FACTSHEET

Recognising the Risks to Women Facing Sexual Exploitation

This factsheet must be read and followed through by attending the recommended webinar that will focus on a case study and outline the barriers faced by women at risk of or experiencing sexual exploitation

The sex industry in the Portsmouth area functions in a variety of indoor contexts. There is no significant on street presence of the industry. A full picture of this hidden and quickly changing industry is not easily discoverable, but increased understanding of the risks is recommended in the pursuit of a client-centred approach to working with those engaging with non-specialist support services.

Selling sex

Prostitution and/or sex work constitutes the provision of sexual or erotic acts or sexual intimacy in exchange for payment or other benefit or need.

The Nature and Prevalence of Prostitution and Sex Work in England and Wales Today A report by Professor Marianne Hester, Dr Natasha Mulvihill, Dr Andrea Matolcsi, Dr Alba Lanau Sanchez and Sarah-Jane Walker Centre for Gender and Violence Research, University of Bristol 2019

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5db84ad1e5274a4aa81178e1/Prostitution_and_Sex_Work_Report.pdf

Examples of contexts (encountered by VISTA) in Portsmouth and surrounding areas:

- Adverts on adult websites - escorting and a range of sexual services available as an ‘in call’ or ‘out call’. An individual advert may be posted by an agency on behalf of a woman being exploited
- Brothels or working flats – either as a more permanent premises or rental properties obtained for a period of time for use as a pop-up brothel. These may be a group of women working together for support and safety or may be places of illegal exploitation.
- Massage parlours– a shopfront advertising massage services with ‘happy endings’ or ‘full service’ offered by arrangement.
- Webcamming and online pornographic content
- Sexting
- Strip club
- Sugar Daddy relationships

The Law

Under UK law, ‘it is an offence for a person in a street or public place to solicit another (B) for the purpose of obtaining B's sexual services as a prostitute.

The reference to a person in a street or public place includes a person in a vehicle in a street or public place.

A person commits an offence if -

(a) he intentionally causes or incites another person to become a prostitute in any part of the world, and

(b)he does so for or in the expectation of gain for himself or a third person.'

NB "Prostitute" is the legal term used for a sex worker, used by section 54(2) Sexual Offences Act 2003 (SOA 2003).

Information on the law, for any professional, to enable increased support of those at risk of or experiencing exploitation can be found at

Prostitution and Exploitation of Prostitution | The Crown Prosecution Service

Awareness of Risks of Exploitation is Key

- Where sex is sold behind closed doors, violence, abuse and exploitation are more easily concealed. Staff in Housing, Emergency, Domestic Abuse, Problematic Substance Abuse and Homelessness Services have a particular role to play in recognising and providing access to support of those at risk.
- Whilst people of all genders are involved in the sex industry, the majority are women. Data on abuse and coercion within the industry brings it into the realm of VAWG
- Coercion and control, trafficking and exploitation of individuals continues and there is evidence of this hidden abuse across the Portsmouth area, both as part of organised crime and in the context of individual exploitative and abusive relationships. Migrant women with no recourse to public funds may be particularly at risk.

The intersection of certain key risk factors is important to understand and may be recognised as barriers for those seeking to leave the industry and/or serve as indicators of risk of exploitation:

- Violence, harassment and safety concerns.
- No recourse to public funds
- Police and criminal justice – fear of reporting violent crime
- Mental health concerns
- Housing
- Family, friends and relationship issues
- Substance misuse
- Access to support services
- Fear of being outed and social stigma
- Employment and education

- Physical and sexual health
- Problematic Finances
- Abuse and Trauma

Further reading can obtained at this link Support-needs-of-those-involved-in-the-UK-sex-industry-FINAL-for-publication.pdf

For information and support/referrals contact:

Vista **- Specialist, confidential support to women in the sex industry and those experiencing sexual exploitation**

Vista - Harbour Church **Portsmouth Tel: 07869 258165**
vista@harbourchurchuk.org

Vista — Haven Church **Gosport Tel: 07491 376928**
Vista — Ryde Church **Isle of Wight Tel: 07863 385633**

The Medaille Trust Contact details for UK Modern Slavery Charity Medaille Trust
For enquiries and concerns about Modern Day Slavery Tel: 0800 06 999 16
enquiries@medaille-trust.org.uk (open Mon- Fri 9.00am - 5.00pm)

The Modern Slavery Helpline on **08000 121 700**

Beyond Support Beyond Support - Beyond The Streets – **A free confidential phone support service for women in the sex industry Tel: 0800 133 7870**
support@beyondthestreets.org.uk

For training from specialist providers of support to women in the sex industry, on trauma-informed support, survival sex and understanding the sex industry and more, head to: Learn More - Beyond The Streets

Portsmouth City Council in partnership with:

VISTA

Portsmouth
City of Sanctuary