

**Commercial Sexual Exploitation Cross Party Group**

**MacDonald Holyrood Hotel**

**(81 Holyrood Road, Edinburgh, EH8 8AU)**

**4<sup>th</sup> June 2019**

**11.30-2.00pm**

**Minutes**

**Apologies**

Frances Monaghan	Wise Women
John Mason	MSP
Linda Thomson	Women's Support project
Bronagh Andrew	TARA
Annie Wells	MSP
Jackie Baillie	MSP
Liam McArthur	MSP
Sophie Sherratt	Women's Aid
Shairi Bowes	Scottish Women's Convention
Aileen Fleming	Women's Aid
Louise Gleich	CARE
Siobhan Jess	Nordic Model Now
Patricia Byrne	Individual
Erica Grant	Project Turnkey
Diane Robertson	Individual

**Attendees**

Chris Hall	Not For Sale in Scotland
Ann Hall	Not For Sale in Scotland

Susan Moffat	Not For Sale in Scotland
Roseann Cameron	Routes Out
Kirsti Hay	GCC VAW Services
Billie Wealleans	WEP Highlands and Islands
Janice Wilson	Soroptimist International Scotland North
Marlyn Glen	Individual
Jules Sheridan	Cre8te Opportunities
Eilish brown	Individual
Steve Rawbone	Individual
Beverely Johnston	Salvation Army
J Warren	Individual
Pam Hunter	Say Women
Lisa Mackenzie	Individual
Gina Davidson	Scotsman
Linda Rodgers	Edinburgh Women's Aid
Kate Fry	Office of Rhoda Grant
Alison Scott	NHS Lothian
Rhoda Grant	MSP (Co-convener)
Joan McAlpine	MSP
Tracey Clusker	NHS Lothian
Megan McFarlane	NHS Lothian
S. Curran	NHS Lothian
Jacci Stoye	ACTS (Secretary)
Ruth McGuire	MSP (Co-convener)

### **Agreeing the Minutes of the previous meeting**

Ruth Maguire opened the meeting and asked if the group could agree the Minutes of the previous meeting. The Minutes were unanimously agreed. There were no matters arising.

### **Update given by Stuart Weir on the campaign sub-group**

Stuart said that they had completed the campaign website, which had a video, an email to send to MSPs on why the Nordic model is so important and a resource pack for awareness raising.

The campaign is called 'We're For Equality' as they had taken advice from Catriona and others that gender inequality was a better way to frame the campaign, which might appeal more to young people.

There are several organisations which have subscribed to back the campaign. The website is not yet live; it lacks an MSP and a spokeswoman to take it forward and needs more women's groups to join. Ideally there should be a media launch with the spokesperson present.

Kirsti Hay mentioned the role of the VAW partnerships spread across Scotland and how these groups could take it forward, possibly using a public health agenda. In the Irish campaigns there was a public appetite; Kirsti suggested whether we might be able to send a small group over to learn from them how this was achieved.

Putting forward a Private Member's bill was discussed, but it was considered to be ill-advised. People felt the best way forward was to lobby the government to place it on their legislative programme.

Alison Scott said that those on the frontline were keen to call the legislation a Scottish Model.

Joan McAlpine suggested an event in parliament where we invited all MSPs.

Actions: Ruth Maguire talked about going to Sweden with the APPG and spoke about an Equality Model and the need for rehabilitation and exiting programmes.

Actions for the CPG: We need to consider an event in parliament with a photo opportunity.

### **Presentation by Kirsti Hay and Roseann Cameron on 'Delivering a challenging demand approach in Glasgow'.**

Kirsti talked about the need to keep men who buy sex visible; we need to 'shift our gaze' and look at the legislation that we've got. She said there would be a press release later in the month about a partnership operation between Routes Out and Police Scotland, where police officers were released to target men who were buying sex to disrupt their activities and to divert women to the Routes Out Drop In Service. The police remit was to support women, not to prosecute them.

Roseann spoke about Glasgow historically having a VAW perspective, and that Routes Out had learnt a lot over the last 30 years. Initially, in the project, the Routes Out staff took it forward without a Police presence, which was very difficult as sex buyers were harassing the staff. But when the Police came on board, the sex buyers backed off, giving the Routes Out staff a chance to speak to the women. The staff were out for 4 nights over 3 weeks with a co-ordinated and planned approach which worked really well.

### **Guest Speaker Julie Bindel: Decriminalising the Sex Trade Means Decriminalising Women**

Julie outlined briefly the differences between legalisation and decriminalisation. She then described the differences in her talk by telling us about countries which had gone down either route.

Julie began with Switzerland; she said that she had travelled extensively across the world but that, hitherto, Switzerland had passed her by. (Prostitution in Switzerland has been legal and regulated since 1942). She had been staying there one time and saw a woman standing on the street one morning, she had a ticket, which she had purchased from the municipality in order to be able to sell sexual services. Julie proceeded to tell us what she then discovered: lots of brothels, some with 50 rooms, lots of women imported by pimps, adverts for sexual services on the street front. She showed us the drive-in brothels (provided by the city council), where buyers drive their own cars into performance boxes. There are vending machines for condoms.

She then told us about Amsterdam (prostitution legalised in 2000), where there is a statue of a prostituted woman, and a Prostitution Information Centre in the infamous red-light district. However, this isn't a drop-in centre for the women to come and talk, but a propaganda hub for prostitution, which organises the tours of the red-light district and tells tourists how happy the girls are. However, Julie spoke of a vibrant abolition movement in Holland that is gathering support.

Julie then turned to decriminalisation. She said that in Germany prostitution was decriminalised before it was legalised, which then created a lot of state revenue. In New Zealand, decriminalisation has failed. It was founded on the premise that prostitution can never be eradicated; yet we never say that about anything else. Men do not have a right to sex (rape). There are animal brothels in Denmark -if you decriminalise anything -then what is the problem?

The consequence of this is that decriminalisation changes the culture. In Kiev mail order brides are commonplace. If you can buy a woman for sexual services, then why not a wife? People try to separate trafficking and prostitution by saying that trafficking is bad, and prostitution is fine -is not okay. Julie showed us a photo of Sylvana, an Albanian woman who was trafficked by her brother's friends and later her body was found in a river. Women have no status in Albania.

Prostitution was decriminalised in New Zealand in 2003. Street prostitution has increased fourfold, the incidence of PTSD is high, and Julie told us about one prostituted woman who walked with a zimmer frame because she'd had so many broken bones. In the entire time since 2003, there have been 11 brothel inspections throughout the whole of New Zealand. The form for opening a brothel is half the length of getting a dog from Battersea dog's Home. Any assaults that may happen now are no longer classed as a criminal offence but have become an industrial tribunal.

Julie turned to online sites. The biggest online site in Northern Ireland, Escort Island, is run by a convicted pimp. She also deplored the growth of Sugar daddy sites which target young women.

Julie spoke about Trade Unions and how many sex work unions were bogus and in reality lobbying sites, for example, Coyote was a hippyish polyamorous cult. GMB were persuaded to open a branch for sex workers, but where are the rights in prostitution? Who is your union rep? Unions are for the benefit of the pimps. In the Netherlands they are funded by the government; there are 100 members, but 25,000 prostituted people.

Summary of questions and responses:

- Nordic Model countries: if a buyer won't wear a condom the woman can call the police, she won't face any charges
- NM law changes hearts and minds
- Look at cost of prostitution to society in violence/mental and physical health/children in care/ can we cost this in real fiscal terms?
- Narrative changed with money and academics -became a lifestyle choice for young men

Next meeting 24<sup>th</sup> September 2019