



House of Commons
Home Affairs Committee

Prostitution

Third Report of Session 2016–17



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*Report, together with formal minutes
relating to the report*

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Home Affairs Committee

The Home Affairs Committee is appointed by the House of Commons to examine the expenditure, administration, and policy of the Home Office and its associated public bodies.

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The following were also members of the Committee during the Parliament.

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The Committee is one of the departmental select committees, the powers of which are set out in House of Commons Standing Orders, principally in SO No 152. These are available on the internet via www.parliament.uk.

Publication

Committee reports are published on the Committee's website at www.parliament.uk/homeaffairscom and in print by Order of the House.

Evidence relating to this report is published on the [inquiry publications page](#) of the Committee's website.

Committee staff

The current staff of the Committee are Carol Oxborough (Clerk), Phil Jones (Second Clerk), Harriet Deane (Committee Specialist), Adrian Hitchins (Committee Specialist), Kunal Mundul (Committee Specialist), Andy Boyd (Senior Committee Assistant), Mandy Sullivan (Committee Assistant) and Jessica Bridges-Palmer (Committee Media Officer).

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Key facts

Note: One of the challenges in examining prostitution is the absence of robust data. The “facts” set out below have been submitted to the Committee in evidence but should be treated with caution and are open to dispute. Terminology is also disputed, with some opposition to the description “sex workers”. Our use of the term in this report is a neutral one and refers to female, male or transgender adults who receive money in exchange for sexual services.

- Around 11% of British men aged 16–74 have paid for sex on at least one occasion, which equates to 2.3 million individuals.
- The number of sex workers in the UK is estimated to be around 72,800 with about 32,000 working in London.
- Sex workers have an average of 25 clients per week paying an average of £78 per visit.
- In 2014–15, there were 456 prosecutions of sex workers for loitering and soliciting.
- An estimated 152 sex workers were murdered between 1990 and 2015. 49% of sex workers (in one survey) said that they were worried about their safety.
- There were 1,139 victims of trafficking for sexual exploitation in 2014, and 248 in April to June 2015 (following implementation of the Modern Slavery Act 2015).

The main legislation relating to prostitution is contained in the following Acts:

- Sexual Offences Act 2003
- Policing and Crime Act 2009
- Criminal Justice and Police Act 2001 (in relation to placing of advertisements relating to prostitution)
- Modern Slavery Act 2015 (in relation to trafficking for sexual exploitation)
- Serious Crime Act 2015 (in relation to sexual exploitation of children).

The Appendix to this Report sets out further details on existing legislation, supplied by the Home Office.

1 Introduction

1. In England and Wales, the sale and purchase of sexual services between consenting adults is legal. It is estimated that there are between 60,000 and 80,000 sex workers in the UK, the majority women, working either on the streets, or more commonly now in a variety of indoor environments. It is estimated (based on a small sample) that around 11% of British men aged 16–74 have paid for sex on at least one occasion (which equates to about 2.3 million individuals).¹ Various activities related to prostitution, such as soliciting, kerb crawling, brothel-keeping and various forms of exploitation, are illegal. These activities are controlled through legal provisions which have been implemented over a period of decades, through several different laws, with a view to protecting vulnerable people from exploitation and reducing the negative impacts of prostitution on local communities.²

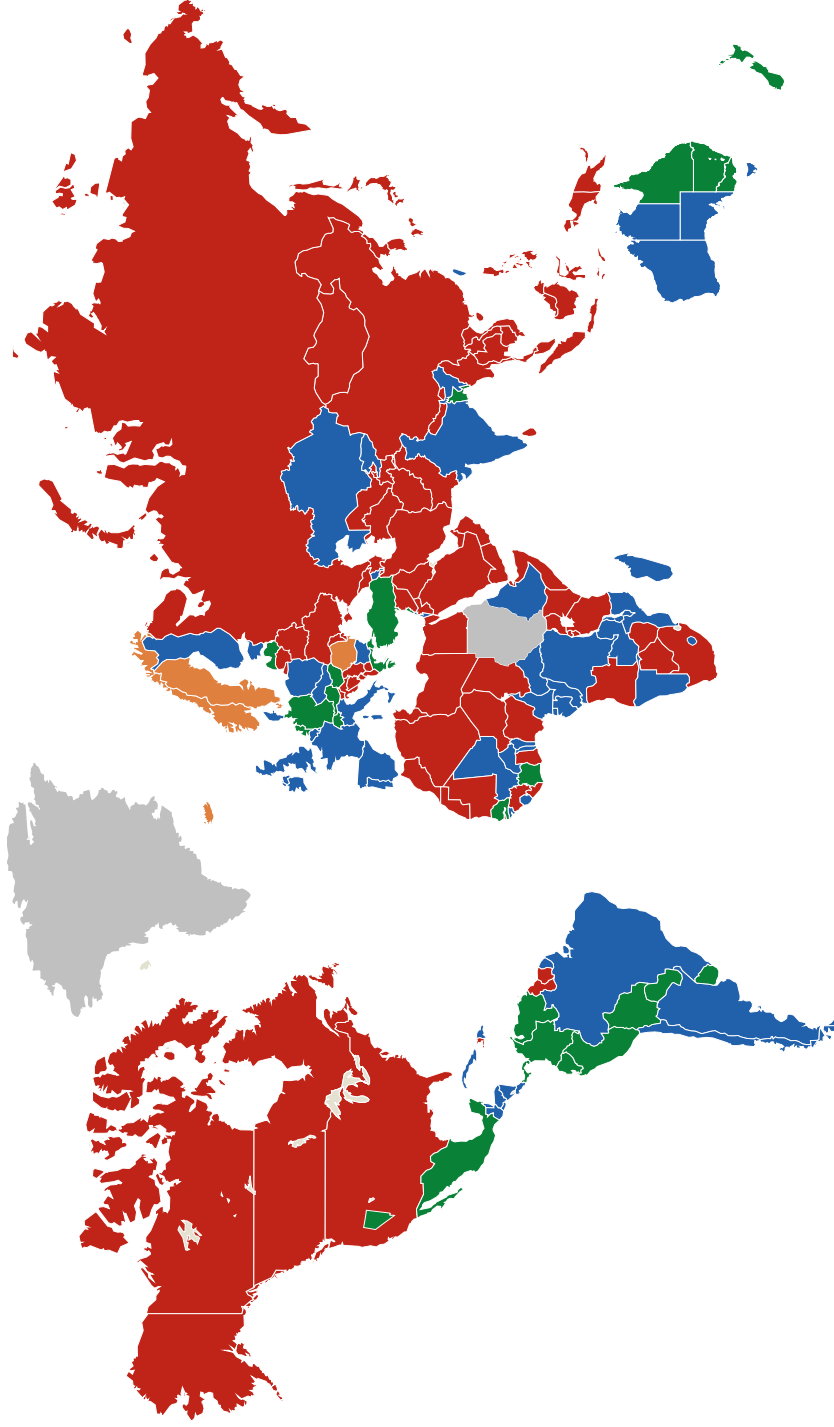
2. Prostitution is a social issue where there is considerable variation in the legislative intent and framework of different countries, even within Europe. Other countries around the world take different views on the acceptability of prostitution and adopt a range of different legislative approaches. Prostitution is illegal in many countries; most commonly, it is the sale of sexual services which is prohibited, but since 1999 some countries have introduced a form of prohibition, commonly known as the sex buyer law, which places the burden of criminality on those buying sex. In countries where prostitution between consenting adults is legal, legislative provisions exist to protect children and other vulnerable people and to prevent coercion, exploitation and other criminal activities which can be associated with the sex industry. Regulations are also usually implemented to manage issues such as neighbourhood nuisance and to regulate the ownership and management of brothels. Other variables include the employment status and rights of prostitutes; the investment in and approach taken to policing and enforcement; and the resources allocated to provide support services for prostitutes and help for them to exit prostitution. Different cultures and social factors, other existing legislation, and different implementation policies mean that, in practice, no two countries follow exactly the same approach.

3. In recent years, several countries have changed their approach to prostitution. Sweden implemented its sex buyer law in 1999, criminalising the purchase of sex. Since then, a number of other countries, including Norway and Iceland and more recently Northern Ireland and France, have adopted similar approaches. In February 2014, the European Parliament adopted a non-binding resolution which recognises prostitution as a violation of human dignity and an obstacle to gender equality, and states that the Swedish model is one way of combating trafficking and improving gender equality. However, other countries have chosen to decriminalise prostitution, such as Denmark in 1999, the Netherlands in 2000 and New Zealand in 2003. Decriminalisation is supported by a number of international organisations, including the World Health Organisation, on the basis that it would help to prevent the spread of HIV, and Amnesty International, which argues that criminalisation of sex workers makes an already disadvantaged group of people more vulnerable to violence and other violations.

1 Jones et al, [Sexually Transmitted Infections](#), 2014, The prevalence of, and factors associated with, paying for sex among men resident in Britain: findings from the third National Survey of Sexual Attitudes and Lifestyles; and ONS, [Population Estimates for UK, England and Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland, mid-2014](#), release date April 2016. The number of males aged 16-74 was about 22.7 million in mid-2014.

2 Home Office written evidence ([PRO0236](#))

World Map indicating laws on prostitution in each country (state or territory in the case of the US and Australia)



The legend means the following:

- Prostitution legal and regulated
- Prostitution (the exchange of sex for money) legal, but brothels are illegal; prostitution is not regulated
- Illegal to pay for sex but not to offer the service (client commits crime, prostitute doesn't)
- Prostitution fully illegal
- No data

Source: Wikipedia, [Prostitution by country](#)

Notes:

1. This map is shown for illustrative purposes only. It uses classifications which are slightly different to the ones used by the Committee in making its assessment.
2. A sex buyer law came into effect in France in April 2016 (a change from prostitution being legal). This change is not yet reflected in the map.

Background to the inquiry

4. Given the importance of ensuring vulnerable people are protected from exploitation, we decided to hold an inquiry to examine this very important social issue. We believed it was important to assess the variety of different legal models and the evidence about their impact, and to consider whether there might be benefits to changing the existing legal framework in England and Wales. This is a complex area, and one which many neighbouring countries are currently reviewing or to which they have recently implemented a new approach.

5. We issued a call for evidence in January and received over 250 written submissions from a range of individuals and organisations, including people working in the sex industry, academics, campaigners, charities and service providers. Much of the evidence reflected views which were deeply held and deeply divided, with little common ground. Most witnesses were either in favour of the sex buyer law as implemented in Sweden; or of decriminalisation of sex workers, possibly along the lines of the New Zealand model.

6. To a large extent the different arguments were based on different moral viewpoints on the legitimacy of prostitution, with those in favour of the sex buyer law arguing that prostitution is commercial sexual exploitation of women and girls and incompatible with gender equality, and those in favour of decriminalisation arguing that prostitution between consenting adults is a legitimate occupation which women and men choose to pursue as a way of earning an income. However, both groups offered evidence to support the effectiveness of their preferred approach in terms of improving the lives of sex workers and reducing the negative effects of the sex industry on society. Both groups were also united in a desire to decriminalise sex workers.

7. We took oral evidence from Kat Banyard, Co-director, UK Feminista; Mia de Faoite; Laura Lee; Alan Caton OBE, Independent Chair, Islington and Bedfordshire Safeguarding Children Boards; Assistant Chief Constable Nikki Holland, National Police Chiefs' Council lead for prostitution and sex work; Paris Lees; and Dr Brooke Magnanti. In April, we made a short visit to Copenhagen, Denmark and Malmö, Sweden to learn about the different legislative models operating in those countries and to hear the views of various organisations providing support to sex workers there. We are grateful to everyone who contributed to our inquiry.

8. Although a few written submissions made reference to male and transgender sex workers, the overwhelming majority of the evidence we received focussed exclusively on female sex workers. For that reason, this Report deals mainly with the issues affecting women involved in prostitution, although some of these will be equally applicable to male and trans prostitutes.

9. We have assessed the main legislative models adopted in other countries which might be followed if change to the existing law in England and Wales was considered to be desirable. (We have not assessed the merits of complete prohibition through the criminalisation of the sex worker, as this has not been put forward as an option with any merits for England and Wales.) No two countries operate a particular approach in exactly the same way but the models are broadly: the introduction of a sex buyer law (the Swedish model); decriminalisation of both the sale and purchase of sex (as operated

in New Zealand and Denmark); and a legalised system (sometimes also referred to as “regulated”), in which laws are established to control where, when and how prostitution is legally permissible (as operated in the Netherlands and Germany).

10. This is the first inquiry that the Home Affairs Committee has ever held into prostitution. It was originally intended to be a short inquiry. However, the evidence made clear to us that the views on the legal approach to prostitution are strongly held and highly polarised. The different viewpoints often arise from moral values and people’s reactions are frequently emotive. The challenge of making a rational assessment of the advantages and disadvantages of the range of models is compounded by the lack of robust evidence, which arises at least in part from the covert nature of prostitution and the understandable unwillingness of those involved to identify themselves as sellers or buyers of sex. It should also be borne in mind that sex work is often linked to criminality, including trafficking, coercion, and illegal drugs.

11. This report therefore represents our interim views on the different legislative approaches in other countries, the changes we believe need to be made now in England and Wales, and the options for legislative change which need further, closer and more thorough examination. We hope that this report will stimulate public debate about the important issues which prostitution raises. We intend to follow this interim report with a final report later in the Session.

2 Prostitution in England and Wales

Legislation in England and Wales

12. Prostitution policy and legislation are devolved matters, and it is open to both Scotland and Northern Ireland to legislate separately. In England and Wales, the sale and purchase of sexual services is legal, but various related activities are criminal. This includes activities linked to exploitation, such as controlling prostitution, or managing a brothel, and activities that can present a public nuisance, such as buying or selling sex in public. The relevant legislation is spread over several Acts. All prostitution legislation is gender neutral. The Home Office provided an overview of the relevant legislation, which is reproduced as an Appendix to this Report.

13. The Home Office stated that the Government’s legislative aim is to prevent people leading or forcing others into prostitution and to target those who make a living from the earnings of prostitutes. The legal approach is therefore intended “to tackle those who recruit others into prostitution for their own gain or someone else’s by charging offences of causing, inciting or controlling prostitution for gain, or trafficking for sexual exploitation”.³ Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) guidance on prostitution includes an overview of the relevant legislation in England and Wales, and sets out practical and legal guidance to prosecutors dealing with prostitution-related offences.⁴

The sex industry in England and Wales

14. The Home Office did not provide any information in its written submission about the current extent and nature of prostitution in England and Wales. Some witnesses did provide statistics, and referenced research studies which gave some background information about the current profile of prostitution in parts of the UK, and this information is summarised in the following paragraphs.

Difficulties in collecting statistics about the sex industry

15. There appear to be many gaps in the information available, particularly about indoor prostitution which forms the largest and least visible part of the sex industry. In addition, much of the data which is available is interpreted in different ways, and used to support different arguments. Sex workers with health, addiction and other support needs who are known to the authorities can be easier for researchers to contact, whereas many indoor sex workers, especially those who keep their sex work secret from their friends and families, are very difficult to contact. National Ugly Mugs, a national support organisation for sex workers which was initially funded by the Home Office, said that statistics pertaining to the sex industry are often conflicting and contested and can be difficult to understand for the following reasons:

- Research on sex workers tends to have low response rates;
- Most studies are small-scale and/or relate to specific groups of sex workers, so definitive statistics on the sex industry do not exist;

3 Home Office written evidence ([PRO0236](#))

4 Crown Prosecution Service, [Legal Guidance on Prostitution and Exploitation of Prostitution](#) [accessed May 2016]

- The sex industry is very diverse and sex workers operating in different sectors tend to face different issues in relation to their work;
- Statistics from specific studies are not usually representative of the sex industry as a whole.⁵

Number

16. Dr Belinda Brooks-Gordon, who has recently analysed the economic contribution of sex work to UK GDP for the Office of National Statistics, told us that the total number of sex workers in the UK is estimated to be around 72,800, with approximately 32,000 of those working in London.⁶ The Fawcett Society referred to research conducted in 2014, which indicated that there were at least 58,000 women in prostitution in the UK, with an average of 25 clients per week, each paying on average £77.69 per visit.⁷

Gender

17. End Demand, a campaign calling for Parliament to adopt the sex buyer law, said that “the majority of people exploited through prostitution are women and girls and the majority of those who pay for sex are men.”⁸ In its 2014 Report, *Shifting the Burden*, the All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on Prostitution and the Global Sex Trade reported that 95% of sex workers are women.⁹ However, other witnesses pointed out that, whilst the majority of sex workers are female, there is a significant minority of male and transgender sex workers, and that some sex buyers are women.¹⁰ The Sex Work Research Hub (a consortium of academics based at the Universities of Durham and Leeds) cited research which estimates that women comprise just over 80% of indoor sex workers, with more than 17% male and just over 2% transgender.¹¹ Professor Philip Hubbard commented that the scope and scale of male and trans work, much of which occurs online and via mobile phone connection, is often significantly underestimated.¹² The National Aids Trust noted that, while the sex work profession is dominated by women, it is vital to recognise the breadth of people involved in order to target interventions effectively.¹³

Types of sex work

18. The term “prostitution” includes various types of sex work including street prostitution and various forms of indoor prostitution including brothels, massage parlours and escort work. Assistant Chief Constable Nikki Holland, the National Police Chiefs’ Council (NPCC) lead for sex work and prostitution, told us that street sex working was far more prominent when she joined the police service 28 years ago, and that contacts were now much more likely to be made online than in the streets.¹⁴ According to the Sex Work Research Hub, street based sex workers comprise just over a quarter of sex

5 National Ugly Mugs (supplementary evidence) ([PRO0244](#))

6 Dr Belinda Brooks-Gordon ([PRO0120](#))

7 The Fawcett Society ([PRO0213](#))

8 End Demand ([PRO0070](#))

9 APPG on Prostitution and the Global Sex Trade, *Shifting the Burden*, March 2014

10 Dr Sarah Kingston, University of Lancaster and Terry Thomas, Emeritus Professor, Leeds Beckett University ([PRO0148](#))

11 Sex Work Research Hub ([PRO0030](#))

12 Professor Philip Hubbard ([PRO0019](#))

13 National Aids Trust ([PRO0153](#))

14 Oral evidence taken on [1 March 2016](#), Q139

workers in the UK, with the remainder working in diverse indoor settings, particularly in independent work.¹⁵ In a recent survey of sex workers conducted by Dr Mary Laing, 87% of the 218 respondents worked independently, 4% in a brothel, sauna or parlour, 4% escorted through an agency, 3% were street based and the remainder worked in another part of the sex industry.¹⁶

Age

19. A fundamental difference in view between supporters of the sex buyer law and those of decriminalisation is whether sex workers have the capacity to exercise real choice about the work they are doing. Advocates of the sex buyer law believe that many sex workers are women who have been coerced into prostitution as children and so are victims of exploitation. End Demand quoted a statement made in a 2004 Home Office consultation paper that “approximately 50% of women in prostitution in the UK started being paid for sex acts before they were 18 years old”.¹⁷ However, National Ugly Mugs disputed the validity of this evidence, saying that:

If this statistic is analysed for representativeness, it can be found that the original sources cited by the Home Office used to make this point relates only to female street based sex workers—excluding workers in varied off street spaces, as well as male and transgender workers; much of the research is old (6 of the 9 sources are pre 1999, and the report itself is 12 years old) the sample sizes of the sources vary and at least one source only had participants under the age of 18, offering a foregone conclusion. Therefore it cannot possibly be the case that 50% of women in prostitution became involved when they were children.¹⁸

20. Dr Brooke Magnanti gave an overview of some other research findings which suggested that the average age of starting sex work in the UK was between 20 and 24 years old. She also pointed out that it was very common in sex work for sex workers to advertise their age as younger than the reality.¹⁹ Laura Lee told us that in her 22 years working in different parts of the sex industry, she had “never come across anybody who came in under age”,²⁰ and that:

In some ways we are a very self-regulatory industry, so that if we came across a woman who was coerced or trafficked that would not be tolerated, not for one second. Neither would underage. I would certainly report that and I know many of my colleagues would do the same.²¹

21. The Children’s Society notes that children and young people aged 16 and 17 can become victims of child exploitation in different ways such as “being introduced into situations of sexual exploitation by a person who they believe to be their ‘boyfriend’ to being exploited in gangs, through online grooming or by being introduced to or made dependent on drugs and alcohol”. The Children’s Society stated that prosecuting cases

15 Sex Work Research Hub ([PRO0030](#))

16 Dr Mary Laing ([PRO0126](#))

17 End Demand ([PRO0070](#))

18 National Ugly Mugs ([PRO0244](#))

19 Oral evidence taken on [10 May 2016](#), Q160

20 Oral evidence taken on [1 March 2016](#), Q22

21 Oral evidence taken on [1 March 2016](#), Q15

of sexual exploitation when the victim is aged 16 or 17 is very difficult, due to the fact that sexual offence legislation sees those in this age group as different to those under the age of 16, as they can give consent to sexual relationships. It maintains that the number of prosecutions for the offences of sexual exploitation of children under the age of 18 remains low and that there is no data readily available on the number of prosecutions for sexual exploitation crimes where the victim is aged 16 or 17. The Society recommended that the Government develop guidance for the police and local authorities on this matter.²²

22. We support the Children Society’s recommendation that the Government develop guidance for the police and local authorities on how young people identified as being victims of, or at risk of, child sexual exploitation prior to turning 18 should be dealt with after they reach 18. This should include guidance to the police on how to respond to young adults who are found to be offering sexual services in the community or online, especially if they have been formerly known as young people at risk of child sexual exploitation, to ensure that they receive the support they need.

Vulnerability

23. The NPCC’s National Policing Sex Work Guidance notes that “the murder of sex workers continues to take place at an alarming rate” and that at the time of writing the guidance, 152 sex workers had been murdered since 1990.²³ CARE described prostitution as one of the most dangerous occupations in the world, with many workers experiencing violence from sex buyers, and the APPG report on prostitution referred to “near pandemic levels of violence experienced by women in prostitution”.²⁴

24. Other witnesses agreed that some very vulnerable women were involved in prostitution, particularly on the streets. St Mungo’s, which provides a range of services to support clients who are involved in prostitution, told us that 1 in 4 women living in their supported housing services (and 1% of male residents) had current or past involvement in sex working, rising to 1 in 3 female residents who had a history of sleeping rough.²⁵ Others questioned the extent to which the research on these very vulnerable women could be generalised to the sex industry as a whole. Research published by Jane Pitcher of Loughborough University, found that many claims about the vulnerability of sex workers drew on examples of young people and/or street-based workers, who tend to encounter a range of factors which increase their vulnerability, whereas research demonstrates that the experience of adults working in indoor sectors is markedly different.²⁶ We received evidence which pointed not only to the underlying vulnerabilities as a driver to entry into prostitution but also to the harm done from street prostitution. Equality Now refers to research which found that those in street prostitution suffer a significantly higher mortality rate compared to women of similar age and backgrounds who are not in prostitution. A former prostitute told us: “the evidence that prostitution is harmful is hard to dispute”.²⁷

22 The Children’s Society (PRO0237)

23 The Guidance is available on the [Authorised Professional Practice](#) section of the College of Policing website

24 CARE (PRO0078); and APPG on Prostitution and the Global Sex Trade, [Shifting the Burden](#), March 2014, p5

25 St Mungo’s (PRO0171)

26 [Criminology and Criminal Justice](#), 2014 14, The impact of different regulatory models on the labour conditions, safety and welfare of indoor-based sex workers, Pitcher and Wijers

27 Equality Now (PRO0189) and Crystal (PRO0073)

Reasons for doing sex work

25. Many witnesses wrote about their personal experiences as sex workers. Of those who explained their reasons for doing sex work, most said that the main motivation was to earn money. Some highlighted the fact that a significant number of sex workers are single mothers who entered prostitution to support their families. Sex Worker Open University, a UK sex worker-led collective, explained that many people sold sex simply because they are unable to access other means of earning an income, and that many sold sex intermittently, to accumulate savings or cope with one-off or occasional financial needs like debts or buying gifts for the holiday season.²⁸ The National Union of Students (NUS) pointed to research led by Swansea University into student sex work which found that almost 5% of the students in the study had done sex work at some time. The NUS went on to explain:

Financial hardship is a principal motivating factor for students to pick up work in the sex industry. Continued efforts need to be made to locate those students who do not succeed in getting the financial support that they need within the existing administrative protocols.²⁹

Clarissa Duckworth, a former prostitute stated: “It can be horrible to have to do sex for money. I had decided to do it to get money for drugs. It’s true that it’s a choice but it’s also true that it’s horrible”.³⁰

Clients

26. Very few witnesses commented on the clients of sex workers. The Fawcett Society referred to a survey undertaken during 2010 to 2012, with a sample of 6,293 men aged 16–74 years and resident in Great Britain. This found that 11% of respondents reported having ever paid for sex and 3.6% had paid for sex within the previous five years. Among men ever having paid for sex, 62.6% reported paying for sex outside the UK, most often in Europe and Asia. The data demonstrated a steady increase with age in the mean number of paid partners, suggesting either generational changes in paid sex, or that a proportion of men who paid for sex continue to pay for sex as they age.³¹

27. Dr Belinda Brooks-Gordon provided an overview of research into the motivations for clients of sex workers. She said that in-depth interviews with clients found that most men were seeking sexual solutions for emotional problems, and that for these men going to a sex worker relieved feelings of despair and intense loneliness. However, there was a wide range of other factors influencing their behaviour. She also said that clients are, in general, more law abiding than males in the general population.³²

Migrant workers and trafficking

28. There are indications that an increasing number of migrant women are working as prostitutes. Many of these are women who choose sex work as a means of earning an income. Laura Lee told us that:

28 Sex Worker Open University ([PRO0147](#))

29 National Union of Students ([PRO0150](#))

30 Clarissa Duckworth ([PRO0139](#))

31 Jones et al, [Sexually Transmitted Infections](#), 2014, The prevalence of, and factors associated with, paying for sex among men resident in Britain: findings from the third National Survey of Sexual Attitudes and Lifestyles

32 Dr Belinda Brooks-Gordon ([PRO0120](#))

The industry is awash with migrant sex workers and that is simply because it is a buoyant industry, so what you have is mothers coming to the UK earning money and sending it back home to their children and to feed their families.³³

29. Some migrant women are particularly vulnerable to violence and exploitation. Assistant Chief Constable Nikki Holland told us that out of the last 11 murders of sex workers, nine of those had been migrants.³⁴ Some migrant sex workers are victims of trafficking, but the Salvation Army, which currently holds a government contract to support adult victims of modern slavery, points to the need for clarity in distinguishing between prostitution and sex trafficking:

It is important to distinguish that people trafficked for sexual exploitation are recognised in the law as victims, that their involvement in exploitative sexual activities is involuntary, and will invariably reveal elements of coercion, control and deception in bringing about cooperation. By contrast, people entering prostitution may do so voluntarily, and for differing reasons.³⁵

30. Research has been conducted to try to establish the numbers of women who have been trafficked for the purpose of prostitution, but different studies have reached different conclusions. Professor Nicola Mai conducted research between 2007 and 2009 which analysed the experiences of migration and sex work of 100 migrant women, men and transgender people working in London, and found that only around 6% of all female interviewees felt that they had been deceived and forced into selling sex in circumstances within which they felt they had no share of control or consent.³⁶

31. The ACPO-led Project Acumen research, published in 2010, included interviews with 200 migrant off-street prostitutes. It estimated that around 17,000 migrant women were involved in prostitution in England and Wales. Of these, around 15% (2,600) were trafficked, a further 54% (9,200) were vulnerable but had day-to-day control over their activities, and 31% were aware before leaving their home country that they were likely to become involved in prostitution and were able to live and work largely independently.³⁷

32. In his 2012 report on sex work in London, *Silence on Violence*, London Assembly Member Andrew Boff pointed out that estimates of the proportion of migrant prostitutes who had been trafficked ranged from a (now rejected) figure of 80% (mentioned by Fiona Mactaggart MP) down to Professor Mai's estimate of 6%. He pointed out that the inherently covert nature of sex trafficking makes it virtually impossible to obtain accurate data. He suggested that the estimates made by Professor Mai and Project Acumen were likely to be on the low side, because many people would not come forward to participate in research due to fear or intimidation, and because both studies excluded English women forced into selling sex and women trafficked from Africa, one of the most underground and potentially widespread sources of trafficking victims.³⁸

33 Oral evidence taken on [1 March 2016](#), Q11

34 Oral evidence taken on [1 March 2016](#), Q142

35 Salvation Army ([PRO0050](#))

36 Professor Nicola Mai ([PRO0138](#))

37 ACPO, *Setting the Record: The trafficking of migrant women in the England and Wales off-street prostitution sector*, August 2010. [ACPO was the Association of Chief Police Officers, which was replaced in 2015 by the National Police Chiefs' Council.]

38 [Silence on Violence](#), a report by Andrew Boff AM, March 2012

33. Statistics from the UK National Referral Mechanism for 2015 showed that there were 1,080 potential victims of trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation, up from 830 in 2014, an increase of 30%.³⁹ Statistics for the period 2009–13, before the new provisions in the Modern Slavery Act 2015 were implemented in July 2015, indicate that there were 111 cases brought and 63 convictions for offences related to trafficking for sexual exploitation under the Sexual Offences Act 2003.⁴⁰ Meaningful data on prosecutions under the Modern Slavery Act specifically relating to the offence of trafficking for sexual exploitation offences are not yet available, although the CPS reported in February 2016 that the number of defendants being taken to court each month for trafficking offences overall is “higher than ever before” with 183 people being taken to court between April and December 2015 compared to 187 in the whole year 2014–15. In 2014 the CPS identified 1,139 victims of trafficking for sexual exploitation; in the period April–June 2015, 248 sexual exploitation victims were identified.⁴¹

34. ACC Nikki Holland said that trafficking was very difficult to prove because the women were very vulnerable, would say that they were not victims, and were reluctant to talk to the police. She added “that is why we want to work more with the sex workers themselves, to give them confidence to report to the police, to give us intelligence and give us those opportunities to be more proactive and not reliant on their evidence.”⁴² In terms of the involvement of organised crime and gangs in prostitution, ACC Holland said that more of it seemed to be coming from overseas, but intelligence was sparse and a lot more information was needed to fully understand the nature and the scale of the problem and its links to serious and organised crime.⁴³

35. When we asked about the enforcement of provisions in the Policing and Crime Act 2009, which criminalise the payment for sexual services of a prostitute subject to force, ACC Nikki Holland told us that the legislation had rarely been used. She said it was difficult both to obtain the necessary evidence from victims to confirm that the exchange had taken place, and to get evidence in any other way.⁴⁴ She later confirmed in writing that there had been no convictions in the past year for these offences under the Act (Section 53A).⁴⁵

36. We were dismayed to discover the poor quality of information available about the extent and nature of prostitution in England and Wales. Without a proper evidence base, the Government cannot make informed decisions about the effectiveness of current legislation and policies, and cannot target funding and support interventions effectively.

37. Despite the obvious difficulties involved in finding out about an essentially covert industry, there appears to be an extensive range of useful research material available. However, findings from these studies are sometimes misinterpreted and applied too

39 See NCA, [National Referral Mechanism Statistics—End of Year Summary 2015, published February 2016 and End of Year Summary 2014](#), published January 2015. The National Referral Mechanism is operated by the National Crime Agency and is a framework for identifying victims of human trafficking or modern slavery and ensuring they receive the appropriate support.

40 Parliamentary written question [221880](#), answered on 23 January 2015

41 CPS, News release [26 February 2016](#), “Trafficking prosecutions on the rise as British prosecutors sign up to new anti-trafficking commitments”

42 Oral evidence taken on [1 March 2016](#), Q133

43 Oral evidence taken on [1 March 2016](#), Q141

44 Oral evidence taken on [1 March 2016](#), Q90

45 ACC Nikki Holland ([PRO0243](#))

broadly across a diverse industry. In addition, factors such as greater internet use and increased migration have dramatically changed the way that the sex industry operates, and so some previously valid research will now be out of date.

38. We recommend that the Home Office commissions an in-depth research study to help develop a better understanding of the current extent and nature of prostitution in England and Wales, and to draw together and put in context any recent relevant research. The research study should be conducted within the next 12-month period and there should be a report to Parliament by June 2017. It should aim to publish and explain reliable statistics which can be used to inform future legislative and policy decisions, and to discard any unreliable data.

39. Trafficking for the purposes of sexual exploitation is an important and separate issue from prostitution between consenting adults. It is too early to make a proper assessment of the impact of the Modern Slavery Act 2015 on levels of trafficking, although the Crown Prosecution Service identified 248 victims of trafficking for sexual exploitation in the first three months of the Act's operation, compared to 1,139 in 2014. It is clear that it is very difficult to identify victims, to gain their confidence and to put together the necessary evidence for successful prosecutions. However, it is essential that information on trafficking for sexual exploitation is collected and published regularly. The Government should also consider how changes to legislation and policies relating to the sex industry might better support the prevention of trafficking for sexual exploitation.

3 Government priorities and policies on prostitution

40. The Home Office stated that the Government is committed to ensuring that legislation enables the police and others to tackle exploitation, and support those who wish to exit prostitution.⁴⁶ The NPCC's National Policing Sex Work Guidance is adopted by all police forces in England and Wales, and the NPCC advises that this guidance "should be used by chief officers to shape police responses to ensure that the general public experience consistent levels of service".⁴⁷

Policing and enforcement

Prosecution of sex workers

41. The APPG on Prostitution and the Global Sex Trade pointed out that policing and enforcement of prostitution is unevenly prioritised and resourced throughout the country, and that the lack of a centralised political strategy had resulted in disparate local enforcement:

Within London alone, one borough may be diverting women into exiting services whilst another is focused on clean ups and crack downs. Policing of prostitution is inconsistent because enforcement of legislation is resource intensive. It rarely becomes a policing priority unless an extremely serious case is reported.⁴⁸

42. End Demand, and other campaigners for the introduction of a sex buyer law, believe that enforcement is unfairly targeted at female sex workers rather than male sex buyers, saying that:

In 2013/14 there were more charges for loitering and soliciting ('selling sex') than for the crimes of pimping, brothel-keeping, kerb-crawling and advertising prostitution combined. Similarly, in 2014/15 there were 456 prosecutions for loitering and soliciting, yet only 227 prosecutions for kerb-crawling.⁴⁹

43. Sex Worker Open University agreed that there was clear evidence that sex workers were currently more likely to be penalised than buyers, and went on to explain that a variety of measures was used against sex workers:

[...] most criminal sanctions suffered by sex workers are not reflected in centralised prosecution statistics. They instead take the form of cautions, anti-social behaviour orders (ASBOs), arrests and indeed simple harassment by the police. To take one example, Ilford police station arrested no fewer than 100 sex workers, handed out 236 cautions and issued 6 ASBOs in the year

46 Home Office written evidence ([PRO0236](#)),

47 The Guidance is available on the [Authorised Professional Practice](#) section of the College of Policing website

48 APPG on Prostitution and the Global Sex Trade ([PRO0158](#))

49 End Demand ([PRO0070](#))

to September 2013. It is of particular concern that a so-called “prostitute’s caution” can be issued essentially at police discretion, without the supposed offender even making an admission of guilt.⁵⁰

Police protection of sex workers

44. National Ugly Mugs (NUM), a scheme to help protect people involved in prostitution from violent and abusive individuals, explained that sex workers were often victims of crime, but rarely reported these incidents to the police:

Almost 2000 reports have been made to NUM since July 2012, but only 25% of the victims were willing to formally report to the police. Of these, 283 were rapes, 86 were attempted rapes and 150 were other sexual assaults. Our 2015 survey with Leeds University found that 49% of sex workers are “worried” or “very worried” about their safety and 47% have been targeted by offenders. Yet 49% were either “unconfident” or “very unconfident” that police would take their reports seriously.⁵¹

45. The National Policing Sex Work Guidance stresses the protection duty which the police have towards sex workers, and comments that “simple enforcement does not produce sustainable outcomes and can actually increase the vulnerability of sex workers to violent attack”. ACC Nikki Holland explained that, whilst each Chief Constable is autonomous in terms of their operational delivery, operational guidance is that crimes against prostitutes should be treated as a hate crime, and prostitutes treated as a vulnerable group in society.⁵² She added that the enforcement approach taken in Merseyside, where crimes against sex workers were treated as hate crimes, had been very successful: it had led to high levels of intelligence coming to the police from sex workers in relation to dangerous offenders, and was now promoted in operational guidance.⁵³ Other witnesses praised the Merseyside approach as an effective way of providing protection for sex workers.⁵⁴

Street prostitution

46. The National Policing Sex Work Guidance acknowledges the difficult role that police forces have in balancing local priorities and notes that the presence of visible street prostitution can have a negative impact on a community’s confidence and satisfaction. It states that street prostitution can be associated with a range of problems including harassment of women by men looking for prostitutes; littering from discarded condoms and syringes; noise; impingement on residents’ use of public spaces; fear of associated crimes such as drug dealing, robbery and coercion; fear of lower house prices and restricted business opportunities; fears for the welfare of sex workers and that children may witness soliciting and sexual activities; and traffic related issues.

47. Both Nottinghamshire and Suffolk Police provided evidence about initiatives they have implemented to reduce street prostitution which are based on intensive enforcement of kerb crawling legislation, and the provision of services to help sex workers exit

50 Sex Worker Open University ([PRO0147](#))

51 National Ugly Mugs ([PRO0082](#))

52 Oral evidence taken on [1 March 2016](#), Q83

53 Oral evidence taken on [1 March 2016](#), Q103

54 Rape Crisis Surrey and Sussex ([PRO0178](#)); and oral evidence taken on [1 March 2016](#), Q68

prostitution. Neil Radford, Police Sergeant, Nottinghamshire Police, said that since the scheme was implemented in Nottingham in 2004, 1,590 men had been caught attempting to purchase a sexual act on the streets of Nottingham, 945 of whom had attended a one-day rehabilitation programme to address their use of prostitution; only 33 were known to have reoffended. Care packages to help women exit prostitution had reduced the number of street sex workers from 150 to just under 40.⁵⁵ Suffolk adopted a similar strategy to Nottingham. Alan Caton OBE, formerly a police officer with Suffolk Constabulary, said that within two years of the implementation of a zero tolerance strategy in 2007, prostitution had effectively disappeared from the streets of Ipswich and over 80 women had been helped to move away from prostitution by the multi-agency team.⁵⁶

48. Leeds recently piloted a different approach, where street prostitution was permitted within a defined area of the city, at specified times. The area was policed for the reassurance of sex workers and to enforce other laws, including those relating to violent crime, robbery and public disorder. The rules of the managed approach were agreed between key stakeholder groups including the sex workers, the residents and local businesses. West Yorkshire Police said that the pilot had achieved a number of its stated objectives, but the tragic murder of a sex worker inside the designated area in December 2015 had led to significant negative media coverage and an upsurge in opposition to the scheme. The Leeds Strategic Prostitution Group is now re-evaluating its strategy.⁵⁷

Brothel-keeping legislation

49. According to CPS guidance, premises only become a brothel when more than one woman uses premises for the purposes of prostitution, either simultaneously or one at a time. Although the guidance highlights the aim of penalising those who organise prostitutes and make a living from their earnings, a number of witnesses said that fear of prosecution stopped them from working together, and so exposed them to the risks to their safety in working alone. Eva Klambauer, an academic at King's College London, conducting research on the impact of legislation on the lives of sex workers, said that sex workers sometimes received ambivalent advice from the police:

Several women I interviewed have explicitly mentioned that when they called the police to report a violent attack, the police advised them to work together with other sex workers. They 'turn a blind eye on it', because their main concern is 'to keep the girls safe'. Despite the occasional assurance of police officers not to target sex workers themselves, most independent sex workers I interviewed are afraid of working together as they are unwilling to risk being charged with brothel-keeping.⁵⁸

50. The English Collective of Prostitutes noted that the CPS policy for brothel-keeping prosecutions:

[...] says nothing about coercion or safety, but only about how long women have been working and how much money has been made. So no distinction

55 Neil Radford, Nottinghamshire Police ([PRO0116](#))

56 Alan Caton OBE ([PRO0007](#))

57 West Yorkshire Police ([PRO0228](#))

58 Eva Klambauer, King's College London ([PRO0214](#))

is made between small collectives where women work cooperatively, keep their own money and set their own hours and establishments run by coercive bosses.⁵⁹

The International Union of Sex Workers said that in some cases sex workers were convicted under brothel-keeping provisions, even when there was no evidence of exploitation or third party involvement:

Women connected with the IUSW have received criminal convictions as a result of sending two dozen text messages—over a period of two years—ensuring another woman would be present for her shift at a brothel and for working from a holiday flat, rented for a fortnight, with another woman on the basis that both were running the brothel created by the other’s presence.⁶⁰

51. The NPCC Sex Work Guidance advises police forces to focus on how to make those involved in sex work safe and to conduct risk assessments before enforcing brothel-keeping legislation: “brothel closures and raids create a mistrust of all external agencies including outreach services. It is difficult to rebuild trust and ultimately reduces the amount of intelligence submitted to the police and puts sex workers at risk”. The Home Office acknowledged that sex workers sometimes choose to work together for their safety, and said that the CPS currently had discretion in terms of deciding when to prosecute for brothel-keeping offences.⁶¹

Support to exit prostitution

Support needs

52. Some organisations which already provide services to support women working in prostitution, or those who wish to exit, described the vulnerability of their clients, the barriers they face and their wide support needs. For example, Nia, a charity providing accommodation, advice and exit support, explained that women involved in prostitution faced a range of barriers, including money, housing, a legacy of childhood violence, coercion, mental and physical health issues, problematic substance abuse, having entered prostitution at an early age, lack of qualifications and having multiple criminal records.⁶²

53. Commonweal Housing, which runs the Chrysalis Project to provide accommodation and support in Lambeth to women who have been exploited in street prostitution, says that one of the main barriers to exiting is the involvement of women in a lifestyle and network of contacts that can keep them trapped in prostitution. Other problems include a lack of national guidance and strategy for supporting women to exit prostitution; lack of funding; and a lack of awareness among mainstream organisations such as the NHS, meaning that practitioners are not confident about raising prostitution with women and may not know the steps to take if a woman did wish to exit.⁶³

59 English Collective of Prostitutes ([PRO0172](#))

60 International Union of Sex Workers ([PRO0151](#))

61 Home Office written evidence ([PRO0236](#)),

62 Nia ([PRO0204](#))

63 Commonweal Housing ([PRO0035](#))

54. The Prison Reform Trust told us that women’s involvement in prostitution is recognised to be a driver to the offending of many of the women who are sent to prison, and that support to exit prostitution is one of the National Offender Management Service’s Nine Pathways to reduce reoffending. It recommended the development of local multi-agency partnerships that enable women to exit prostitution, and a coherent funding strategy for women’s support services.⁶⁴ Some witnesses pointed out that programmes to support exit from prostitution were only likely to be effective for those sex workers who had made their own decision to leave prostitution, rather than if it was made a requirement for them to do so.⁶⁵

Criminal records

55. Many witnesses said that the key barrier for women trying to exit prostitution was having a criminal record. For example, Sex Worker Open University said that criminalisation of sex workers made it more difficult for them to transition into work in the formal economy, and that having prostitution offences on their criminal record could bar them from various jobs.⁶⁶ Kairos Women Working Together, a support project for women in prostitution, stated that criminal sanctions for women in prostitution “can serve to trap and entrench them in a cycle of exploitation, offending and limited life chances” and recommended the removal of criminal sanctions for those selling sex.⁶⁷

56. Vera Baird QC, Police and Crime Commissioner for Northumbria Police, recommended that:

- Consideration be given to legislating for the deletion of previous convictions/cautions for prostitution from the record as these are a significant barrier to exiting prostitution or gaining employment.
- Changing policy or legislation to prevent the use of use of Anti-Social Behaviour Orders (ASBOs) to manage women’s involvement in prostitution, since ASBOs often mean that women are excluded from support services which are often located within ‘red light’ districts.
- Further funding for outreach workers to support sex workers, including health and social care and support to exit.⁶⁸

57. We commend the police service for its focus on protecting sex workers, and for seeking to gain their assistance in targeting those who exploit them or commit other crimes. However, there is considerable variation in the policing approach to prostitution throughout the country, not all of which is consistent with national policy, as the National Police Chiefs’ Council lead for prostitution and sex work, Assistant Chief Constable Nikki Holland, indicated to us. Moreover, police forces often have to choose whether to enforce offences for soliciting or brothel-keeping in order to reduce negative impacts on the local community, or to focus on building up the confidence and cooperation of sex workers in order to protect them from crime,

64 Prison Reform Trust ([PRO0208](#))

65 Laura Lee ([PRO0107](#))

66 Sex Worker Open University ([PRO0147](#))

67 Kairos Women Working Together ([PRO0110](#))

68 Vera Baird, Northumbria PCC ([PRO0227](#))

and to help identify and convict criminals. While it is right that communities choose their policing priorities, it is not right that the police have to choose which laws to enforce and which to overlook.

58. We are very concerned that, despite there being no clear evidence that it reduces demand for prostitution, the current practice of treating soliciting as an offence is having an adverse impact, in terms of preventing sex workers from seeking help to exit prostitution, exposing them to abuse and violence, and damaging other areas of their lives, such as access to health and welfare benefits. Having a criminal record for prostitution-related offences also often creates an unsurmountable barrier for sex workers wishing to exit prostitution and to move into regular work. It is wrong that sex workers, who are predominantly women, should be criminalised, and therefore stigmatised and penalised, in this way. The current law on brothel-keeping also means that some sex workers are often too afraid of prosecution to work together at the same premises and as a result often compromise their safety and put themselves at considerable risk by working alone.

59. We therefore recommend that, at the earliest opportunity, the Home Office change existing legislation so that soliciting is no longer an offence and so that brothel-keeping provisions allow sex workers to share premises, without losing the ability to prosecute those who use brothels to control or exploit sex workers. There must be zero tolerance of the organised criminal exploitation of sex workers. The Home Office should also legislate for the deletion of previous convictions and cautions for prostitution from the record of sex workers by amending the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act. In our final report, we will consider the purposes of the law on prostitution and what the research shows about how those purposes can best be fulfilled, including whether a different approach should be taken to on-street and off-street prostitution.

4 The sex buyer law

60. A large proportion of the evidence we received was from individuals and organisations arguing in favour of the introduction of a sex buyer law in England and Wales. This would represent a significant policy change in that it would criminalise prostitution, by making the purchase of sexual services illegal. In this Chapter we review the evidence we received about this legislative model.

The sex buyer law in other countries

Sweden

61. In 1999, Sweden became the first country to introduce a sex buyer law, making it illegal to pay for sex, but not to be a prostitute (the client commits a crime, but not the prostitute). The legislative proposal stated that it was shameful and unacceptable that, in a gender equal society, men could obtain casual sexual relations with women in return for payment. It pointed out that prostitution resulted in serious harm to both individuals and to society. It was expected that criminalization would have a deterrent effect on prospective buyers of sex, would help to reduce the extent of organized prostitution activities, and would have an inhibiting effect on the prevalence of prostitution in Sweden.⁶⁹

62. Several years after implementation, the Swedish Government commissioned an evaluation of the legislation, which was delivered to the Swedish Minister of Justice in 2010. The report pointed out that evaluation had been difficult because prostitution and trafficking are complex issues which often occur in secret, and empirical surveys were often limited in scope, and so any data should be treated with caution. However, it went on to conclude that:

- Since the introduction of the ban on the purchase of sexual services, street prostitution in Sweden had reduced by half, and there was nothing to indicate that the ban had diverted street prostitution to the Internet;
- There were no in-depth studies available about the extent of indoor prostitution in which contact is made at restaurants, hotels, sex clubs or massage parlours (and so no data or evidence to suggest that these had increased). It therefore concluded that “as far as we can see” prostitution had not increased in Sweden since the implementation of the ban, therefore it was reasonable to assume that criminalization had helped to combat prostitution.⁷⁰

63. Another evaluation commissioned by the Swedish Government was published in December 2013. This report also pointed to the methodological challenges of researching the “hidden population” of prostitution, and was also cautious about the reliability of any data, but concluded that:

69 Selected extracts from the Swedish government report on [The Ban against the Purchase of Sexual Services: an evaluation 1999–2008](#), SOU 2010:49, The Swedish Institute, 2010

70 Selected extracts from the Swedish government report on [The Ban against the Purchase of Sexual Services: an evaluation 1999–2008](#), SOU 2010:49, The Swedish Institute, 2010

- Over the last decade, the proportion of individuals in Sweden who had bought and sold sexual services had remained relatively constant over time (approximately 7.5% of Swedish men between the ages of 18 and 65 which was a low figure compared to other Nordic and European countries);
- Public support for the Swedish Act prohibiting the Purchase of Sexual Services had remained consistently strong;
- Street prostitution had been cut by more than half since the estimate made in 1995, which was 650 women at the time;
- The number of escort advertisements had increased markedly from 304 to 6,965. However, this growth could have resulted from an increased use of advertising rather than an increased number of individual sex workers.
- Most sex workers were not Swedish: 77% of escort services advertisements were for foreign sex workers and most street prostitution involved foreigners.⁷¹

Norway

64. Norway criminalised the buying of sex in 2009. Under the Norwegian Penal Code, it is illegal to buy sex or to promote the prostitution of another person. The Government's stated rationale was to prevent and reduce human trafficking, but it also sought to change public attitudes to prostitution; to reduce the size of the sex industry by reducing demand; and to reduce sexual exploitation of men and women in prostitution. The Norwegian Ministry of Justice and Public Security commissioned an evaluation of the impact of the law in 2013. This evaluation concluded that the ban had made Norway a less attractive country for prostitution-based trafficking than would have been the case if the law had not been adopted, and that there was no evidence that the ban had led to an increase in violence against prostitutes.⁷²

65. Amnesty International published its own evaluation of the impact of the Norwegian sex buyer law in 2016. It found evidence that sex workers were subject to high level policing in order to “disrupt, destabilise and increase the pressure on those operating in the sex sector”, and that the legal provision banning the promotion of prostitution was being used to target sex workers. It gave the example of Operation Homeless, a period of increased enforcement of the law on promotion of sex work which ran between 2007 and 2011, and which led to the rapid eviction of many sex workers from their place of work and/or home. It found that many of the women interviewed were extremely reluctant to report crimes to the police and said that they would only do so as a last resort. It also pointed out that the Government's conclusions that levels of sex work and trafficking had reduced substantially as a result of the ban had been systematically questioned by academics on the basis that there are too many uncertainties in the data used to claim success.⁷³

71 Länstyrelsen Stockholm (Stockholm County Board of Administration) [Prostitution in Sweden 2014](#): The extent and development of prostitution in Sweden

72 [Evaluation of Norwegian legislation criminalising the buying of sexual services](#) (summary) commissioned by the Norwegian Ministry of Justice and Public Security in the autumn of 2013 (evaluation work conducted in the period between January to June 2014)

73 Amnesty International, [The human cost of 'crushing' the market: Criminalization of sex work in Norway](#), 2016

Northern Ireland

66. Northern Ireland has become the first part of the UK to pass legislation making the purchasing of sex illegal. Under section 15 of the Human Trafficking and Exploitation (Criminal Justice and Support for Victims) Act (Northern Ireland) 2015, it is an offence to obtain sexual services in exchange for payment, either by paying, or promising to pay, any person directly, or through a third party. The legislation came into effect on 1 June 2015. However, Sex Worker Open University pointed out that, under the terms of the legislation, street sex workers are newly subject to an offence under the Public Order Act 1994 if they are “acting in a manner which consists of loitering in a public place for the purpose of offering his or her services as a prostitute”, and so “a Bill that claims to ‘shift the burden’ has in fact increased the criminal burden on street-based sex workers”.⁷⁴

67. The Northern Ireland ban was opposed by the then Northern Ireland Justice Minister, David Ford, on the grounds that there was inadequate evidence on the impact of prohibiting the purchase of sex. Mr Ford also noted that the police did not support a ban as they believed it was unlikely to assist in reducing human trafficking.⁷⁵ Mr Ford told the Northern Irish Assembly:

I am concerned about the possibility of unwelcome implications: for example, an increase in problems for vulnerable women involved in prostitution; possible costs in justice terms to the flow of information to the police on trafficked victims; inability to enforce; an increase in crime; and a threat to the safety of those in prostitution.⁷⁶

France

68. France introduced a sex buyer law in April 2016, in a change from prostitution being legal in the country.⁷⁷ There has clearly not yet been time for any assessment of the impacts to be made but an evaluation would assist in any consideration of a change in legislation in England and Wales.

Potential benefits of a sex buyer law

Gender inequality and commercial exploitation

69. Those in favour of the introduction of a sex buyer law believe that prostitution is commercial exploitation, reinforces gender inequality and is a form of violence against women and girls.⁷⁸ The APPG on Prostitution and the Global Sex Trade’s 2014 report suggested that the current law normalises the acceptability of purchasing sexual services whilst stigmatising and penalising those providing sexual services. It added that the failure of legislation to reflect the gender imbalance within prostitution encourages assumptions that men have a right to purchase sexual services from women, and that the law is detrimental to other strategies that promote gender equality.⁷⁹ Some witnesses

74 Sex Worker Open University ([PRO0147](#))

75 Sex Worker Open University ([PRO0147](#))

76 Northern Ireland Assembly Official Report (Hansard) [24 September 2013](#)

77 The Guardian, [6 April 2016](#), France passes law making it illegal to pay for sex

78 See for example End Demand ([PRO0070](#)); and Nordic Model Information Network ([PRO0143](#))

79 APPG on Prostitution and the Global Sex Trade, [Shifting the Burden](#), March 2014; and APPG written evidence ([PRO0158](#))

argued that prostitution is inherently harmful, and that women should be protected by law from experiencing this harm. A number of witnesses provided information about their own experiences of prostitution to illustrate this view.⁸⁰

Reducing demand for prostitution and deterring traffickers

70. Witnesses supporting the introduction of a sex buyer law argue that it is an effective way of reducing demand for prostitution. For example, the Nordic Model Information Network, an international alliance of sex industry researchers, submitted written evidence signed by 48 academics from the UK and elsewhere which commented that, since the introduction of the sex buyer law in Sweden, there has been no lethal violence against women in prostitution there; street prostitution has reduced by half; and reducing the commercial sex market had decreased the contexts in which trafficking and other forms of violence flourished.⁸¹ Witnesses also argued that a sex buyer law would make England and Wales “a more hostile destination for traffickers”.⁸²

Arguments against a sex buyer law

Provisions already exist for criminal offences associated with the sex industry

71. Some witnesses argued that a sex buyer law is unnecessary, given the existing range of measures to tackle crime associated with prostitution. Support and Advice for Escorts (SAAFE), a peer support resource set up and run by sex workers, said that it was crucial to distinguish between consensual sexual activity between adults and genuine violence and exploitation, which the sex buyer law failed to do.⁸³ The Sussex Centre for Gender Studies said that criminalisation was likely to deter clients who had no criminal intent but was less likely to deter those with the intention of abusing sex workers.⁸⁴ Laura Lee explained:

Trafficking is already an offence, as is rape, kidnapping, sex with a minor or holding a person against their will. Targeting the purchasers of sex is not only erroneous in its aims of tackling trafficking but it is completely misguided in that it affects consenting adults, not those who would abuse and commit violence towards sex workers.⁸⁵

Demand is not reduced, just displaced

72. A number of academics argued that there is insufficient evidence that the sex buyer law actually reduces demand. Professor Philip Hubbard of the University of Kent said that evidence from Sweden suggested that criminalisation had simply changed the way sex was sold and that prohibition pushed prostitution underground where workers were more liable to exploitation.⁸⁶ The Sex Work Research Hub, which includes 32 academics, suggested that “too much attention is given to reductions in numbers of kerb crawlers

80 See, for example, Mia de Faoite ([PRO0160](#))

81 Nordic Model Information Network ([PRO0143](#))

82 End Demand ([PRO0070](#))

83 Amy Vergnès ([PRO0038](#))

84 Sussex Centre for Gender Studies ([PRO0125](#))

85 Laura Lee ([PRO0107](#))

86 Professor Philip Hubbard ([PRO0019](#))

and not enough to the purchase of sex in clubs, private flats and via webcams”.⁸⁷ The New Zealand Prostitutes Collective pointed to estimates made by the Swedish National Bureau of Investigation which indicated that, since the introduction of the Swedish sex buyer law, the number of Thai massage parlours in Stockholm had increased from 90 to 250.⁸⁸ Dr Belinda Brooks-Gordon argued that the concept of attempting to reduce demand in the sex industry by criminalising buyers was overly simplistic and not supported by evidence.⁸⁹

Harassment and other negative effects on sex workers

73. Dr Jay Levy conducted fieldwork and research on the Swedish sex buyer law for over three years. He described cases where sex workers had been targeted and harassed by the police and faced consequences including eviction, removal of their children, deportation (of migrant sex workers) and ‘outing’ as sex workers. In addition, he reported cases where sex workers had been denied access to health information, harm reduction interventions and condoms.⁹⁰

74. The International Union of Sex Workers said that “kerb crawling crackdowns”, such as those run by the Swedish police, merely changed the way in which prostitutes worked and increased the risks to which prostitutes were exposed including providing sex without a condom; working in more isolated locations; having less time to assess potential clients or agree prices, boundaries, safe sex and other limits; and finding themselves in situations they would have declined if they had more time to make a decision.⁹¹ Action for Trans Health, a UK network campaigning for trans healthcare rights, argued that trans sex workers were particularly vulnerable, and that the criminalization of clients would mean that sex workers would be forced to undertake unsafe practices to ensure that their client base was not arrested whilst they were working.⁹² However, representatives of the Mika Malmö organisation whom we met in Sweden told us that the sex buyer law empowered women at risk of exploitation, particularly those in street prostitution.

Health

75. The Sex Work Research Hub stated that criminal sanctions harmed sex workers’ broader health and access to care, and that data from multiple countries linked criminalisation of sex work with up to a five-fold increase in risk of HIV infection or other sexually transmitted infections.⁹³ Bridie Sweetman, a New Zealand-based lawyer and academic, argued that the Swedish model limited the ability of sex workers and their clients to access preventive health measures and health checks; was associated with a drop in willingness to carry and use condoms; and workers were more likely to engage in unprotected sex out of desperation for work and the inability to report a client for insisting on unprotected sex.⁹⁴

87 Sex Work Research Hub ([PRO0030](#))

88 New Zealand Prostitutes’ Collective ([PRO0223](#))

89 Dr Belinda Brooks-Gordon ([PRO0120](#))

90 Dr Jay Levy ([PRO0245](#))

91 International Union of Sex Workers ([PRO0151](#))

92 Action for Trans Health ([PRO0165](#))

93 Sex Work Research Hub ([PRO0030](#))

94 End Demand ([PRO0070](#))

Policing difficulties

76. Professor Peter Shirlow of the University of Liverpool was commissioned by the Northern Ireland Ministry of Justice to conduct research into prostitution, prior to the implementation of the Northern Ireland sex buyer law. He said that the Police Service Northern Ireland were of the view that a sex purchase ban would be difficult to enforce, that it would be resource intensive, and that it would be difficult to get adequate evidence against clients. He explained that in Sweden evidence was generally gained by employing covert tactics such as phone surveillance.⁹⁵ Feminists for Solidarity Sweden said that Swedish sex workers had become the targets for police seeking evidence against sex buyers, and that sex workers had experienced having their homes under constant police surveillance, many had been placed on a register for the government to keep track of their movements, and others had experienced violent and traumatic police raids.⁹⁶ ACC Nikki Holland said that it would be “really, really difficult to police the internet”. Although it would be possible for the police to go online and build up an intelligence profile of who was selling sex, “far more intrusive techniques” would be required to identify who was buying sex.⁹⁷

77. Other witnesses said that criminalising buyers would make it less likely that sex workers would provide information to police about criminal activities. The Sussex Centre for Gender Studies suggested that negative relations between sex workers and the authorities meant that they were less likely to reach out when they witnessed trafficking, abuse and exploitative working, which would make the job of the police more difficult.⁹⁸ Miss E, a sex worker, said that “no client is going to inform on a place where there is an underage girl as they would be terrified that they would get in trouble, so dangerous, exploitative establishments will continue to run”.⁹⁹

78. The sex buyer law is a fundamentally different legislative approach to prostitution from that which is currently in place in England and Wales. It is based on the premise that prostitution is morally wrong and should therefore be illegal, whereas at present the law makes no such moral judgement. We acknowledge that the intention of many supporters of the sex buyer law is to protect sex workers, especially women, from the harm, violence and exploitation that can occur in the sex industry, but we also note that the sex buyer law makes no attempt to discriminate between prostitution which occurs between two consenting adults, and that which involves exploitation. Much of the rhetoric also denies sex workers the opportunity to speak for themselves and to make their own choices.

79. We are not yet convinced that the sex buyer law would be effective in reducing demand or in improving the lives of sex workers, either in terms of the living conditions for those who continue to work in prostitution or the effectiveness of services to help them find new ways to earn a living. Evaluations of the impact of sex buyer laws are largely based on data about street prostitution, and therefore offer little insight into the large parts of the sex industry which take place in various indoor environments, and there are indications that the law can be misused to harass and victimise sex workers,

95 Professor Peter Shirlow (University of Liverpool), Dr Susann Huschke (University of the Witwatersrand), Dr Eilis Ward (NUI Galway) and Dr Dirk Schubotz (Queen’s University Belfast) ([PRO0212](#))

96 Feminists for Solidarity Sweden ([PRO0103](#))

97 Oral evidence taken on [1 March 2016](#), Q136

98 Sussex Centre for Gender Studies ([PRO0125](#))

99 Sex worker E ([PRO0036](#))

who are the very people whom the law is seeking to protect. We are not yet persuaded that the sex buyer law is effective in reducing, rather than simply displacing, demand for prostitution, or in helping the police to tackle the crime and exploitation associated with the sex industry.

80. The sex buyer law in Northern Ireland was only introduced in June 2015 and it was therefore too soon for its impact to be assessed in time to inform our inquiry. Similarly, France introduced a sex buyer law on 6 April 2016—only 10 weeks ago—and an evaluation of the impact of this change would provide very useful comparative information for assessing the likely implications in England and Wales. In our continuing inquiry, we will take further evidence on the impacts of the implementation of the sex buyer law in Northern Ireland and France so that a more robust evidence base can be established for assessing the potential impacts of introducing similar legislation in England and Wales, and our conclusions will be contained in our final report.

5 Other legislative models

Legalisation

81. Some countries, rather than either totally prohibiting or fully decriminalising prostitution, take the approach of establishing laws to control where, when and how prostitution is legally permissible.

Netherlands

82. Prostitution in the Netherlands was legalised in 2000, when the general ban on brothels and the ban on pimping were lifted, and more severe penalisation of undesirable forms of prostitution and the sexual abuse of minors was introduced. The sex industry is regulated under administrative and labour law, brothels are subject to a licensing scheme and adult consensual sex work is decriminalized. The administrative responsibility is devolved primarily to local government, and municipalities therefore play the most important role in determining local policy for prostitution. The six aims of the legislation were: the control and regulation of voluntary prostitution through a municipal licence policy; more robust tackling of exploitation of coerced prostitutes; protection of minors from sexual abuse; protection of prostitutes; clarifying the distinction between prostitution and criminal activities; and reducing the scale of prostitution by illegal foreign nationals.

83. In a 2007 evaluation of the impact of the legislation, the Dutch Ministry of Justice found that 95% of prostitutes remained 'self-employed', despite "a high degree of control" by brothels, which meant they did not have access to the social security system. Figures suggested that there had been no decline in the number of prostitutes controlled by pimps. The evaluation found that the emotional well-being of prostitutes had declined between 2001 and 2006 leading to an increased use of sedatives. Municipal inspection regimes were patchy, three-quarters of inspections were announced and the penalty for most brothels for breaching their licence conditions was a formal warning.¹⁰⁰ The Dutch government considered a raft of additional measures in 2012, including raising the minimum age from 18 to 21; mandatory registration of prostitutes in a national register; and punishing clients using illegal prostitution with a fine. Following criticism that the proposals did not go far enough the Senate failed to pass the new legislation.

84. Academic research published in 2014 by Jane Pitcher and Marjan Wijers, outlined the legislative and policy framework of the Netherlands, compared it to legislation and policy in England and Wales, and considered the impact of the different regimes on off-street sex workers. The authors argued that, although decriminalization of sex work is a precondition to secure the labour and human rights of sex workers, the involvement of sex workers in policy development and facilitation of different modes of working are necessary to improve their working conditions and autonomy.¹⁰¹

¹⁰⁰ [Prostitution in the Netherlands since the lifting of the brothel ban](#), 2007, Daalder

¹⁰¹ [Criminology and Criminal Justice](#), 2014 14, The impact of different regulatory models on the labour conditions, safety and welfare of indoor-based sex workers, Pitcher and Wijers

Germany

85. Prostitution in Germany is legal, and subject to regulation. In October 2001 the German Bundestag passed the Act Regulating the Legal Situation of Prostitutes (Prostitution Act), and the Act entered into force on 1 January 2002. The legislation legalised the relationship between prostitute and client meaning prostitutes could sue for payment. It also allowed for employment contracts between prostitutes and brothel owners, although the usual right of an employer to give instructions was restricted to protect the right of sexual self-determination, allowing prostitutes to access the social security system. The aim of the Act was to improve the legal and social situation of prostitutes, by restricting criminal liability to cases involving exploitation; enabling prostitutes to have proper employment contracts and thereby to reduce their dependency on pimps; and to improve the health and hygiene conditions for prostitutes at work. According to the Government's 2007 review of the impact of the legislation, the Prostitution Act was adopted following "a difficult political process" which "was very much influenced by different basic ethical attitudes", but ultimately took a view of prostitution as:

[...] an autonomous decision that is to be respected by the law but which is typically associated with considerable dangers and risks. These include, for example, the psychological and physical impacts on those working in prostitution. These risks and dangers are not associated with all forms of prostitution to the same extent, but are primarily determined by the conditions under which the prostitutes are working.

86. The Government's review concluded that the Prostitution Act had only to a limited degree achieved the goals intended by the legislator; that there had been little measurable improvement in working conditions of prostitutes and little improvement in the ability of prostitutes to exit the sex industry. However, it also concluded that some of the concerns had not proved to be justified, and that the Act had not made it more difficult to prosecute trafficking in human beings, forced prostitution and other prostitution-related violence. It concluded that "a more broad-based approach to regulating prostitution is required" focused on combating of trafficking, forced prostitution and prostitution involving minors, and that it should aim to protect prostitutes as much as possible from violence and exploitation "not least by making the clients of those forced into prostitution liable to punishment".¹⁰²

Decriminalisation

New Zealand

87. New Zealand decriminalised prostitution through the implementation of its Prostitution Reform Act (PRA) in June 2003. The purpose of the legislation was:

To decriminalise prostitution (while not endorsing or morally sanctioning prostitution or its use); create a framework to safeguard the human rights of sex workers and protect them from exploitation; promote the welfare and

¹⁰² Report by the German Federal Government on the Act Regulating the Legal Situation of Prostitutes (Prostitution Act), July 2007

occupational health and safety of sex workers; contribute to public health; and prohibit the use of prostitution of persons under 18 years of age. The PRA also established a certification regime for brothel operators.¹⁰³

88. The PRA was evaluated on behalf of the Government by a Law Review Committee in 2008. Its main conclusions included:

- The enactment of the PRA had had little impact on the number of people working in the sex industry (whilst acknowledging that accurately counting the number of sex workers was very difficult, and that caution must be applied to any estimated numbers).
- The PRA safeguarded the rights of those under 18 not to be used in sex work; the right of adults not to be forced to engage in sex work, including the right to refuse a particular client or sexual practice; and the right not to be subject to exploitative, degrading employment practices.
- It had had a marked effect in safeguarding the right of sex workers to refuse particular clients and practices, chiefly by empowering sex workers through removing the illegality of their work.
- There were still some managed sex workers who were being required by brothel operators to provide commercial sexual services against their will.
- Of those interviewees who felt able to comment, the majority felt sex workers were now more likely to report incidents of violence to the police (but not necessarily to carry the process through to court).
- Street work (comprising about 11% of the sex industry) was dangerous for sex workers and caused concern and upset to communities. Street based sex workers should be encouraged to either move to a safer, indoor setting, or to leave sex work altogether.

89. Tim Barnett, who as a New Zealand MP sponsored the Prostitution Reform Bill during its passage through Parliament, said that decriminalisation had led to a “massive improvement in police-sex worker cooperation” which had enabled murders of sex workers to be solved; corrupt police and law breaking brothel owners to be exposed and convicted; and traffickers of sex workers to be exposed.¹⁰⁴ The New Zealand Prostitutes Collective said that the New Zealand model protected the rights, health and welfare of sex workers, protected them from exploitation, and allowed them to report violence without fear of action by the police against them or their clients.¹⁰⁵

Denmark

90. Prostitution in Denmark was decriminalised in 1999, but certain related activities remain illegal. Both buying and selling sexual services are legal, but activities such as operating brothels and pimping are illegal, as is prostitution by non-residents. Sex workers are not entitled to the protection of employment laws or unemployment benefits, but they

¹⁰³ New Zealand Government, [Report of the Prostitution Law Review Committee on the Operation of the Prostitution Reform Act 2003](#), May 2008

¹⁰⁴ Tim Barnett ([PRO0127](#)); see also New Zealand Parliament Hansard, [25 June 2003](#)

¹⁰⁵ New Zealand Prostitutes' Collective ([PRO0223](#))

are still required to register for and pay tax, although they do not have to declare prostitution as being their occupation. Part of the rationale behind decriminalisation was that making it legal to sell sex would also make it easier to police.

91. During our visit to Copenhagen in April, we heard a range of views on the impact of decriminalisation and on the measures necessary to address the ongoing problems associated with sex work. Officials from the Ministry for Social and Interior Affairs emphasised that prostitution in Denmark is considered to be a social problem, not a criminal matter. Accurate information was very difficult to collect, but they believed that there were probably around 2,900 prostitutes in Denmark. There were no data available on whether decriminalisation had had an impact on the number of prostitutes, but demand appeared to be stable: surveys indicated that about 15% of the male population had bought sex at some time in their life. There was a great deal of competition between prostitutes and prices for sex had not increased in recent years. There was a significant proportion of street sex workers who had come from abroad and it was suspected that at least some of them would have been trafficked. Prostitution seemed to be moving off the street, either to massage parlours or internet-based. Decriminalisation had not ended the social stigma attached to prostitution and prostitutes still tend to hide what they do: it was described as “decriminalised but not legitimate”. Political views on the treatment of prostitution remain very polarised.

92. We visited the Livarehab centre which provides support for prostitutes, including for a range of psychological, drug addiction and other problems. We were told that there is a higher incidence of drug and addiction problems among prostitutes than the rest of the population and many have been subject to child abuse. Most of the women who visited the centre had experienced lack of opportunities, poor family life and difficult upbringing. Most of the centre’s “participants” were Danish, but they also included women from many other countries, transgender people from various countries and Swedish male prostitutes. A number of the women came from Greenland, a Danish dependency, where people suffer many social problems. Most prostitutes want to exit prostitution but feel they cannot, often for financial reasons. Livarehab also helps participants to learn other ways of earning money, such as jewellery-making and textiles. There was a range of views even amongst the centre’s staff about decriminalisation and whether a sex buyer law would be better and we were told that many people disagree with the existing law but differ about what changes should be made.

Potential benefits of full decriminalisation

Better sex worker cooperation with the authorities

93. Some witnesses suggested that decriminalisation was a necessary step to enable sex workers to engage with the authorities and to access support. One25, an organisation in Bristol supporting street sex-working women stated that if the law did not criminalise women for selling sex, then they would be more willing to turn to the police for help and support. It argued that while decriminalisation was not a perfect legal solution, it provided women involved in street sex work with “better protection against violence, increased chances of seeking justice against those who exploit or abuse them and increased support in establishing routes out of street sex work”.¹⁰⁶

106 One25 ([PRO0056](#))

Working together for safety

94. A number of witnesses said that the current legislation in England and Wales meant that women could not protect themselves by working together, without fear of arrest. The English Collective of Prostitutes stated that brothel-keeping provisions increased sex workers vulnerability to violence by forcing sex workers to work in isolation, which undermined their efforts to stay safe and deterred them from reporting attacks for fear of arrest.¹⁰⁷ Sex Worker Open University said that brothel-keeping provisions should be among those which are repealed, “because sex workers who choose to work together for safety or to share expenses are routinely prosecuted or threatened with prosecution under these provision”.¹⁰⁸ Professor Philip Hubbard said that decriminalisation, as implemented for example in New Zealand, had allowed workers to operate legitimately alone or in collectives and encouraged them to report instances of rape or violence.¹⁰⁹

Health

95. A number of health organisations, including the World Health Organisation, the Global Commission on HIV and the Law and the Royal College of Nurses, support the decriminalisation of sex work on the grounds that it facilitates the provision of health services.¹¹⁰ The National Aids Trust stated that criminalising sex work undermined HIV prevention and treatment for a high-risk population, reduced the ability of sex workers to negotiate condom use with clients, and increased the risk of HIV transmission. It referenced research which indicates that decriminalisation of sex work could have the greatest effect on the course of HIV epidemics, averting 33–46% of HIV infections worldwide in the next decade.¹¹¹

96. Scarlet Alliance, an Australian sex workers association, commented that in New South Wales, Australia, a decriminalisation model similar to that of New Zealand had delivered “exceptional public health outcomes, minimal opportunities for police corruption, increased transparency, improved safety for sex workers, and far higher levels of compliance than any other model of regulation”. It pointed to a range of research publications on the outcomes of decriminalisation in New South Wales.¹¹²

Arguments against full decriminalisation

Expansion of sex industry

97. Critics of decriminalisation argue that it leads to an increase in the size of the sex industry and increases sexual exploitation. For example, the Nordic Model Information Network states that countries where prostitution is legalised show expansion of the prostitution market.¹¹³ For reasons discussed earlier in this Report, estimates of the size of a sex industry are very difficult to make, and so there is little definitive evidence to

107 English Collective of Prostitutes ([PRO0172](#))

108 Sex Worker Open University ([PRO0147](#))

109 Professor Philip Hubbard ([PRO0019](#))

110 London Young Labour ([PRO0098](#))

111 National Aids Trust ([PRO0153](#))

112 Scarlet Alliance ([PRO0122](#))

113 Nordic Model Information Network ([PRO0143](#))

either support or rebut this view. However, the New Zealand Prostitutes Collective states that the number of sex workers in New Zealand has remained relatively stable since decriminalisation. The Sussex Centre for Gender Studies echoed this view.¹¹⁴

Continued exploitation of sex workers

98. The Nordic Model Australia Coalition is an organisation for survivors of commercial sexual exploitation in Australia, which supports the sex buyer model of legislation. It stated that issues have arisen as a result of decriminalisation in Australian states, particularly New South Wales, which has “entrenched exploitation of persons in the sex industry, perpetuated stigmatisation and prevented real justice, support and compensation for those who wish to exit the sex trade”. It also said that, since decriminalisation of the sex industry in New Zealand, at least four women involved in prostitution are known to have been murdered by sex buyers, whereas the only similar fatality in Sweden was a domestic violence incident.¹¹⁵

Increased trafficking

99. The Nordic Model Australia Coalition cited a research study carried out by the London School of Economics and the German Institute for Economic Research, in which “the researchers used a global sample of 116 countries and found that countries where prostitution was legal tend to experience a higher reported inflow of human trafficking than countries in which prostitution was prohibited”.¹¹⁶ However, it should be noted that the author of this paper also indicated a number of qualifications to the research findings. He pointed to “the clandestine nature of both the prostitution and trafficking markets” which make it difficult, and “perhaps impossible”, to find hard evidence to establish a direct relationship between legalisation and trafficking. The researchers noted that the finding about higher reported inflows was therefore “best regarded as being based on the most reliable existing data” but which needed to be “subjected to future scrutiny”. It was made clear that more research was “definitely warranted” and that coming to firmer conclusions would require “the collection of more reliable data”. It was also argued that although “the likely negative consequences of legalized prostitution on a country’s inflows of human trafficking might be seen to support those who argue in favour of banning prostitution” in order to reduce trafficking, this overlooked “the potential benefits that the legalization of prostitution might have on those employed in the industry”:

Working conditions could be substantially improved for prostitutes—at least those legally employed—if prostitution is legalized. Prohibiting prostitution also raises tricky “freedom of choice” issues concerning both the potential suppliers and clients of prostitution services.¹¹⁷

100. We received evidence that the model of decriminalisation implemented in New Zealand has worked successfully. Research suggests that it has resulted in a number of benefits, including a clear policy message, better conditions for sex workers, improved cooperation between sex workers and the police, and no detectable increase in the size of the sex industry or exploitation of sex workers.

114 New Zealand Prostitutes’ Collective ([PRO0223](#)); and Sussex Centre for Gender Studies ([PRO0125](#))

115 Nordic Model Information Network ([PRO0143](#))

116 Nordic Model Australia Coalition ([PRO0198](#))

117 World Development, Vol 41, 2013, [Does prostitution increase human trafficking?](#)

101. In our continuing inquiry, we will evaluate the extent to which elements of the New Zealand model might be implemented in England and Wales, the benefits which might derive from this, and the risks of negative consequences, such as an increase in associated crime or public nuisance, and our conclusions will be set out in our final report.

Our overall assessment of other legislative models

102. All of the different approaches which we have examined have some advantages but none appears to offer a complete solution and none would be directly transferable to England and Wales in its entirety because the context in which it would be applied will always be different, particularly in terms of employment law and the social welfare support available, as well as the wider criminal justice system and policing. However, there may well be elements from the different models which could usefully be applied in England and Wales. At this stage, we are not recommending the adoption of any one of the three broad models of a sex buyer law, decriminalisation or legalisation, because the evidence base for any of these changes is not yet established. We will set out our views on this in our final report. In the meantime, we have made clear our strong view that the first step of changing the existing legislation on soliciting, and on brothel-keeping as it relates to sex workers sharing premises, should be taken by the Government as a matter of urgency.

Conclusions and recommendations

Introduction

1. This is the first inquiry that the Home Affairs Committee has ever held into prostitution. It was originally intended to be a short inquiry. However, the evidence made clear to us that the views on the legal approach to prostitution are strongly held and highly polarised. The different viewpoints often arise from moral values and people's reactions are frequently emotive. The challenge of making a rational assessment of the advantages and disadvantages of the range of models is compounded by the lack of robust evidence, which arises at least in part from the covert nature of prostitution and the understandable unwillingness of those involved to identify themselves as sellers or buyers of sex. It should also be borne in mind that sex work is often linked to criminality, including trafficking, coercion, and illegal drugs. (Paragraph 10)
2. This report therefore represents our interim views on the different legislative approaches in other countries, the changes we believe need to be made now in England and Wales, and the options for legislative change which need further, closer and more thorough examination. We hope that this report will stimulate public debate about the important issues which prostitution raises. We intend to follow this interim report with a final report later in the Session. (Paragraph 11)

Prostitution in England and Wales

3. We support the Children Society's recommendation that the Government develop guidance for the police and local authorities on how young people identified as being victims of, or at risk of, child sexual exploitation prior to turning 18 should be dealt with after they reach 18. This should include guidance to the police on how to respond to young adults who are found to be offering sexual services in the community or online, especially if they have been formerly known as young people at risk of child sexual exploitation, to ensure that they receive the support they need. (Paragraph 22)
4. We were dismayed to discover the poor quality of information available about the extent and nature of prostitution in England and Wales. Without a proper evidence base, the Government cannot make informed decisions about the effectiveness of current legislation and policies, and cannot target funding and support interventions effectively. (Paragraph 36)
5. Despite the obvious difficulties involved in finding out about an essentially covert industry, there appears to be an extensive range of useful research material available. However, findings from these studies are sometimes misinterpreted and applied too broadly across a diverse industry. In addition, factors such as greater internet use and increased migration have dramatically changed the way that the sex industry operates, and so some previously valid research will now be out of date. (Paragraph 37)

6. We recommend that the Home Office commissions an in-depth research study to help develop a better understanding of the current extent and nature of prostitution in England and Wales, and to draw together and put in context any recent relevant research. The research study should be conducted within the next 12-month period and there should be a report to Parliament by June 2017. It should aim to publish and explain reliable statistics which can be used to inform future legislative and policy decisions, and to discard any unreliable data. (Paragraph 38)
7. Trafficking for the purposes of sexual exploitation is an important and separate issue from prostitution between consenting adults. It is too early to make a proper assessment of the impact of the Modern Slavery Act 2015 on levels of trafficking, although the Crown Prosecution Service identified 248 victims of trafficking for sexual exploitation in the first three months of the Act's operation, compared to 1,139 in 2014. It is clear that it is very difficult to identify victims, to gain their confidence and to put together the necessary evidence for successful prosecutions. However, it is essential that information on trafficking for sexual exploitation is collected and published regularly. The Government should also consider how changes to legislation and policies relating to the sex industry might better support the prevention of trafficking for sexual exploitation. (Paragraph 39)

Government priorities and policies on prostitution

8. We commend the police service for its focus on protecting sex workers, and for seeking to gain their assistance in targeting those who exploit them or commit other crimes. However, there is considerable variation in the policing approach to prostitution throughout the country, not all of which is consistent with national policy, as the National Police Chiefs' Council lead for prostitution and sex work, Assistant Chief Constable Nikki Holland, indicated to us. Moreover, police forces often have to choose whether to enforce offences for soliciting or brothel-keeping in order to reduce negative impacts on the local community, or to focus on building up the confidence and cooperation of sex workers in order to protect them from crime, and to help identify and convict criminals. While it is right that communities choose their policing priorities, it is not right that the police have to choose which laws to enforce and which to overlook. (Paragraph 57)
9. We are very concerned that, despite there being no clear evidence that it reduces demand for prostitution, the current practice of treating soliciting as an offence is having an adverse impact, in terms of preventing sex workers from seeking help to exit prostitution, exposing them to abuse and violence, and damaging other areas of their lives, such as access to health and welfare benefits. Having a criminal record for prostitution-related offences also often creates an unsurmountable barrier for sex workers wishing to exit prostitution and to move into regular work. It is wrong that sex workers, who are predominantly women, should be criminalised, and therefore stigmatised and penalised, in this way. The current law on brothel-keeping also means that some sex workers are often too afraid of prosecution to work together at the same premises and as a result often compromise their safety and put themselves at considerable risk by working alone. (Paragraph 58)

10. We therefore recommend that, at the earliest opportunity, the Home Office change existing legislation so that soliciting is no longer an offence and so that brothel-keeping provisions allow sex workers to share premises, without losing the ability to prosecute those who use brothels to control or exploit sex workers. There must be zero tolerance of the organised criminal exploitation of sex workers. The Home Office should also legislate for the deletion of previous convictions and cautions for prostitution from the record of sex workers by amending the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act. In our final report, we will consider the purposes of the law on prostitution and what the research shows about how those purposes can best be fulfilled, including whether a different approach should be taken to on-street and off-street prostitution. (Paragraph 59)

The sex buyer law

11. The sex buyer law is a fundamentally different legislative approach to prostitution from that which is currently in place in England and Wales. It is based on the premise that prostitution is morally wrong and should therefore be illegal, whereas at present the law makes no such moral judgement. We acknowledge that the intention of many supporters of the sex buyer law is to protect sex workers, especially women, from the harm, violence and exploitation that can occur in the sex industry, but we also note that the sex buyer law makes no attempt to discriminate between prostitution which occurs between two consenting adults, and that which involves exploitation. Much of the rhetoric also denies sex workers the opportunity to speak for themselves and to make their own choices. (Paragraph 78)
12. We are not yet convinced that the sex buyer law would be effective in reducing demand or in improving the lives of sex workers, either in terms of the living conditions for those who continue to work in prostitution or the effectiveness of services to help them find new ways to earn a living. Evaluations of the impact of sex buyer laws are largely based on data about street prostitution, and therefore offer little insight into the large parts of the sex industry which take place in various indoor environments, and there are indications that the law can be misused to harass and victimise sex workers, who are the very people whom the law is seeking to protect. We are not yet persuaded that the sex buyer law is effective in reducing, rather than simply displacing, demand for prostitution, or in helping the police to tackle the crime and exploitation associated with the sex industry. (Paragraph 79)
13. The sex buyer law in Northern Ireland was only introduced in June 2015 and it was therefore too soon for its impact to be assessed in time to inform our inquiry. Similarly, France introduced a sex buyer law on 6 April 2016—only 10 weeks ago—and an evaluation of the impact of this change would provide very useful comparative information for assessing the likely implications in England and Wales. In our continuing inquiry, we will take further evidence on the impacts of the implementation of the sex buyer law in Northern Ireland and France so that a more robust evidence base can be established for assessing the potential impacts of introducing similar legislation in England and Wales, and our conclusions will be contained in our final report. (Paragraph 80)

Other legislative models

14. We received evidence that the model of decriminalisation implemented in New Zealand has worked successfully. Research suggests that it has resulted in a number of benefits, including a clear policy message, better conditions for sex workers, improved cooperation between sex workers and the police, and no detectable increase in the size of the sex industry or exploitation of sex workers. (Paragraph 100)
15. In our continuing inquiry, we will evaluate the extent to which elements of the New Zealand model might be implemented in England and Wales, the benefits which might derive from this, and the risks of negative consequences, such as an increase in associated crime or public nuisance, and our conclusions will be set out in our final report. (Paragraph 101)
16. All of the different approaches which we have examined have some advantages but none appears to offer a complete solution and none would be directly transferable to England and Wales in its entirety because the context in which it would be applied will always be different, particularly in terms of employment law and the social welfare support available, as well as the wider criminal justice system and policing. However, there may well be elements from the different models which could usefully be applied in England and Wales. At this stage, we are not recommending the adoption of any one of the three broad models of a sex buyer law, decriminalisation or legalisation, because the evidence base for any of these changes is not yet established. We will set out our views on this in our final report. In the meantime, we have made clear our strong view that the first step of changing the existing legislation on soliciting, and on brothel-keeping as it relates to sex workers sharing premises, should be taken by the Government as a matter of urgency. (Paragraph 102)

Appendix 1: Home Office overview of existing legislation in England and Wales

[Taken from Home Office written evidence ([PRO0236](#)), Annex A]

In summary, the acts of buying and selling sex are not in themselves illegal in England and Wales. However, many activities that can be associated with prostitution are offences. This includes activities linked to exploitation, such as controlling prostitution, or managing a brothel, and activities that can present a public nuisance, such as buying or selling sex in public.

The relevant legislation is spread over several Acts, with the most recent significant changes made via the Policing and Crime Act 2009 and the Sexual Offences Act 2003, which introduced offences related to the exploitation of those involved in prostitution. Most recently, the Serious Crime Act 2015 replaced references to ‘child prostitution’ in statute with ‘sexual exploitation of a child’.

Prostitution policy and legislation are devolved matters, and it is open to both Scotland and Northern Ireland to legislate separately. Most distinctly, as of 1st June 2015, it is illegal to pay for sex in Northern Ireland.

All prostitution legislation is gender-neutral.

Controlling and trafficking

The offences principally directed against those who exploit others through prostitution include controlling prostitution for gain and causing or inciting prostitution for gain both of which have a maximum penalty of seven years (s53 and s52, Sexual Offences Act 2003).

It is illegal to keep a brothel, i.e. a venue where more than one prostitute works (not necessarily at the same time). The main offence is keeping a brothel used for prostitution, the maximum penalty for which is 7 years (s33 Sexual Offences Act 1956, with the maximum penalty amended by Sexual Offences Act 2003). It is also illegal for a landlord to let premises to be used as a brothel, or a tenant to permit premises to be used as a brothel or for prostitution, maximum penalty of six months (s33–36, Sexual Offences Act 1956)

The 2003 Act introduced the offences of trafficking into, within and out of the UK for sexual exploitation (s57–59). These offences cover both adults and children and carry penalties of up to 14 years.

The Policing and Crime Act 2009 amended the 2003 Act to introduce closure orders. These allow a police constable to apply to a court for an order closing premises associated with specified prostitution or pornography related offences for up to three months (which can be extended by up to three months if the court deems it necessary. However the total period for which the order has effect must not exceed six months).

Children

It is always illegal to buy sex if the seller is under 18. The 2003 Act introduced an offence of paying for the sexual services of a child (s47), for which the maximum penalty is life when the child is under 13; otherwise 14 years when the child is under 16, or seven years if the child is 16 or 17.

The 2003 Act also introduced offences specifically in respect of the exploitation of children and young people through prostitution or pornography. These were amended by the Serious Crime Act 2015 to remove references to ‘child prostitution’ and ‘child pornography’. The offences of causing or inciting sexual exploitation of a child, controlling a child in relation to sexual exploitation, and arranging or facilitating sexual exploitation of a child (s48–50) carry a maximum penalty of 14 years.

The Serious Crime Act 2015 also amended s1 of the Street Offences Act 1959—loitering or soliciting for the purposes of prostitution (see below regarding street-based prostitution), so that it applies only to adults, i.e. children involved in prostitution are not criminalised.

Paying for sex

Soliciting a person in a street or public place for the purpose of obtaining sexual services from a prostitute is illegal under the Sexual Offences Act 2003 (as amended by the Policing and Crime Act 2009). This replaced the old offences of ‘kerb crawling’ and ‘persistent soliciting’ (Sexual Offences Act 1985) and includes a person soliciting from a vehicle in a street or public place. The maximum penalty is a level 3 fine.

The 2003 Act was amended by the Policing and Crime Act 2009 to introduce an offence which made it illegal to pay for the sexual services of a prostitute subjected to force, threats (whether or not relating to violence) or any other form of coercion or any form of deception of a kind likely to induce or encourage the prostitute to provide those services. It is a strict liability offence, i.e. it is not a valid defence for a defendant to argue that he did not know the prostitute had been subject to force etc. The maximum penalty is a level 3 fine.

Men and women involved in street-based prostitution

The Street Offences Act 1959 (as amended by the Sexual Offences Act 2003, the Policing and Crime Act 2009, and the Serious Crime Act 2015) criminalises loitering or soliciting for purposes of prostitution. It is an offence for an adult to persistently solicit or loiter in a street or public place for the purposes of prostitution. Conduct is persistent if it takes place at least twice in three months. The maximum penalty is a level 3 fine or an Engagement and Support Order.

In terms of exiting and support, the Policing and Crime Act 2009 introduced Engagement and Support Orders. These orders provide the courts with an alternative to fining those convicted of loitering or soliciting, and instead requires attendance at meetings with a court appointed supervisor. This helps provide support and access to services that might otherwise be out of reach, including medical care, housing and drug/alcohol dependency programmes.

Advertising prostitution

The Criminal Justice and Police Act 2001 made placing of advertisement relating to prostitution an offence. This only applies to public telephones (although the Secretary of State may, by order, apply the offence to any specified public structure). Maximum penalty is six months imprisonment and/or an unlimited fine.

Formal Minutes

Wednesday 15 June 2016

Members present:

Keith Vaz, in the Chair

Mr Ranil Jayawardena

Mr David Winnick

Stuart C McDonald

Draft Report (*Prostitution*), proposed by the Chair, brought up and read.

Ordered, That the draft Report be read a second time, paragraph by paragraph.

Paragraphs 1 to 56 read and agreed to.

Paragraph 57 read as follows:

“We commend the police service for its focus on protecting sex workers, and for seeking to gain their assistance in targeting those who exploit them or commit other crimes. However, there is considerable variation in the policing approach to prostitution throughout the country, not all of which is consistent with national policy, as the National Police Chiefs’ Council lead for prostitution and sex work, Assistant Chief Constable Nikki Holland, indicated to us. Moreover, police forces often have to choose whether to enforce offences for soliciting or brothel-keeping in order to reduce negative impacts on the local community, or to focus on building up the confidence and cooperation of sex workers in order to protect them from crime, and to help identify and convict criminals. While it is right that communities choose their policing priorities, it is not right that the police have to choose which laws to enforce and which to overlook.”

Amendment proposed to leave out from “often” in line 7 to the end of the paragraph, and to insert:

“make choices between whether to enforce offences for soliciting or brothel-keeping in order to reduce negative impacts on the local community, or to focus on building up the confidence and cooperation of sex workers in order to protect them from crime, and to help identify and convict criminals. It is right that communities should choose their policing priorities but the police should not choose which laws to enforce and which to overlook”.—(*Mr Ranil Jayawardena.*)

Question proposed, That the Amendment be made.

The Committee divided.

Ayes, 1

Mr Ranil Jayawardena

Noes, 2

Stuart C. McDonald

Mr David Winnick

Amendment disagreed to.

Paragraph 57 agreed to.

Paragraphs 58 and 59 read.

Amendment proposed, to leave out paragraphs 58 and 59.—(*Mr Ranil Jayawardena.*)

Question proposed, That the Amendment be made.

The Committee divided.

Ayes, 1

Mr Ranil Jayawardena

Noes, 2

Stuart C. McDonald

Mr David Winnick

Amendment disagreed to.

Paragraphs 58 and 59 agreed to.

Paragraphs 60 to 101 read and agreed to.

Paragraph 102 read as follows:

“All of the different approaches which we have examined have some advantages but none appears to offer a complete solution and none would be directly transferable to England and Wales in its entirety because the context in which it would be applied will always be different, particularly in terms of employment law and the social welfare support available, as well as the wider criminal justice system and policing. However, there may well be elements from the different models which could usefully be applied in England and Wales. At this stage, we are not recommending the adoption of any one of the three broad models of a sex buyer law, decriminalisation or legalisation, because the evidence base for any of these changes is not yet established. We will set out our views on this in our final report. In the meantime, we have made clear our strong view that the first step of changing the existing legislation on soliciting, and on brothel-keeping as it relates to sex workers sharing premises, should be taken by the Government as a matter of urgency.”

Amendment proposed to leave out from “report” in line 10 to the end of the paragraph.—(*Mr Ranil Jayawardena.*)

Question proposed, That the Amendment be made.

The Committee divided.

Ayes, 1

Mr Ranil Jayawardena

Noes, 2

Stuart C. McDonald

Mr David Winnick

Amendment disagreed to.

Paragraph 102 agreed to.

A Paper was appended to the Report as Appendix 1.

Resolved, That the Report be the Third Report of the Committee to the House.

Ordered, That the Chair make the Report to the House.

Ordered, That embargoed copies of the Report be made available, in accordance with the provisions of Standing Order No. 134.

[Adjourned till Wednesday 29 June at 2.00 pm.]

Witnesses

The following witnesses gave evidence. Transcripts can be viewed on the [inquiry publications page](#) of the Committee's website.

Tuesday 1 March 2016

Question number

Kat Banyard, Co-director, UK Feminista and spokesperson for the End Demand campaign, **Mia de Faoite**, and **Laura Lee**

[Q1-71](#)

Alan Caton OBE, Independent Chair, Islington and Bedfordshire Safeguarding Children Boards, and **Nikki Holland**, Assistant Chief Constable, National Police Chiefs' Council Lead for Prostitution and Sex Work

[Q72-143](#)

Tuesday 10 May 2016

Paris Lees, journalist, presenter and equality campaigner, and **Dr Brooke Magnanti**, research scientist, blogger and writer

[Q144-193](#)

Published written evidence

The following written evidence was received and can be viewed on the [inquiry publications page](#) of the Committee's website.

PRO numbers are generated by the evidence processing system and so may not be complete.

- 1 Action for Trans Health ([PRO0165](#))
- 2 Agenda ([PRO0130](#))
- 3 Alba Tomasula y Garcia ([PRO0124](#))
- 4 Amanda Sebestyen ([PRO0005](#))
- 5 Amy Vergnés ([PRO0038](#))
- 6 Andrew Boff ([PRO0239](#))
- 7 APPG on Prostitution and the Global Sex Trade ([PRO0158](#))
- 8 Assistant Chief Constable Nikki Holland, National Police Chiefs' Council Lead for Prostitution and Sex Work ([PRO0243](#))
- 9 Backlash UK ([PRO0079](#))
- 10 Becky E Frankham & Robb M Montgomery ([PRO0094](#))
- 11 Belfast Feminist Network ([PRO0180](#))
- 12 Beyond the Streets ([PRO0177](#))
- 13 Bridie Sweetman Sweetman ([PRO0069](#))
- 14 Cambridge Centre for Applied Research in Human Trafficking ([PRO0179](#))
- 15 CARE (Christian Action Research and Education) ([PRO0078](#))
- 16 Carla Martinez ([PRO0140](#))
- 17 Centre for Gender and Violence Research, University of Bristol ([PRO0053](#))
- 18 Charlotte Rose ([PRO0222](#))
- 19 Child and Woman Abuse Studies Unit ([PRO0166](#))
- 20 Chris Atchison ([PRO0066](#))
- 21 CJ ([PRO0157](#))
- 22 Claire de Than ([PRO0202](#))
- 23 Clarissa Duckworth ([PRO0139](#))
- 24 Commission on the Sex Buyer Law ([PRO0071](#))
- 25 Commonweal Housing ([PRO0035](#))
- 26 Community Safety Glasgow ([PRO0233](#))
- 27 Crystal ([PRO0073](#))
- 28 Daniel Harvey ([PRO0193](#))
- 29 Darryl Perry ([PRO0105](#))
- 30 David Clarke ([PRO0167](#))
- 31 Deirdre O'Reilly ([PRO0028](#))
- 32 Dr Belinda Brooks-Gordon ([PRO0120](#))
- 33 Dr Brooke Magnanti ([PRO0092](#))

- 34 Dr Jay Ginn ([PRO0002](#))
- 35 Dr Jay Levy ([PRO0245](#))
- 36 Dr Jessica Baily ([PRO0183](#))
- 37 Dr Jessica Elliott ([PRO0218](#))
- 38 Dr Jonathan Mendel and Dr Kiril Sharapov ([PRO0159](#))
- 39 Dr Julia Long ([PRO0088](#))
- 40 Dr Kenneth Harpur-Lewis ([PRO0032](#))
- 41 Dr Mary Laing ([PRO0126](#))
- 42 Dr Olivia Smith ([PRO0090](#))
- 43 Dr Robert Shields ([PRO0006](#))
- 44 Dr Ruth McStay ([PRO0027](#))
- 45 Dr Ruth Van Dyke ([PRO0089](#))
- 46 Dr Sarah Kingston & Terry Thomas Emeritus Professor ([PRO0148](#))
- 47 Dr Selby Whittingham ([PRO0048](#))
- 48 East London Strippers Collective ([PRO0188](#))
- 49 Elana Cunningham ([PRO0137](#))
- 50 Elim Pentecostal Churches ([PRO0168](#))
- 51 Ella Parsons ([PRO0241](#))
- 52 End Demand ([PRO0070](#))
- 53 End Demand supplementary ([PRO0249](#))
- 54 End Violence Against Women Coalition ([PRO0156](#))
- 55 English Collective of Prostitutes ([PRO0172](#))
- 56 Equality Now ([PRO0189](#))
- 57 Esther Allen ([PRO0059](#))
- 58 European Women's Lobby ([PRO0075](#))
- 59 Eva Klambauer ([PRO0214](#))
- 60 Feminists For Solidarity Sweden ([PRO0103](#))
- 61 Frankie Mullin ([PRO0144](#))
- 62 Gaye Dalton ([PRO0018](#))
- 63 Gender and Law class on LLB Law degree at University of the West of England ([PRO0155](#))
- 64 Giles Beaumont ([PRO0049](#))
- 65 Giorgio Giandomenici ([PRO0055](#))
- 66 Groundlevel Churches UK ([PRO0046](#))
- 67 Hannah Swanson ([PRO0101](#))
- 68 Home Office ([PRO0236](#))
- 69 Institute of Our Lady of Mercy ([PRO0181](#))
- 70 International Policing and Justice Institute ([PRO0163](#))

- 71 JBS-R Associates ([PRO0065](#))
- 72 Jill Thomas ([PRO0201](#))
- 73 Joel Hellewell ([PRO0114](#))
- 74 Joseph Giacomazzi ([PRO0109](#))
- 75 KairosWWT ([PRO0110](#))
- 76 Kate Wright ([PRO0016](#))
- 77 Kitty Rocca ([PRO0135](#))
- 78 Labour Representation Committee National Committee ([PRO0141](#))
- 79 Laura Lee ([PRO0107](#))
- 80 Leonard Fahrni ([PRO0235](#))
- 81 Lila Rose ([PRO0121](#))
- 82 London Borough of Hounslow ([PRO0190](#))
- 83 London Young Labour ([PRO0098](#))
- 84 Lucy O'Connor ([PRO0100](#))
- 85 Manchester Feminist Network ([PRO0145](#))
- 86 Mark Newbold ([PRO0022](#))
- 87 Marnie Evans ([PRO0134](#))
- 88 Martin Seager ([PRO0021](#))
- 89 Matthew Stocks ([PRO0174](#))
- 90 Max Gentle ([PRO0216](#))
- 91 Member of the European Parliament Mary Honeyball ([PRO0162](#))
- 92 Miss E ([PRO0036](#))
- 93 Miss Raven Bowen ([PRO0043](#))
- 94 Mr Alan Caton ([PRO0007](#))
- 95 Mr Andrew Weller ([PRO0026](#))
- 96 Mr Charles Tilbury ([PRO0047](#))
- 97 Mr Chris Roper ([PRO0123](#))
- 98 Mr Graham Marsden ([PRO0040](#))
- 99 Mr Hugh Palmer ([PRO0052](#))
- 100 Mr M ([PRO0240](#))
- 101 Mr Rob Tyson ([PRO0072](#))
- 102 Mr Robert Macrae ([PRO0187](#))
- 103 Mr Simon Penhaligon ([PRO0039](#))
- 104 Mr Steve Elrond ([PRO0113](#))
- 105 Mr Steve(n) Moxon ([PRO0129](#))
- 106 Mr Thomas French ([PRO0085](#))
- 107 Mrs Chris Thorogood ([PRO0009](#))
- 108 Mrs Emma Boucher ([PRO0221](#))

- 109 Mrs Susie Marriott ([PRO0011](#))
- 110 Ms Anna Fisher ([PRO0074](#))
- 111 Ms Charlotte Cane ([PRO0104](#))
- 112 Ms Diane Martin CBE ([PRO0154](#))
- 113 Ms Esther Owen ([PRO0173](#))
- 114 Ms Harriet Wistrich ([PRO0225](#))
- 115 Ms Helen Saxby ([PRO0149](#))
- 116 Ms Karen Pollock ([PRO0051](#))
- 117 Ms Mia de Faoite ([PRO0160](#))
- 118 Ms N ([PRO0083](#))
- 119 Ms Pandora Blake ([PRO0111](#))
- 120 Ms Ruth Appleton ([PRO0014](#))
- 121 Ms Stephanie Davies-Arai ([PRO0077](#))
- 122 NAT (National AIDS Trust) ([PRO0153](#))
- 123 National Alliance of Women's Organisations ([PRO0197](#))
- 124 National Board of Catholic Women ([PRO0191](#))
- 125 National Ugly Mugs ([PRO0082](#))
- 126 National Ugly Mugs supplementary ([PRO0244](#))
- 127 National Union of Students ([PRO0150](#))
- 128 New Zealand Prostitutes' Collective ([PRO0223](#))
- 129 Nia ([PRO0204](#))
- 130 Nick Batley ([PRO0087](#))
- 131 Nicole Petrovia ([PRO0133](#))
- 132 Nina de Paula Hanika ([PRO0102](#))
- 133 Nordic Model Australia Coalition ([PRO0198](#))
- 134 Nordic Model Information Network ([PRO0143](#))
- 135 Nottinghamshire Police ([PRO0116](#))
- 136 One25 ([PRO0056](#))
- 137 Outsiders Trust ([PRO0023](#))
- 138 P Frizelle ([PRO0012](#))
- 139 Parentpower ([PRO0031](#))
- 140 Payday ([PRO0230](#))
- 141 Penny Lane ([PRO0131](#))
- 142 Permanently Visible Productions ([PRO0029](#))
- 143 Prison Reform Trust ([PRO0208](#))
- 144 Professor Jackie Jones ([PRO0196](#))
- 145 Professor Nicola Mai ([PRO0138](#))

- 146 Professor Peter Shirlow, Dr Susann Huschke, Dr Eilis Ward and Dr Dirk Schubotz ([PRO0212](#))
- 147 Professor Philip Hubbard ([PRO0019](#))
- 148 Professor Ramsay Burt ([PRO0099](#))
- 149 Professor Tsachi Keren-Paz, Keele University, School of Law ([PRO0086](#))
- 150 Rachel Stuart ([PRO0067](#))
- 151 Rape Crisis South London/Rape and Sexual Abuse Support Centre ([PRO0119](#))
- 152 Rape Crisis Surrey and Sussex ([PRO0178](#))
- 153 Resist Porn Culture ([PRO0041](#))
- 154 Rev Alan Donald ([PRO0033](#))
- 155 Ricardo London ([PRO0117](#))
- 156 Rooms of our Own ([PRO0115](#))
- 157 Ruhama ([PRO0020](#))
- 158 Rural Rainbow ([PRO0076](#))
- 159 Sarah Solemani ([PRO0170](#))
- 160 SAY Women ([PRO0210](#))
- 161 Scarlet Alliance ([PRO0122](#))
- 162 SCOT-PEP ([PRO0176](#))
- 163 Scottish Soroptimists ([PRO0034](#))
- 164 Sex Work Research hub ([PRO0030](#))
- 165 Sex Worker Open University ([PRO0147](#))
- 166 Sex Workers Alliance Ireland ([PRO0203](#))
- 167 Sofia Helgadóttir ([PRO0185](#))
- 168 Sophia Manet ([PRO0093](#))
- 169 SPACE International ([PRO0128](#))
- 170 St Mungo's ([PRO0171](#))
- 171 Susan Smith ([PRO0042](#))
- 172 Susie Johnson ([PRO0142](#))
- 173 Sussex Centre for Gender Studies ([PRO0125](#))
- 174 The Children's Society ([PRO0237](#))
- 175 The Fawcett Society ([PRO0213](#))
- 176 The Howard League for Penal Reform ([PRO0057](#))
- 177 The Immigrant Council of Ireland ([PRO0192](#))
- 178 The International Union of Sex Workers ([PRO0151](#))
- 179 The Josephine Butler Society ([PRO0013](#))
- 180 The Judith Trust ([PRO0219](#))
- 181 The Men's Development Network ([PRO0200](#))
- 182 The Salvation Army ([PRO0050](#))

- 183 The Women's Equality Party ([PRO0095](#))
- 184 Tim Barnett ([PRO0127](#))
- 185 Trust Women's Project ([PRO0207](#))
- 186 UK Programme Action Committee of Soroptimist International Great Britain and Ireland ([PRO0084](#))
- 187 UNISON ([PRO0045](#))
- 188 Vera Baird QC, Police and Crime Commissioner for Northumbria ([PRO0227](#))
- 189 Wales Assembly of Women ([PRO0195](#))
- 190 Welsh Women's Aid ([PRO0081](#))
- 191 West Yorkshire Police ([PRO0228](#))
- 192 Women Against Rape ([PRO0132](#))
- 193 Women Analysing Policy on Women ([PRO0194](#))
- 194 Women at the Well ([PRO0169](#))
- 195 Women's Association (University of Birmingham) ([PRO0182](#))
- 196 Women's Support Project ([PRO0232](#))

List of Reports from the Committee during the current Parliament

All publications from the Committee are available on the [publications page](#) of the Committee's website.

The reference number of the Government's response to each Report is printed in brackets after the HC printing number.

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Second Report	The work of the Immigration Directorates (Q4 2015)	HC 22
First Special Report	The work of the Immigration Directorates (Q3 2015): Government Response to the Committee's Sixth Report of Session 2015–16	HC 213

Session 2015–16

First Report	Psychoactive substances	HC 361 (HC 755)
Second Report	The work of the Immigration Directorates (Q2 2015)	HC 512 (HC 693)
Third Report	Police investigations and the role of the Crown Prosecution Service	HC 534
Fourth Report	Reform of the Police Funding Formula	HC 476
Fifth Report	Immigration: skill shortages	HC 429 (HC 857)
Sixth Report	The work of the Immigration Directorates (Q3 2015)	HC 772 (HC 213)
Seventh Report	Police and Crime Commissioners: here to stay	HC 844
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Second Special Report	Out-of-court Disposals: Government Response to the Committee's Fourteenth Report of Session 2014–15	HC 379
Third Special Report	The work of the Immigration Directorates (Q2 2015): Government Response to the Committee's Second Report of Session 2015–16	HC 693
Fourth Special Report	Psychoactive substances: Government Response to the Committee's First Report of Session 2015–16	HC 755
Fifth Special Report	Immigration: skill shortages: Government Response to the Committee's Fifth Report of Session 2015–16	HC 857