

University of Bristol research on prostitution and sex work 2018-2019

Response ID	Completion date
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1	Please confirm your consent to take part in this survey.	Yes, I consent to take part in this survey.
2	As stated above, all the information collected within this survey will be held securely and confidentially. Your name or identifying details will not be identified alongside your survey comments in any publications. Please confirm that we can use the information that you provide to inform our research.	Yes, I confirm that you can use the information I provide as outlined above.
3	The only exception to confidentiality is if you tell us that a child under 18 is at risk of serious harm. In this case we may need to inform someone.	Yes, I understand this limit to confidentiality.

4	It is common practice in publicly-funded research to publish a list of survey respondents. However, we respect your right to choose whether you wish your name to be published in this way. Please can you indicate whether or not you wish your name to be included in a publicly available list of survey respondents.	Yes, please publish my name as part of a list of survey respondents
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5	Your name	English Collective of Prostitutes
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6	Name of organisation (if applicable)	English Collective of Prostitutes
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7	What type of organisation do you represent?	Sex working/involved in prostitution (current or former)
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8	Your contact email. (By providing this email, we understand that you are willing to be contacted for further information or consultation regarding this research).	ecp@prostitutescollective.net
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8.a	If we wanted to clarify something in your response or seek your advice, could we contact you on this email?	Yes
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9	Is there any particular study, report or other publication that you think it is important that we pay attention to for this project?	Attention should be paid to reports, studies and other publications from current sex workers and sex workers' organisations as these will provide essential first-hand experience and evidence about the nature and extent of the sex industry in the UK.
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to for this project:
Please give details.

For your information, the New Zealand government commissioned a similar study into "The Nature and Extent of the Sex Industry in New Zealand" which provided baseline information on the sex industry prior to the introduction of the Prostitution Reform Act in 2003, to assist [the Prostitution Law Review Committee] in evaluating "the extent to which the Act is meeting its purpose." [http://www.nzpc.org.nz/pdfs/PLRC,-\(2005\),-Nature-and-extent-of-the-sex-industry-in-New-Zealand.pdf](http://www.nzpc.org.nz/pdfs/PLRC,-(2005),-Nature-and-extent-of-the-sex-industry-in-New-Zealand.pdf)

One essential element of this study was "an interview with members of the New Zealand Prostitutes Collective (NZPC)" in order to give "a fuller picture of the nature of the sex industry in New Zealand". It's important that our experience as the longest standing, most active sex worker organisation in the UK, be acknowledged and that we are interviewed for this research.

There are a number of publications we would recommend you pay attention to:

- The cross-party Home Affairs Committee report 'Home Affairs Committee Prostitution Third Report of Session 2016–17' as it is the most prestigious parliamentary body to have scrutinised the prostitution laws in recent times:

<https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201617/cmselect/cmhaff/26/26.pdf>

- A report 'Decriminalisation of Prostitution: the Evidence' by the English Collective of Prostitutes from the 2015 parliamentary Symposium which brought together sex workers from over 10 countries, academics and other experts and provides a definitive source of statistical evidence for parliamentarians on decriminalisation: <http://prostitutescollective.net/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/Online-Symposium-Report.pdf>

- Two new pieces of community research from the English Collective of Prostitutes:

a) 'What's a Nice Girl Like You Doing in a Job Like This: Comparing sex work with other jobs traditionally done by women'. This research compares the wages, hours and working conditions between sex work and other traditional "women's" jobs and in doing so dismantles the myth that sex work is uniquely exploitative.

b) 'Proceed with Caution: the impact of criminal records and cautions on sex workers.' Sex workers speak about the impact of criminalisation on many aspects of their lives and present themselves not as victims but as protagonists in their own struggle to overcome criminalisation or survive despite it.

- The English Collective of Prostitutes' quarterly bulletins documenting arrests, raids, prosecutions and convictions of sex workers and others for prostitution offences in the UK: <http://prostitutescollective.net/bulletins/> The bulletins highlight a number of trends such as: police crackdowns in particular areas; the widespread use of civil orders including S222 injunctions; the rise in the level of prostitution which correlates to the rise in poverty.

- Fact sheets by the English Collective of Prostitutes which counter misinformation such as: 'Facts About Sex Work'

	<p>http://prostitutescollective.net/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/Facts-About-Sex-Work.pdf and 'Fact and Fiction: Debunking Common Myths about Prostitution' http://prostitutescollective.net/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/Fact-and-Fiction.pdf</p> <p>Unreliable, biased reports from the All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on Prostitution and the Global Sex Trade should be disregarded. Its first report: 'Shifting the Burden' was criticised by academics for its "biased framing of the issue; misrepresentation of views contrary to those of the report's authors; selective presentation of evidence and facts; amalgamation of sex work with other crimes and social problems." But what condemns this report most thoroughly is that despite requests from now Shadow Chancellor John McDonnell to Gavin Shukar MP, the chair at the time, the APPG never released the data on which it based its findings.</p> <p>Its second report 'Behind Closed Doors' was criticised by scholars for its "flawed methodology and ideological bias" as well as its "self-fulfilling research questions and findings." The ECP's response to these reports are here: http://prostitutescollective.net/2014/03/objections-from-the-ecp-to-the-methodology-content-of-the-report-from-the-appg-on-prostitution/ and here: http://prostitutescollective.net/2018/05/press-release-another-sham-inquiry-from-the-self-appointed-partisan-all-party-parliamentary-group-on-prostitution/</p>
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10	<p>Are there particular 'types' of prostitution and sex work that you feel need to be included in this project? Please give details.</p>	<p>Women in our network work (in one or many of these ways at the same and different times): on the streets, in premises in their own home or a rented flat on their own or with other women (classed as a brothel), as escorts going out to meet clients at their home or hotel, in one location or touring round the country, in walk-up flats, as BDSM (including dominatrices and pro subs), as web cammers, as porn performers, as dancers/strippers.</p> <p>Sex workers who are most often mischaracterised or ignored are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • street workers (stereotyped as drug users), • mothers (ignored and made invisible) • migrant sex workers and women of colour working in the sex industry (subject to racist stereotyping as victims of trafficking). <p>We speak more of this below.</p>
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11	<p>Are there particular individuals or groups that you believe we need to speak to? Please give details.</p>	<p>The English Collective of Prostitutes: As the longest standing, most active organisation of sex workers and former sex workers working both on the street and in premises in the UK, it is crucial that the researchers conducting this study speak to us. We have an active network of over 100 women and a wider network of over a 1000 that contact us regularly or we are in touch with. We are multi-racial, migrant and non-migrant, working in cities, towns and rural areas.</p> <p>Our starting point has always been women working on the street, often women of colour, tans, and/or immigrant women who are most up against the police and the prostitution laws. We are working class women who are working in prostitution to make ends meet and feed our families.</p> <p>Some of our work includes: winning the first ever successful private prosecution for rape in England and Wales in 1995 which put a serial rapist behind bars; forming the Safety First Coalition in the aftermath of the tragic murder of five women in Ipswich in 2006 which includes prestigious organisations like the Royal College of Nursing and Women Against Rape; winning against loitering and soliciting charges and Anti-Social Behaviour Orders; opposing gentrification and the closure of sex workers' flats in Soho, London, because it is safer to work inside; winning against Brexit inspired deportation orders.</p> <p>Sex Worker Advocacy and Resistance Network; SCOT-PEP, Bristol Sex Workers Collective.</p> <p>Rose Alliance (Sweden); STRASS (France), Sex Workers Alliance Ireland. Sex worker organisations which have first-hand experience of laws to criminalise clients:</p> <p>New Zealand Prostitutes Collective. The sex worker organisation based in New Zealand where sex work has been decriminalised since 2003.</p> <p>Black Women's Rape Action Project and Women Against Rape. Both organisations are based on self-help and provide support, legal information and advocacy. They campaign for justice and protection for women and girls, including asylum seekers, who have suffered sexual, domestic and/or racist violence.</p>
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12	Does your organisation collect numerical data on prostitution and sex work which you think would be useful for this project? If so, please give details and ensure your email is entered in Section 8 above.	Yes
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13	Do you have an experience that you think would help us to understand better what prostitution and sex work looks like today in England and Wales? If so, please give details.	<p>Yes.</p> <p>WHO WE ARE:</p> <p>The English Collective of Prostitutes (ECP) is the most active and longest-standing sex worker organisation in the UK. We are women who work or have worked in the sex industry - both on the street and indoors. We have a core group based in London and a national network of over a thousand sex workers who we are regularly in touch with and/or who contact us especially when facing violence and/or arrest, raids or prosecution. Founded in 1975, we fight against being treated like criminals and campaign for decriminalisation and safety for sex workers. We've worked with thousands of women defending themselves against criminal charges and trying to get justice against rape and other violence.</p> <p>From the start we also campaigned for money, benefits, housing and other resources to go directly to women so that any of us can leave sex work if and when we want. We also campaign with others for pay equity, and against low wages and exploitative conditions in the other jobs traditionally done by women as in our experience many women go into prostitution because these other jobs don't pay enough to live on, especially for mothers with children to support.</p> <p>A) We can give evidence about the EXTENT OF THE SEX INDUSTRY</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There has been a significant increase in the numbers of women going into prostitution or returning to prostitution in the last five years at least. How we measure that is by an approximate six-fold increase in calls to our helpline and women contacting us by email, social media and in other ways. The reasons given are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Benefit sanctions which leave women suddenly with no income at all and for women without qualifications or capital, prostitution (in this case on the street) or begging is one of the few options to get money for the next meal or rent payment. • Reduction in income generally due to benefit cuts, rising costs of housing, partner losing their job, being on a zero-hour contract and not
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being given enough hours to earn enough to cover costs, low and lowering wages in other jobs including professional jobs like nursing and teaching, introduction of student fees and then rise in fees and abolition of Education Maintenance Grant, destitution level National Asylum Support payments and a hostile environment which means that asylum claims are routinely refused without the evidence being heard and then women are cut off from all financial support.

The rise in poverty among women is confirmed by official statistics which found 86% of austerity cuts target women. In addition, four million children are living in poverty, 1.25 million people are officially destitute, and asylum-seekers are barely surviving on £36 a week. Benefit sanctions and universal credit have driven thousands to prostitution. A survey in Doncaster in 2014 showed a 60% increase in street prostitution. Charity workers in the area were quoted as saying that "women are being forced to sell their bodies for sex for just £5 because of benefit sanctions" and that they had seen women who were "literally starving".

B) We can provide evidence about the NATURE OF THE SEX INDUSTRY

For us the nature of the sex industry includes who sex workers are and the conditions in which we work – where, how often, how much we get paid, how many clients we see, whether we face abuse and/or violence, whether we can complain and get redress, whether we denied rights that others are entitled to

Approximately 95% of the sex workers in our network are women (cis and trans). This is a higher proportion of women than official statistics but that is probably because we are, and are known as, a women's organisations. Quantitative research on the size and nature of the sex industry in the UK found a total of approximately 72,800 sex workers in the UK, 85- 92% of whom are women. The percentage of male sex workers varied from 5-8%; transgender sex workers from 1-6%. No research distinguished between trans women, trans men and non-binary sex workers or asked those who identified as female or male whether they identified as the gender they were assigned at birth.

Approximately 80% of sex workers in our network are mothers. Again, possibly a higher proportion than other statistics, the most reliable of which report a proportion of 70%.

Approximately 1/3 of the sex workers in our network are migrant, most notably from countries such as Albania, Brazil, China, Hungary, Nigeria, Romania, Uganda.

Around a quarter of the women in our network have a criminal record for prostitution and half of us have been raided, arrested or threatened with arrest by the police.

The average age of entry into the sex industry of women in our network is approximately 23 years old. The average age of entry into sex work is unknown. Statistics that claim the average age of entry into prostitution is 13 years old are not true. The statistic comes from information provided by groups that work with “abused and exploited children” (Atlantic, 5 September 2014). The statistic that claims that 75% of women in prostitution in the UK started being paid for sex acts before they were 18 years old is misleading. It comes from small samples of street-based women (e.g. Benson & Matthews, 1995) and is not representative of the sex industry as a whole. In one often cited study, the participants were chosen because they were all under 18 when they entered prostitution (Melrose, 2002).

Sex workers in our network were earning at least twice the living wage per hour and the higher wage is the primary reason women gave for going into sex work. This is confirmed by official statistics which compared the average wage for a hairdresser (£7.43 per hour) a nurse (£17.58 per hour) waitress (£6.95 an hour) with a middle-income off-street sex worker in London (£70 per hour and female migrant street sex worker outside of London (£30 per hour).

THE MAIN ISSUES WE ALL FACE AS SEX WORKERS ARE:

- 1) The unjust prostitution laws which mean we can't work with others for safety, neither on the streets nor in premises. Police crackdowns and raids don't stop us from working (we can't afford to), they mean we have to move to other areas we are less familiar with. When our premises are closed down our power in relation to bosses is reduced, we are scrabbling for work elsewhere and likely to end up in more exploitative conditions.
- 2) Criminal convictions make it harder to leave prostitution and find other jobs. Many women in our group want to do jobs that involve children such as childcare but can't apply for those jobs as they require enhanced police checks. We have only known of one woman to get a job as a dinner lady with a conviction for prostitution.
- 3) High levels of rape and other violence and lack of protection from violence by the police and courts. It is much safer to work indoors with others, but this is illegal. A survey of online sex workers found that 49% were unconfident that police would take reports of violence seriously: <http://prostitutescollective.net/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/Facts-About-Sex-Work.pdf> There is also evidence to indicate that violence from the police is a significant problem. <http://prostitutescollective.net/2016/10/raids-arrests-prosecutions-closures-sex-workers-people-associate-work-around-uk-april-september-2016/>

But criminalisation increases violence. Attacks on sex workers doubled in Scotland after kerb-crawling laws were introduced which criminalised clients. A 2014 survey found that where arrests of sex

workers and clients were high, only 5% of sex workers who were victims of a crime reported it. This compared to 46% of victims in areas where police adopted a harm reduction approach. 63% of sex workers in Sweden said a law which criminalised clients created more prejudice. <http://prostitutescollective.net/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/Facts-About-Sex-Work.pdf>

Frequently women come to the ECP complaining that the police refused to investigate an attack they reported and instead threatened them with prosecution for prostitution offences. Recent examples from sex workers in our network of assaults, stalking and robberies, and the police responses include:

A sex worker was nearly strangled in an attack by a client. She went to a police station to report the assault, providing various details that could identify him and handed over the clothes she had been wearing during the attack. The police woman on the reception proceeded to ask multiple times what type of work the woman did instead of taking down information about the assault. Police then refused to photograph her injuries, take her clothing into evidence or gather DNA. The woman was later told by an officer that they 'don't really investigate these matters when you have intentionally put yourself at risk'.

Another sex worker reported harassment from a client to the police, including a barrage of abusive texts. She gave the police various details that could identify the stalker. She was told that the harassment she was receiving was an 'occupational hazard' and that because the client had given the woman a negative review online, this was this the real reason she was complaining about him. The man wasn't even cautioned and after several weeks the woman was told that the case had been closed. After the case had been closed the police got in touch wanting to question her again and a woman she worked with, which looked to her like an attempt to gather evidence to prosecute her.

On the rare occasions that our attackers are prosecuted, we face a character assassination in court and see our attacker walk free.

4) Stigma and discrimination which projects the view that our job is immoral or degrading and that our lives aren't worthy. Generally, we are forced to work in isolation and keep our job hidden from friends, our communities and society. We get no acknowledgement or credit for our contribution to the survival of families and communities – and this disparagement causes upset and mental distress.

Some issues are specific to women working in different ways for example:

WOMEN WORKING ON THE STREET.

Approximately half of the women in our network work on the streets and a third of those are migrant workers. The vast majority are mothers. In the last five years the numbers of women working on the street in our network has increased due to benefit sanctions, other cuts and rising poverty generally – see above.

- How we work -- women chose an established “red-light” area to work preferably as that is where clients know to go. We wait for clients to drive up in their car, speak to them for a few minutes to assess if they are drunk, check out the car to see that he is alone, negotiate prices and services and then go with the client to an agreed location. When we can, women prefer to work close to a friend, who can take down the client’s registration number and who will know what time you will be expected back. We often set ourselves an amount of money we need to make, whether it’s to pay a bill or the rent and when we have made that money, we go home. Working on the street you have no overheads (unlike working in the flat where you pay bills).
- If you work on the street, you can be arrested and fined for loitering and soliciting. Even though the exchange of sex for money is not illegal, it is impossible to work on the street without breaking the law. The police have a lot of power and discretion and evidence against us can be just their word. Once you are identified as a sex worker it is hard to walk down the street without being stopped, cautioned and arrested by police.
- EXAMPLES FROM WOMEN IN OUR GROUP include: one woman who was arrested and fined for waiting at the bus stop in the red-light area when she wasn’t even working. Another woman in our group was arrested because her friend was found with condoms on her. We have seen women fined up to £300 for loitering and soliciting, which is particularly unfair for a crime of poverty. It is our experience that this is happening widely around the country. One woman went to the police to report a gang which was trying to force her to work for them and was told by the custody sergeant “are you telling me you are a prostitute because if so, I will arrest you.” Another woman was told that she had to be threatened three times before the police would act. We are currently working with a woman in Yarl’s Wood detention centre who is facing deportation on the grounds she is a “persistent offender” because she has six convictions for loitering and soliciting. If the deportation is successful, we are very concerned this sets a dangerous precedent for migrant sex workers on the street.
- The statistic that claims that 95% of women in street prostitution are problematic drug users is unreliable as a national statistic. It comes from a 2004 study of 71 women, contacted through an outreach project in Bristol (Jeal & Salisbury, 2004), who were particularly vulnerable (2/3 were homeless). Sex workers who don’t use drugs have little contact with such projects and are unlikely to be surveyed. There are no reliable recent national figures of drug use among sex workers and therefore no evidence that the rate of drug use is higher than among journalists, doctors, bankers or celebrity chefs.

WOMEN WORKING FROM PREMISES

Women in our group work in brothels with other sex workers and/or a receptionist or “maid” and/ or work from home and /or work as escorts.

- Indoor work is carried out either with in calls, which is where the client comes to the sex workers’ address, or with outcalls which is where the sex worker meets the client at his own home/a hotel room. Sex workers in our group generally prefer incall bookings because either they are working with a friend which helps the workers’ safety or even if you are working alone it isn’t in an unfamiliar house/area unlike outcall bookings.
- Some of us are working for someone else, who we pay to pay the rent, bills, advertising, arrange bookings and screen clients. Some of us decide to do all that ourselves and advertise primarily online using sites like AdultWork. Because working in this way is criminalised, the amounts we have to pay out for someone to arrange rent, bills etc. for us are unregulated. This can lead to some of us paying out at least 50% of our earnings. There are jobs that this is comparable to though, for example hairdressing. When hairdressers rent a chair, the salon takes a cut out of the hairdresser’s takings, usually in the region of 40-60%. <https://www.salonsdirect.com/blog/rent-hairdressing-chair-tips/> If we do all this work ourselves, we might get to keep more of our earnings, but our hourly rates drop dramatically from the amount of work it is to organise.
- The law explicitly states that two or more sex workers working from premises constitutes a brothel and is illegal. This has the devastating impact of forcing women to choose between the safer option of working with someone else and facing arrest or working alone and facing increased risk of attack. Although the law is supposed to target those profiting from sex workers, it is our experience that sex workers themselves are arrested. The stakes are high as the sentence for brothel-keeping is up to seven years in prison.
- EXAMPLES FROM WOMEN IN OUR GROUP: In the last couple of years, women in our group working together from premises have faced persistent police raids and threats of arrest. One woman was sentenced to four years in prison for working together with others. She was a sex worker and was in no way managing the premises, but her lawyer didn’t put up a strong defence. Two other women in our group received a letter threatening them with a premises closure order. After an initial visit to the property, police claimed to have evidence that the premises were being operated as a brothel and advised the worker that ‘any female [found at the address in the future] is VERY LIKELY to be arrested’.
- Some women work in walk-up flats, mainly in London in Soho or Mayfair. The location of these flats are known to the police so women aren’t deterred from reporting violence for fear that they will alert police to where they are and be closed down. BUT women there have

been victims of mass police raids on at least four occasions since 2000 the most notably was in 2013 when police in riot gear and dogs entered premises with the media in tow who took identifiable pictures of women, handcuffed women on the floor, maliciously informed women's families they worked in the sex industry, took migrant women against their will to a so-called "place of safety", took women's money and refused to give a receipt – see below for more information about the resistance to this abuse.

CRIMINALISATION OF CLIENTS UNDERMINES OUR SAFETY

- Soliciting for sex on the street (kerb-crawling) is illegal. Since 2010 it is illegal to "pay for sex with a prostitute subject to force and coercion", and men can be convicted even if they didn't know the sex worker was being forced.
- Criminalisation, of sex workers or clients, drives women underground.
- There is substantive evidence from countries where the buying of sex is illegal that this has made working more dangerous for sex workers. See here for information from Sweden, Scotland, Ireland, Norway and France: <http://prostitutescollective.net/2018/08/briefing-why-the-nordic-model-undermines-womens-safety-and-rights/>

TRAFFICKING, EXPLOITATION AND "ORGANISED CRIME" IS NOT PROSTITUTION

- Consenting sex in exchange for payment should not be conflated with forced trafficking. In 2013 sex workers' flats in central London were raided to "save victims of trafficking": 250 officers in riot gear with dogs (accompanied by the media who published identifiable photos), broke down doors and handcuffed women. No trafficking victims were found but 20 flats were closed. A campaign spearheaded by local women with the ECP got the flats reopened. <http://feministing.com/2013/12/11/guest-post-the-soho-raids-were-not-about-trafficking/>
- Tackling the "growth in sexual exploitation and the trafficking of women" is given as the justification for banning prostitution sites. No concrete evidence beyond sensationalised speculation has been offered. Advertising online enables sex workers to better screen clients and escape exploitative bosses in parlours and agencies.
- It is not true that most sex workers are trafficked. A study of migrant sex workers found less than 6% had been trafficked, many said they prefer working in the sex industry rather than the "unrewarding and sometimes exploitative conditions they meet in non-sexual jobs" <https://archive.londonmet.ac.uk/iset/research-units/iset/projects/esrc-migrant-workers.html?8810F8AC-060C-A7FC-7F15-A583EB86BCE8>
- Anti-trafficking initiatives primarily result in migrant sex workers being targeted for raids, arrests and deportation. If well-meaning people including parliamentarians want to act against trafficking, then

ensure victims get support and end the discredited “hostile immigration environment” so that people fleeing war and poverty aren’t forced into the hands of traffickers. And take action against zero-hour contracts, low wages and exploitative bosses in the jobs that are the alternatives to prostitution. For more information on trafficking see: <http://prostitutescollective.net/2016/04/facts-on-trafficking/>

- “Pop-up brothels” are not a new tactic by criminals to exploit women, as implied by some people. They are the direct result of police raids and closure orders which force sex workers to keep moving premises. Closures undermine sex workers safety as it prevents sex workers implementing security procedures such as: installing CCTV, building up a regular client base, familiarising yourself with the local area. Rape and other violence against sex workers is best addressed by effective investigations and prosecutions of the crimes sex workers report. Exploitation should be defined and tackled in the same way as it is in other industries by strengthening trade union rights and empowering workers and prosecuting abusive employers. More info here: <http://prostitutescollective.net/2017/12/6946/>
- Presuming links with organised crime (trafficking) characterises sex workers as ‘victims’ in need of ‘saving’ and disparages and dismisses our struggle as workers for occupational safety and rights. Spreading false information about sex workers premises being linked to organised crime justifies increased policing, enforcement and closures which harm sex workers.

14	Please add any other comments in this section.	<p>This survey claims only to investigate (a) the nature and (b) the prevalence of prostitution and sex work in England and Wales and not “to make recommendations on law and policy.” Yet you say yourselves “However, clearly our findings could be used by future governments to shape policy.” We think it is therefore extremely unfair that this “investigation” be undertaken by an organisation with clear policy bias</p> <p>http://data.parliament.uk/writtenevidence/committeeevidence.svc/evidencedocument/home-affairs-committee/prostitution/written/29006.html.</p> <p>We have just written to complain that Dr. Andrea Matolcsi, who openly campaigns for a “sex purchase law” is conducting this research. Ms Matolcsi worked for Equality Now and is currently a director of UK Feminista.</p> <p>https://beta.companieshouse.gov.uk/officers/s6_qswCw6wQhnRZkd11sRB0396A/appointments</p> <p>Both organisations have done extensive lobbying for a change in the law to criminalise sex workers’ clients. UK Feminista is the secretariat to the All Party Parliamentary Group on Prostitution and the Global Sex Trade which has a remit to: “develop proposals for government action with a focus on tackling demand for the sex trade.” Ms Matolcsi’s connection with UK Feminista raises questions about whether that organisation or others which hold similar ideological views on prostitution have priority access to the research team and are exerting undue influence. How can it be appropriate for her to conduct what is supposed to be impartial research? We have written to you to ask how you are planning to ensure that sex workers feedback is adequately and, fairly represented in the research methodology and process and have asked for a copy of the timeline of the different stages of the research. We have not received adequate answers for these questions.</p> <p>You say that “We also recognise that individuals and groups can feel over-consulted and under-recognised. We know that completing surveys takes time. We commit to being inclusive in how the information that you share is recognised.”</p> <p>We have done at least four submissions to MPs from different political parties and groups in the last year. At least two had a pre-determined outcome and our evidence was ignored. We are discouraged that this official government commissioned research has such an obvious bias. We have asked repeatedly to be interviewed and properly consulted for this research but have heard nothing.</p>
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