic and same sex domestic violence

Tel: 08452 60 44 60

### Routes Out Team

Formally Routes Out of Prostitution Intervention Team provide a drop in facility 4 nights per week for women involved in street prostitution at Base 75. The team is available for consultancy and advice to workers supporting women within West Dunbartonshire.

Tel: 0141 276 0737 this is the evening number- they also have day time contact – Louise Belton manager - 0141 276 7516

### SAY Women

SAY Women is a voluntary organisation which offers safe and secure accommodation for young women aged 16-25 who are survivors of childhood sexual abuse, rape or sexual assault and who are homeless or threatened with homelessness.

Tel: 0141 552 5803

### Scottish Domestic Abuse Helpline

Confidential information and support is available 24 hours a day, every day of the year. The Freephone number does not appear on itemised phone bills.

They can put women in touch with local services like Women's Aid or Housing Department. Helpline volunteers are all women and have received specialist training.

Tel: 0800 027 1234

### Women's Support Project

The aim of the project is to raise awareness of the extent and effects of male violence and work towards improved and consistent services for abused women and children. Written resources are available on prostitution and other forms of commercial sexual exploitation. Training is offered on prostitution and on working with women abused through prostitution.

The women's support project has a very useful website sourcing up to date research and information. For further information.

Tel: 0141 552 2221

E-mail: [info@wsproject.demon.co.uk](mailto:info@wsproject.demon.co.uk)

### Men Create the Demand; Women Are the Supply

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Donna M. Hughes

University of Rhode Island, 2000

Extract from: Lecture on Sexual Exploitation, Queen Sofia Centre, Valencia, Spain

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 sexualised and wants 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.[1] Cities and countries where men's demand for women in prostitution is legalised 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, traumatised, 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 decriminalise 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 legalisation and regulation of prostitution and trafficking, which allow women to be exploited and abused under state determined conditions, and the decriminalisation 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.

[1] This dynamic is the case for heterosexual prostitution. Exceptions are gay prostitution, men's sexual abuse of boys, the occasional sexual abuse of children by women and the almost non-existent prostitution of men by women.

## 8 Myths About Women's Involvement in Prostitution

Many myths and stereotypes exist about prostitution. Without an understanding of these it is difficult to appreciate the exploitation factors that exist for the women involved. The following demonstrates common myths that are often expressed and the realities learned through the accounts of experiences as told by women involved in prostitution.

### Myth 1 Involvement in prostitution is a choice

**Reality** Involvement in prostitution is survival behaviour. Involvement in prostitution very often results from lack of choices. Women become involved in prostitution as a result of child abuse, physical and sexual violence, poverty, homelessness, drug dependency and mental health problems.

### Myth 2 Prostitution is the oldest profession in the world.

**Reality** Referring to women involved in prostitution as “working girls” or involvement in prostitution as “working the streets” negates the real trauma that women experience through their involvement in prostitution. Viewing prostitution as ‘work’ accepts the long-term emotional, physical and mental health problems associated with involvement. It accepts the rape, assault and murder of women. These atrocities against women have often been described as ‘hazards of the job’. Prostitution is neither a profession nor a career. Prostitution is the exploitation and abuse of vulnerable women.

### Myth 3 Women involved in prostitution are promiscuous.

**Reality** Prostitution is not about women wanting or seeking sex. Prostitution for women is not sexual behaviour; it is survival behaviour. Most women describe separating their minds from their bodies, dissociating from the experience in order to cope with what they have to do. Women involved in prostitution are bought by men and are used as objects from fulfilling men's sexual desires, fantasies and deviance. Women's involvement in prostitution is passive, often as the result of the threat of or actual violence.

### Myth 4 Prostitution services a natural need for sex. Men who use women involved in prostitution are lonely and can't get romantic relationships.

**Reality** Men who buy women for sex come from all walks of life; they are married, they have partners, they are fathers, grandfathers, uncles, brothers, sons and nephews. They are involved in all occupations. They are all ages and races. The above myth presupposes that men have uncontrollable sexual urges that must be fulfilled; herein lies the justification for prostitution. A woman is viewed as an object for sexual gratification. The woman becomes a commodity of the person with the money and the power. Many women have described being appalled by what is demanded of them and experience deep trauma as a result.

### **Myth 5** Women involved in prostitution make lots of money.

**Reality** The overwhelming majority of women involved in street prostitution live in abject poverty. Money made through prostitution is spent as rapidly as it is gained, usually on buying drugs, for themselves and their partners. When women become involved in prostitution, their drug use often spirals to help cope with what they are exposed to and what they are expected to do. This reinforces their continued involvement in prostitution. Drug dealers make substantial amounts of money from women who are involved in prostitution.

### **Myth 6** Prostitution is glamorous

**Reality** This myth is propagated by media representations of women and the presentation of the “call girl” as a sophisticated, wealthy, jet-setting businesswoman. This could not be further from the truth and is a naïve and dangerous representation. All women involved in prostitution whether indoor or outdoor, five star hotel or alleyway are at risk of sexual, physical and emotional abuse by the men who buy sex.

### **Myth 7** Legalising prostitution will protect the women involved.

**Reality** Legalising prostitution does not improve safety for women. Where legalisation has occurred, areas have developed which have been notorious for crime, particularly drug dealing. Pimps promising protection, in reality control women and become part of the violence stopping women from leaving prostitution. Brothels can legally advertise for ‘prostitutes’ in job centres and all unemployed women could be sent to interview or benefits could be threatened if they refuse to take up the ‘job’. Women from poorer countries are likely to be trafficked to areas where prostitution is legal. Legalisation would enable organised crime to prosper.

### **Myth 8** Prostitution is a victimless crime.

**Reality** Most women involved in prostitution recount experiences of routine physical and emotional abuse, violent assaults, thefts and sexual abuse. Some women are murdered. Most women involved in prostitution live in fear of crime and do not believe they have equal rights to legal recourse therefore, often do not report the crimes against them. Many women believe that they are responsible for the consequences of their involvement in prostitution, a pattern often seen in victims of abuse.

## Statistical Information

Estimated 80,000 people involved in selling themselves through prostitution in the UK.  
5000 of them, at any one time are children. \_ are women. *(Kinnell, 1999).*

**This is believed to be much higher now.**

*(Women's Support Project, Glasgow)*

**75% of women started selling themselves for sex when they were under 18.**

*(Women's Support Project, Glasgow)*

**70% of women in prostitution spent time in care.**

**45% report sexual abuse**

**85% report physical abuse within their families**

*(Home Office, 2006)*

**74% of women cited poverty, the need to pay household expenses and support children  
as the main reason they became involved in prostitution**

*(Women's Support Project, Glasgow)*

**50% of women involved in prostitution in the UK have been raped or seriously sexually  
assaulted**

**75% have been physically assaulted**

*(Home Office, 2004)*

**68% of women in prostitution meet the criteria for post traumatic stress disorder in the  
same range as torture victims and combat veterans undergoing treatment**

*(Ramsey et al, 1993)*

**9/10 women in prostitution that were surveyed stated they would like to exit  
prostitution if they could.**

*(Farley, 2003)*

*(Sourced in Women's Support Project: Resource for CSE training)*

### Recommended Reading

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