

CHANGING LIVES

Origins of the red umbrella as a symbol of sex worker rights & end to violence



Red Umbrella (Merseyside Sex Work)

- Red Umbrella was commissioned by the Merseyside Police & Crime Commissioner in 2017 to deliver a service to any individual within the sex industry; inclusive of people in survival sex work, sexual exploitation, street sex work, indoor sex work, camming, lap dancing, porn and escorts.
- The focus is to combat instances of violence and crimes committed against anyone in the sex industry and to bring to justice anyone perpetrating these crimes.

Hate Crime?

- Merseyside is the only police force in the World to treat violence against sex workers as a Hate Crime. With our dedicated, full time police Liaison officer, we will work in partnership to meet the needs of this group. We aim to reduce violence via education, of the general public to highlight the particular nature of this Hate Crime
- We offer:
 - Support, one to one and group
 - Outreach, Drop-In's across Merseyside, Inreach and Netreach
 - Casework
 - Specialist ISVA Support
 - Migrancy worker

We help people to:

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- Report crimes against them via the team and/or National Ugly Mugs
- Look at their health needs, physical, mental health and sexual health
- Educate themselves around safer working, health and safety, harm reduction
- If required, work towards exiting and with local partners, look for alternatives
- Referrals and support to drug & alcohol services, housing providers, safeguarding etc.
- People can move on to: Lives free from addiction, less harmful practices via harm reduction, empowerment through knowledge. Family reunification, how to 'go legal' as in paying tax if working indoors, camming, lap dancing, escorting or involved in porn. Reduce homelessness and unify families.

Street Sex Workers

High levels of:

- Homelessness/vulnerably housed
- Substance misuse & addiction difficulties
- Domestic violence/coercive control/ financial abuse
- Disproportionate number experience of local authority care/social service involvement
- Childhood abuse & history of child sexual exploitation
- Family breakdown/bereavement
- Involvement with criminal justice system
- Mental health issues
- Work related targeted violence/hate crime
- Multi-dimensional complex disadvantage & acute health & social care needs

Where & How Women Sex Work in the UK: Indoor

- Saunas/Brothels
- Working flats with other women
- Agency escorting (outcalls to hotels & other locations)
- Independent escorting (Outcalls and in calls to working flat or home.)
- Dungeons (specialist premises adapted for sex work)
- Bars and hostess clubs/ Lap dancing bars
- Car meets
- Online webcam

Internet Based Sex Work Study (2014)

- Most common sex market for 89% was independent escorting, followed by webcamming & sex phone lines
- 71% had previously worked in health, social care, childcare or charities
- Other common former employment sector was retail (34%),
- 45% sex work alongside other job; 58% sex work was not their only source of income
- 14% said they felt were being exploited
- 13% were current students

Sex work, violence and safety

Sex Work & Violence

- High levels violence
- Range of violent & other crime (verbal abuse-murder)
- Varying patterns across sectors
- Highest levels in street sex work
- Range of perpetrator groups
- Patterns of escalation
- Majority not reported to the police



Q & A

Thank-you for listening

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