An Overview of Male Sex Work in Edinburgh and Glasgow: The Male Sex Worker Perspective

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Glossary

Bar Jars
Free condoms available in gay bars.

C Card
A card which allows collection of free condoms from various locations throughout Lothian.

Cottage/ Cottaging:
Use of men’s public toilets to meet sexual partners, usually for sex on the premises.

Couch testing:
‘Testing’ sexual performance to determine suitability for organised sex work. Usually a sexual act which occurs between sex work organiser and potential sex worker.

Cruising:
The activity of seeking and meeting sexual partners.

Escort:
A sex worker who works for an agency or independently.

Groomed/Grooming:
An individual, often a young person or child, ‘trained’ to perform sexual acts.

GUM:
Genitourinary Medicine/Sexual Health Clinic.

JC:
Researcher (Judith Connell).

MSW:
Male sex worker.

Out Calls:
Visits to client's home, hotel or other pre-arranged location to provide sexual services.

Punter:
Client.

Renting:
Selling sex, usually from the street or other public space.

Rent Boy:
A male sex worker who works on the street, also referred to as a ‘street worker’.

ROAM:
Outreach Advice for Men, Lothian Primary Care NHS Trust – Outreach team.

STI:
Sexually Transmitted Infection.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Trawl/ Trawling:</strong></th>
<th>The activity of seeking and meeting sexual partners also referred to as ‘cruising’.</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Undercutting:</strong></td>
<td>Charging less for a sexual service than other sex workers charge.</td>
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Section 1

Introduction

It is increasingly recognised that the exchange of sexual services for money carries with it certain health costs. Public concern over prostitution has most often focused on the spread and transmission of STIs and, in-particular, the risk and exposure to HIV, in populations of female prostitutes (Day, 1990; McKeganey & Barnard, 1992). This discourse of sexual risk – both to the sex worker and client – has also shaped the research agenda on male prostitution since the first appearance of AIDS. In the UK, HIV has been the focus of comparisons of male sex work in London and South Wales (Hickson et al., 1994; Davies & Feldman, 1999) and of detailed ethnography in Glasgow (Bloor et al., 1990). In Australia, Minichiello et al. (1999) have undertaken a comparative study of male sex workers in Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane with, again, the primary focus being on the risk of HIV infection and other STIs.

Whilst it is understandable that the risk of and exposure to HIV have been the primary focus of research endeavour in this field, given that HIV is life-threatening and research monies have been available to study AIDS since the mid-80s, the consequence is a somewhat restricted perspective on male prostitution. This perspective fails to recognise that the risk of acquiring and transmitting HIV in sex work is clearly not the only significant health risk experienced by male prostitutes.

Here we look in greater detail, than previously in the UK, at the family and social backgrounds of male sex workers, the timing and nature of their entry into sex work, efforts to leave sex work and at some of the day to day realities of involvement in prostitution. Our primary concern is with the mental and physical health consequences of sex work for men. We begin, however, by reviewing the current literature on this under-researched group.

Background

Two recent publications provide extremely comprehensive accounts of HIV related research conducted on male prostitution. In a review of studies concerned with male sex work sexual encounters, Minichiello et al (1998) provide over 70 references, most of which refer to studies undertaken in the last two decades on male prostitution, and are primarily concerned with anglophone research on the risk behaviour of male prostitutes.

The second publication, again with HIV/AIDS as its primary focus, is a collection of papers edited by Aggleton (1999) by authors from 21 countries writing about ‘men who sell sex’ throughout the world. Many of these chapters are very fully referenced, with non-anglophone studies being well represented. Despite their
primary HIV focus, these two publications are also concerned with a wider range of issues of relevance to us, and so will be cited accordingly. Neither publication reports research from Scotland.

In the past, where studies have sought to construct typologies of male prostitution, this has been done in relation to HIV (Davies and Simpson, 1990; Hickson et al, 1994). Although these and other authors have attempted to treat male prostitution as sex work, this has been a secondary concern. For example, although Morse et al (1999), in describing male sex work in the US, begin one section ‘The occupation of sex work... is open to men possessing few formally certified skills....’, their main point is not to describe the occupational structure of sex work, but rather the relative absence of other marketable skills held by individual sex workers. Most authors do not attempt to conceptualise the exchange of sex for money or material goods as work, in great part because of the epidemiological paradigm that has been employed, which is concerned with the pathogen-transmitting potential of specific sexual behaviour. This treats certain demographic variables (age, length of time in prostitution) as risk factors, but excludes consideration of the social organisation of sex work which provides the context for, and full meaning of, these and other variables (at worst, these become analytic ‘noise’, to be ignored in the search for individualised risk profiles). The literature is therefore marked by a failure to focus on sex work as organised economic and social activity for monetary and/or material gain, which has attendant occupational health and safety consequences including, but not limited to, sexual health outcomes. It is in the treatment of male prostitution as work by Minichiello et al, and by some of the authors represented in the Aggleton collection (1999), that allows us to reconsider the activity qua work, and provides a starting point for a rather different kind of analysis.

Minichiello et al note that there are three major types of sex work. These are *Escorts*, who work through an agency, with clients’ first contact being with a gate keeper who then connects them with the sex worker. Although not mentioned by Minichiello et al, we would also include within this category brothel workers (described in the Netherlands by Zuilhof, 1999) for similar reasons, i.e. the presence of a non-sex working intermediary (the brothel owner/manager). Comparable to these men are bar workers, as described by Storer (1999) in Thailand, as the bar owner/manager takes a proportion of the money earned. *Independent workers*, referred to in our study as *independent escorts*, on the other hand have direct contact with customers, their clients, through personal advertisements and their own telephone contact numbers and internet addresses. These men may advertise themselves as providing a variety of services, using an appropriate code word depending on the legality or accepted practice in the country or region, such as ‘escort’ or ‘masseur’. Others are able to specify and describe more directly the bodies offered and nature of the sexual services (‘8 inches, uncut, active’). Finally, there are *Street workers*, who again work through direct contact with clients, but do so on the street, in parks or in bars (but with no monetary commitment to bar owners/managers). In the UK
street workers are also called rent boys (renting being the activity of selling sex in public environments), and these terms will be used interchangeably throughout this report.

What has consistently been found in relation to any HIV-related studies that have investigated differences between these types of sex work is differences, either in the nature of sexual risk behaviour for HIV infection (Estep et al, 1992), or in the prevalence of infection (Morse, 1999), with street workers consistently being in the worst position, their situation often complicated by heavy drug use and dependency. This suggests either that there are distinctive features of the workers involved in these different types of sex work, or that there are patterned structural features of the work itself which facilitate HIV transmission. These are not mutually exclusive explanations, but it is notable that there is an absence of research which has investigated the social mechanisms implicated in the structural explanation.

A number of recent studies have also made reference to the vulnerability of male sex workers to physical and sexual assault, and indicate the synergy between male sex work in particular sectors of prostitution and dangerous drug use (West, 1992; Browne, 1994; Simon et al., 1994; Markos et al., 1994; Snell, 1995; Inciardi & Surratt, 1997; Allman, 1999). However, it is difficult to find studies concerned with the general health and experiences of men working in the sex industry, which address the physical, sexual, emotional and psychological impact of involvement in prostitution. Of particular concern to this study is a range of mental health issues, which in previous research has been characterised as occupational stress. These issues relate to the nature and degree of damaging engagement required of male sex workers’ minds and bodies in sex acts with clients (Browne, 1994:70; Dowsett, 1996:244). Evidence from a small number of respondents in both Browne’s and Dowsett’s studies suggests that aspects of this engagement - which includes the necessity to produce erections, to penetrate clients’ bodies, to engage in sexual acts which conflict with sexual self-identity, and to project key aspects of self-identity as desirable commodities – may affect sex workers’ abilities to relate effectively in sexual relationships outside the context of work, and may have a long-lasting negative effect on their sexual subjectivity and self-identity even after they discontinue sex work.

**The Current Study**

Whilst the available literature points to a series of health concerns, beyond HIV/AIDS, in undertaking the current study we felt that there was scope to describe the occupational health of male sex workers in a broader context. For us this involved an attempt to improve our understanding of the social circumstances of male sex workers. To do this we began by investigating the family background, education, previous and current employment status, contact
with the criminal justice system and housing situations of male prostitutes. We also looked in detail at their entry into and time spent, to date, in prostitution, and the practicalities of sex work in terms of where it takes place and how and where initial contact with clients is made. This inevitably raises issues of personal safety during sex work, and the range of people who represent a risk to the male sex workers in a variety of ways. The mental and physical health consequences and factors associated with sex work are key, and form the core of the study. Finally, we look at what would help men leave sex work permanently, and consider a number of male sex workers views on the nature of services that could help them, both whilst they are working and as a means of identifying routes out of prostitution.

The study is presented here as a working report, intended to inform our understandings of the practicalities of male sex work, its health consequences and to help us consider means of addressing the issues it raises. In doing so we have unashamedly adopted the perspective of the male sex workers themselves, as their voices are so rarely heard when public discussion of these issues takes place.
Section 2

Research Aims, Objectives, Methodology & Limitations

2.1 Research Aims & Objectives

The aim of this study is to investigate, through detailed qualitative research, the health and personal safety of men who work as male prostitutes in Edinburgh and Glasgow, Scotland. This report presents the views and experiences of male sex workers themselves.

For the purposes of the study, a male sex-worker is defined as a:

‘biological male who receives payment ... in money ... in exchange for sexual favours’ (Simon et al. 1993, 263).

The report presents an understanding of male prostitution in Edinburgh and Glasgow in terms of:

- **Background to sex work**

  In this section the issues of family background, time spent in local authority care, education, housing, contact with the criminal justice system and employment will be addressed to construct a profile of those men involved in sex work.

- **Why & how sex work began**

  To describe the route of entry into prostitution and how, why, when and where sex work began.

- **Where sex work takes place & how initial contact with clients is made**

  To ascertain if sex work takes place in a particular area(s) and location(s) in Edinburgh and Glasgow and to obtain an insight into how and where clients are initially contacted.

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1 Interviews and self completion questionnaires with professionals including: outreach workers and their managers, social workers, secure unit workers, residential care workers, health care workers and the police were also undertaken as part of this research.
• **Sex Work & Personal Safety**

To explore if the personal safety of male sex workers has been compromised and/or threatened and if so, where, by whom, and in what way(s).

• **Sex work & physical health**

To determine whether sex work has an impact on physical health.

• **Sex work & mental health**

To investigate the impact of sex work on mental health.

• **Attempts to stop sex work**

To ascertain if attempts have been made to exit prostitution and to explore the reasons why such attempts have been made and why they have failed.

• **Sex Work, support, advice & service provision**

Within each of the fore-mentioned areas the issue of support, advice and service provision for male sex workers will be addressed in terms of availability, impact and need.

### 2.2 Methodology

The research was undertaken over a twenty two month period between December 1999 and September 2001. To meet the aims and objectives of the study (Section 2.1) a number of research methods were employed:

• **Non-participant observations of male sex work sites**

To determine where male sex work in Edinburgh and Glasgow takes place and the social and environmental context of male prostitution, non-participant observations of male sex work sites were undertaken. Access to these sites was obtained through shadowing outreach workers from the ROAM (outreach advice for men) team, Lothian Primary Health Care Trust, in Edinburgh and Phase Scotland in Glasgow.

The researcher (JC) spent an average of four hours a day, two to three days a week, for sixteen months, on outreach shifts. Observation notes were made on each shift. These notes recorded each male sex work site visited, the events which occurred during each shift and conversations with male sex workers, cruising men and outreach workers.
To prevent any misunderstanding of the role of the researcher, for e.g. that she was an additional outreach worker, the reason for her presence was explained to each outreach contact. In some cases outreach workers had informed sex workers of the researcher’s role and future presence prior to the commencement of fieldwork. During fieldwork confidentiality and anonymity was emphasised and maintained by the researcher at all times when conversing with outreach contacts.

While non-participant observations placed male sex work in a social and geographical context, another observation remit was to establish a relationship with male sex workers, to gain their trust, with the aim of interviewing them about prostitution and related personal experiences.

• **Semi-structured interviews with male sex workers**

Semi-structured in-depth, face to face, interviews were conducted with male sex workers. In depth interviews provided each respondent with an opportunity to discuss their experiences of sex work, within a relatively open framework.

In-depth interviews began with questions regarding age, ethnicity, place of birth and residence, and moved on to address the main aims and objectives of the study (Section 2.1).

Prior to each interview the respondent was informed:

- Of the general subject areas to be covered in the interview.
- That any information he (MSW) divulged would be treated with the strictest confidence and used for research purposes only.
- That his (MSW) identity would remain anonymous.

Before each interview the researcher also asked the respondent for his permission to tape record the discussion. Tape recording interviews enabled information to be recorded accurately and in full, an important factor in the analysis of interview data. Interview tapes were transcribed verbatim by an experienced professional transcription agency. The completed transcription was then returned along with the interview tape to the researcher (JC). Each tape was given a numerical code by the researcher to ensure that anonymity would be maintained during transcription.

Directly prior to each interview, a consent form was signed by the respondent confirming that they had agreed to participate in the research and that the purpose of the study had been explained to him along with the issues of confidentiality, anonymity and tape recording. To overcome any possible literacy
problems a respondent might have, the researcher went through each information sheet and consent form verbally.

- **Self-completion questionnaires**

Self-completion questionnaires were used when a male sex worker did not wish to be interviewed, or had recently moved to another town or city and was not geographically accessible.

The questionnaire was designed to cover each of the areas to be addressed in face-to-face interviews. As with the respondents who were interviewed, the issues of confidentiality and anonymity were emphasised. Each male sex worker who completed a questionnaire was also asked to sign a research consent form.

- **Fieldwork discussions & telephone conversations**

Where a male sex worker did not wish to complete a questionnaire or take part in an in-depth interview, the researcher asked for the sex worker’s permission to record hand-written notes of discussions between them to be used for research purposes only.

**2.3 Recruitment of Male Sex Workers**

Attempts to recruit male sex workers were made through:

**A. Outreach Workers**

The researcher shadowed outreach workers in an attempt to recruit male sex workers. Outreach workers also made their own individual efforts to recruit male sex workers.

**B. Press Advertisements**

Advertisements inviting male sex workers to participate in the research were placed in the personal columns of the gay press.

**C. Posters**

Posters inviting male sex workers to participate in the research were placed in cafes, saunas, libraries, student unions and other public buildings.

**D. Snowballing**

Those men who had participated in the study were asked if they knew of any other male sex workers who might be interested in taking part. The researcher gave each respondent a number of business cards with her name, work email
address, telephone and fax numbers, to be distributed to other male sex workers for contact purposes.

**E. The Internet**

Email contact was made with those male sex workers who advertised their services on the internet and an explanation and outline of the research given. A number of directors of escort agencies, who advertise on the internet, were also contacted in an attempt to make contact with the escorts who worked for them.

**2.4 Research Limitations**

As with all research conducted there are limitations to this study:

(a) The male sex workers who participated in the research had predominantly male clients. The research did not focus on men whose clients were female.

(b) Although efforts were made to contact a range of male sex workers, the men who participated in the study were predominantly rent boys who worked on the streets of Edinburgh and Glasgow and who also worked, occasionally, for escort agencies and in brothels.

(c) While the internet is an increasingly popular medium for male sex workers to advertise and to meet new clients, this study does not fully explore this method of client contact.

**2.5 Research Findings**

In chapters three to ten the main themes arising from the research conducted with male sex workers will be summarised using illustrative quotations and observation notes where appropriate. Where a specific name or place is referred to by male sex workers these have been deleted and replaced with xxxx.
Section 3

The Male Sex Worker: Profile, Family Background, Education, Criminal Justice System, Employment & Housing

3.1 Male Sex Worker Profile

A. Age, Time in Sex Work, Ethnicity & Sexuality

Contact was made with 27 male sex workers. The men ranged in age from 17 to 48 years of age and had been involved in sex work for an average of 5 years. The average age when sex work began was 15, with the youngest being 13 and the eldest 27 years old when they first became involved in prostitution. All contacts were white and identified as gay, bisexual, or heterosexual.

B. Type of Sex Work

The majority of male sex work contacts worked, predominantly, as rent boys, with the minority working as independent escorts.

- Mobility Within & Between Sex Work Environments

When addressing the issue of type of sex work, it emerged that the majority of respondents’ experience in prostitution was not confined to one sector. At time of contact a number of sex workers were:

- Renting and, to a lesser degree, working for an escort agency
- Renting and occasionally working in a brothel
- Presently renting and, in the past, had worked for a pimp
- Presently renting and, in the past, had worked in a sauna and for a pimp
- Presently working as an independent escort and in the past had rented, worked as an agency escort, in a brothel and had initially become involved in sex work through a number of paedophiles.
3.2 Early Years: Family Background

Family life for the majority of male sex workers when growing up was marred by incidents of:

- Physical violence
- Mental & psychological abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Drug use – self and within the family
- Generally fractured family relations

A. Physical Violence

A number of respondents recalled how they had been physically assaulted as children. Physical abuse was generally perpetrated by a parent and/or their parent’s partner:

*She (mother) tried to suffocate me when I was a child.*

*Sometimes she (mother) was (violent). I think the only reason she was violent was because she was stressed and she was hurt and she was angry and her life wasn’t going the way she wanted it to and she had to thump somebody and I was the only one there.*

*I used to stand up for my mum and then he (mother’s partner) got bored of her and started hitting me...first he battered me with a belt and then battered me with his fists.*

In the latter instance, both the respondent and his mother had been the victims of recurring incidents of domestic violence.

Physical violence was often partly attributed to the excessive consumption of alcohol by the perpetrator of such acts:

*He (mother’s partner) used to drink a lot.*

*My mum was an alcoholic.*

*No matter what she (mother) drank.*
Although not the personal victims of physical violence, some men viewed the environment in which they were raised as one in which physical aggression and violence prevailed:

*He (father) didn’t touch me….he hit my mum.*

**B. Mental & Psychological Abuse**

While some male sex workers stated that they had not been physically assaulted, there was, throughout their childhood, the constant threat of physical harm:

*He (father) never hit me, but he held an electric drill to my head, pointed it straight at me…I felt threatened by him.*

*I remember one time she (mother) was cooking my dinner and a bit of fat went in her eye and she just went absolutely crazy and went to pick up the pot to whack me with it.*

Such events tended not to be one off occurrences, with mental and psychological abuse being common place in some men’s families:

*He (father) always used to play with your head…shout at you, make you feel bad…*

**C. Sexual Abuse**

Repeated incidents of sexual abuse by family members were recounted by one male sex worker:

*I was sexually abused by my uncle and my older brother… when I was five (years old)...it went on for two years.*

**D. Drug Use: Self & Within the Family**

A number of male sex workers described growing up in families where drug use and/or the dealing of drugs were common place:

*My aunt and her kids were on it (heroin).*

*My uncle died through injecting heroin, another one is in prison (he) got caught with one hell of a lot of heroin.*

*I’ve been brought up around them (drugs).*
In some instances men attributed their initial drug use and subsequent drug addiction to a family member:

She (aunt) got me on it (heroin) because her kids were on it too...she deliberately went and got me hooked...my aunt started me on drugs when I was fourteen (years old), I think I got a habit about seventeen (years old).

I would say if it (drugs) wasn’t there (in family home) I wouldn’t have got into it (taking drugs) the same way I did.

E. Fractured Family Relations

While in all families a degree of disharmony at times prevails, for some male sex workers there had been a permanent, detrimental collapse in family relations. A breakdown in family relations was most frequently attributed to a man’s sexuality and drug use. This had a number of adverse consequences, homelessness and entry into sex work being two primary outcomes.

• Sexuality

One man described how he had been asked to leave the family home when his step-mother became aware that he was gay:

My step-mother had a problem with my sexuality...I was told to leave (family home).

As a result this young man became homeless.

Another man described how he had run away from home, for a year, at the age of thirteen. Being bullied at school, with few friends, and feeling isolated from his family due to his sexuality, he left home and subsequently became involved in sex work:

I wasn’t really close to them (family), I think it was just, my brother and sister were hitting the late teens so they were coming in (to the family home) and causing hassle. They were having relationship problems and they were getting my mum and dad on their side and that was it. I was having relationship problems but I couldn’t go and talk to them about it... I had nobody to talk to at all, no teachers, no friends, no relatives... I had nowhere to turn... I ran off.

• Drug use

While sexuality played a key role in a number of men leaving home, one male
sex worker described how he was told to leave home by his father due to his drug use:

_I told my dad (about heroin addiction). I says you’re no going to be happy with what I tell you and he’s like ‘what is it?’ ‘I’m addicted to heroin’ and he’s like ‘get your arse out of the house’...he just disowned me._

In this case homelessness and an increase in drug use ensued.

F. A ‘Normal’ Childhood

While many male sex workers had experienced a chaotic and often traumatic childhood, a minority of men referred to having a ‘normal’ and ‘happy’ family life when growing up:

_I come from a very normal middle class family._

3.3 Local Authority Care

A dysfunctional family life for many men, when growing up, consequently meant that some male sex workers had been in local authority care on at least one or more occasions during their childhood:

_I was out in care for four months, then I went back home, then I went back into care._

A. Care Setting

The care setting varied from:

- Secure unit
- Children’s home
- Foster care

For a number of male sex workers their experience in care was not confined to one setting. Many men had spent their childhood in and out of various local authority establishments and foster care homes:

_xxxx (MSW) described how he had been in a children’s home, secure unit and two foster care homes throughout his childhood. (Field Note)_
B. Experiences in Care

Male sex workers generally described their time in care in negative terms:

*It was hell.*

*It was really bad.*

Some men referred to incidents of physical harm perpetrated by a foster parent and other young people in care:

*We had to have a child safety act meeting because my foster dad battered me because I was gay, he didn’t like it (being gay) and this was a foster parent!.*

*It (secure unit) was really, really bad, it was like you just got a kicking straight away, kind of everybody thumping you. I couldn’t tell anyone, you carry on through (have to just live with it), just carry on through.*

Repeated incidents of sexual abuse perpetrated by a care worker were recounted by one man:

*I was out away in a home for my own protection... I was sexually molested in there (children’s home) for a year and then I was transferred... you see I was only young, so I didn’t know anything wrong in it (sexual abuse), I didn’t... but I was getting drugged and that, you know at supper time, like at supper time you got milk and you got sandwiches and things were getting put in your milk and then he was carrying us through to his bedroom and you know.*

As well as affecting their physical health, being in care also affected some men psychologically:

*It (being care) messes you up...It’s not good for your head.*

Commenting on a friend, and fellow sex worker, being taken into care and placed in a secure unit, one man stated:

*xxxx (MSW) had to go away at this point (describing an event which occurred on the rent scene) because he was only fifteen. He had to go away into care which I wasn’t happy with because I knew exactly what it was like (being in a secure unit), I knew that it was going to fuck him up and it has.*
The same man recalled his own personal distress at being placed in a secure unit and the desperate measures he was willing to take to be moved:

I was saying (to the social worker) I want to get out of here, I don’t want to be here, you can’t leave me here, if you keep me here I’ll be leaving anyway. She (social worker) was like ‘how’s that?’, I was like ‘cause I’ll make sure, I don’t care what I have to do, I’ll be leaving, I don’t care if I runaway, I don’t care if I have to take lots of pills, I will be out of here…’.

Another male sex worker also questioned his suitability to being placed in a secure unit as a young teenager:

Well you were in (secure unit) with murderers……

As a result of their experiences in care, some men questioned if they had been cared for appropriately:

When you are a social worker, if you do everything by the book, then fair enough, you get your job done, but you are not really helping the person that you are meant to be helping…mentally they don’t help the kids, they might keep them safe by locking them up but it really does things to their head …maybe if they had listened a bit more instead of getting on their social high horse… they pretend to listen but they don’t actually listen to you…

I had to get taken out (of the foster home) because of what happened (beaten by foster father) and then my uncle found out what happened and then absolutely hammered (beat) him (foster father). Then I was told (by the authorities) that because of what happened (uncle hitting foster father) that they couldn’t do anything (about foster father beating him) …I was angry and I says ‘the difference here is I’m the child, they’re two adults, what about me? I’m a child!’…I felt let down by the system, very let down.

3.4 Education

The majority of male sex workers had left school at sixteen years of age with an average of three standard grades. A minority (n=4) had completed their higher examinations and had, or were in the process of undertaking, a university degree. A number of men (n=3) were also, at time of contact, attending college. Despite the relative educational success of some male sex workers, many men felt that they had underachieved at school and had not performed to the best of their academic ability:

I messed up, I could’ve done better (at school), a lot better.
Poor academic performance was generally attributed to:

- Unstable family life
- Bullying at school
- Sexual abuse in a school setting

A. Unstable Family Life

For those male sex workers whose home life was abusive and unstable (Section 3.2), regular school attendance and academic success were frequently viewed as secondary concerns:

*Doing an essay on Bonnie and Clyde, or the Russian government, or anything else, it was just the last thing on my mind at school...*

B. Bullying at School

For some men who identified as gay, their sexuality and the reaction of school staff and pupils to this, played a key role in their underachievement at school:

*It was difficult, I was bullied at school, I was quite camp at school and kids pick up on this really easily...it (the bullying) was just kind of, it was just like an infection, it, it kind of just spread over the school, so I hated school...the teachers were doing nothing, some of them were even joining in... I think if I wasn’t bullied I would have got my qualifications, went to college and got a job, everything (referring to participation in sex work) came from that (bullying). Because of that my life didn’t go in the direction it should have. They’re (bullies) all getting on with their lives and I feel I have been cheated.*

Bullying frequently led to feelings of isolation, anxiety and depression:

*I was a loner, I had no mates at school, no friends to speak to... I went through years of living hell at that secondary... I felt like I could have jumped of the nearest bridge.*

One man described how, as a result of his treatment at school, he had attempted to take his own life:

*I had no friends so my life was really, really dull and depressing. I went to school, went home, cried, went to school, went home, cried and I did that for about six years...I tried suicide, I took some pills of my mums, I*
mean I didn’t know what they were, I knew they were pills in a bottle, so they’ll do…they didn’t work so the next day I thought ‘right, I’m going to do this right’…well I can’t go into one shop and just ask for massive amounts of paracetamol, so I went around a load of shops and went home and took them…my mum found me unconscious on the floor.

For this man, his experience of being bullied at school in the past had now also prevented him from returning to education:

I’d like to go back to college, I would love to go, but school has scarred me so much that the thought of going back into a kind of place like that again scares me…even just talking about it scares me because it’s just the fact, walking down a corridor again and looking around thinking who’s walking down there?, who’s doing this?, who’s saying that?...

Inherent within each account of bullying was the failure of each school to take sufficient steps to address and eradicate bullying:

I was getting bullied (at school) because they (pupils and some teachers) thought I was homosexual…my social worker and foster mum wrote a letter (to the school authorities) and we never heard anything back. They didn’t want to know, to deal with that (homophobic bullying), they wanted that swept underneath the carpet, they’ve got more important things to do. They don’t have time for homosexual problems, schools are not brave enough to stand up to them (the bullies), they just don’t want to know (about homophobic bullying)… I’ve been let down by the education system.

C. Sexual Abuse in a School Setting

Two male sex workers referred to being raped and sexually assaulted at school:

I spent some six years of my life at xxxx (residential school)... xxxx (fellow school pupil) and another senior boy called xxxx came into my dormitory and both of them took it in turn to rape me...one particular afternoon xxxx (fellow school pupil) asked me to stand up and go with him to a toilet cubicle. He told me to stand with my back to him, to take my trousers and underpants down and bend over to touch my toes. He then held my head down and pushed his penis up my back passage...

D. Importance of Educational Success

Although many male sex workers had obtained no, or few, qualifications, they now acknowledged the importance of educational success:
I dogged school ….I never thought I would say it, but I do regret it now and I wish I had stayed at school. I haven’t got any qualifications… you really do need stuff (qualifications) behind you, when you are younger and dead immature you are like ‘who needs courses’….it’s a lot harder now (to get a job) and you really do need to stick in at school and get your qualifications.

Looking to the future, a number of men saw acquiring some, or more, qualifications and professional training as an important goal:

I’ll go back (to college) at some point... I know what I want to do and I will work towards that, get qualifications that’ll help me to do what I want.

I went back to college in August (2000) and I finish in May (2001) and start university.

I would like to get some qualifications to get a job.

I am doing open learning through college in word processing, Excel and Access 2000 (computer packages).

3.5. Employment

A. Employment & Involvement in Sex Work

• Employment Prior to Sex Work

For many men sex work began at an early age, in their early to mid teens, as a result they had no history of employment prior to their involvement in prostitution.

• Employment During Sex Work

At time of contact, approximately half of male sex work contacts were employed. A minority of these men were in full time, professional, non-manual jobs, these individuals tended to be older male sex workers, who worked as independent escorts, with a university degree and/or other professional qualification.

For the majority of male sex workers participation in the labour market was sporadic and irregular. Employment tended to be in low paid, manual jobs such as factory work, bar work, catering and retail. Dissatisfied and disillusioned with their current employment, attendance at work was often poor:
I’ll just sort of stay of work until I get fired…I hate it that much, I can’t stand it, I hate the people there and what I do...

As a result some men, had, or were in the process of seeking, alternative employment:

I spoke to xxxx (MSW) tonight about employment. In a previous discussion he had referred to being unhappy in his job, something he attributed to the poor wages he received, how he was treated by his boss and the repetitive nature of his job. I asked how his job was going and if he was still feeling unhappy in it. He replied that his feelings and situation had not changed since I last spoke to him and that he was now looking for alternative employment and had just filled in a number of application forms. (Field Note)

For some men, their involvement in sex work had been an obstacle to obtaining alternative employment, or their reason for leaving a job in the past:

When I discussed the issue of employment with xxxx (MSW) he informed me that, in the past, he had left a job as he had continually met a number of his clients there. He explained how meeting his clients, out of context, in an environment, and in a job, where he was not known or regarded as a sex worker, made him feel uncomfortable and constantly wary. (Field Note)

xxxx (MSW) spoke to me about his attempts to find employment. During our discussion he referred to one, relatively informal interview, he had attended for a bar job. He recounted how, during the interview, the manager stated that he didn’t hire rent boys. (Field Note)

xxxx (MSW) spoke about his recent attempts to find a new job. He referred to one unsuccessful interview and how he suspected that he did not get the job as one individual who worked there, who knew him and who knew he rented, had informed the manager that he sold sex. (Field Note)

B. Unemployment

For those men who, at time of contact, were unemployed having no job was attributed to:

- Having little, or no, incentive to remain in employment
Men attributed poor wages, no career structure and little job satisfaction to choosing to leave employment:

*The money’s crap….the job’s boring.*

*I’ve got good qualifications and experience but it’s still quite hard to get somebody to employ me (in a job I want to do)…still I’m stuck in crappy dead end jobs.*

**• Instant money in sex work**

For some men sex work, unlike mainstream employment, offered them money as and when required:

*It’s guaranteed money every night.*

*It (sex work) can get me money when I need it.*

**• More money in sex work**

For a number of men, sex work offered them more money than they could presently earn in mainstream employment:

*I choose to do this (sex work) to help me through University instead of working all hours in a bar were the pay would never be enough (to support him through University and for his everyday living).*

*You can earn more money in renting than you do working in a pub or working in a bakery, or working anywhere…*

**• Drug use**

The majority of male sex workers who were heavy drug users were unemployed as a result of their heavy drug use. However, some of these men described how they had worked prior to their drug addiction:

*I had a good job (before heroin addiction)...I’m also a semi qualified electrician and I’ve done an apprenticeship with Scottish Power (electricity & gas company).*

**• Disability**

Two male sex workers were reportedly registered disabled and hence stated they were unable to work in mainstream employment due to ill health.
• **Academic study**

A minority of men attended college or university and were also involved in sex work, as a result they therefore felt that they had little time or incentive to participate in the labour market.

• **Sex work was their profession**

A minority of men, who had been involved in prostitution for a long period of time, viewed sex work as their full time profession and business and, as a result, had made no attempts to find a job:

> I've been doing it (sex work) for years, I've always done it (started when he was thirteen years old) so I can't see me stopping now.

**C. Search for Employment**

Many male sex workers who were unemployed expressed a need and desire to obtain mainstream employment. Attempts to find work were attributed to:

• **Efforts to leave sex work (Section 9)**

• **A need to add a sense of structure and normality to their lives (Section 9.1 pt F).**

**3.6 Education & Employment: Support, Advice & Service Provision**

While discussions with male sex workers revealed a genuine need and desire to obtain academic qualifications and employment, they also highlighted the need for support, advice and service provision in these areas.

Male sex workers referred to a number of obstacles which stood in their path to entering mainstream employment and education and emphasised:

• **The absence of appropriate formal assistance to discuss their desire to work or study, and to be informed of education and employment options.**

Not knowing who to turn to or where to go for professional assistance, some male sex workers asked the researcher for her help and advice to obtain information on college courses and employment opportunities:
xxxx (MSW) asked me if I could help him find out about college courses. (Field Note)

xxxx (MSW) told me that he wanted to do some work, voluntary or paid, with a drug agency. He wished to use his experiences of drug addiction to encourage other young people not to use drugs but he did not know who or where to approach to do this. He asked if I could help him find agencies who might be interested in employing him. (Field Note)

In order to obtain a suitable job or academic course, many men felt that there was a need for specific formal help and support, where participation in sex work could be openly acknowledged and discussed:

**JC**: What would help you get out of renting?

**MSW**: A job, for people (professionals) to help us out of our situation, like maybe to help you try and find a job, give you references... I want to be able to go to the job centre and say ‘right I’ve been doing this (renting), I don’t feel proud of it, but it’s what I have been doing to get money... I feel each time I go into the job centre I can’t get the full help I need, I don’t have any qualifications, I don’t feel proud of myself, I don’t have any confidence about going for jobs... I do have hopes, I do have dreams.

- Limited knowledge of who, or where, to turn for assistance and advice on education and employment issues.

A number of men had a general idea of what they wished to do but did not possess the knowledge as to how to proceed with an appropriate course or area of employment:

I just don’t know where to go. Last time I went to the careers centre I told them I was interested in psychology and they said how about (working in) Tescos?! (Supermarket) and I was like, ‘what?’

- Feeling of being trapped in sex work

Although observations and interviews with some male sex workers clearly illustrate a strong will and ambition to succeed academically and within the labour market, in the absence of comprehensive and appropriate formal support structures there are limitations to the degree of success which can be achieved. As a result some men felt trapped in prostitution:

I’m stuck.
I’m trapped in the whole rent thing and it’s not a nice place to be.

3.7 Contact with the Criminal Justice System

A minority of male sex workers and/or their family members had been in prison. Time spent in prison was frequently attributed to drug use, extortion and theft:

I have an uncle who is doing eight years in prison down in xxxx for shot guns, armed robbery and one hell of a lot of heroin.

I met xxxx (MSW) tonight....I asked him were he had been for the past couple of months. xxxx (MSW) then told me he had been in prison... (Field Note)

A number of male sex workers had prior contact with the criminal justice system as a direct result of their involvement in sex work:

Well there was 40 men convicted... they were convicted because I had sex with them when I was only 13, so I was under age and they all got 3 months, 50 hours community service, things like that... it was all in the papers 'rent boys used as police trap...' things like that, but that wasn’t what happened...I was there (in court) like 3 or 4 times (giving evidence).

3.8 Housing Status

At time of contact, male sex workers lived in a range of accommodation. These are listed in descending order according to the most common residence type:

- Rented council accommodation
- Supported accommodation
- Housing accommodation
- Hostel accommodation
- Owner occupied
- Private rented accommodation
- Parental home
A. Roofless

A number of male sex workers were, at time of contact, roofless and stayed, periodically, on friends’ floors and at their clients' homes:

I met a new MSW contact tonight…. xxxx (MSW) began to talk about his life, his family background and why he was renting…. I asked him where he was presently living, his reply was ‘nowhere really’. He explained how he would sometimes stay on the streets, but at the moment he was staying between various friends houses and occasionally with clients overnight. (Field Note)

Of ‘no fixed abode’ these men were attempting to find permanent accommodation:

During my conversation with xxxx (MSW) he asked if xxxx (outreach worker) and I could help him find somewhere to live. (Field Note)

In discussing their need for somewhere to live, some men stressed their unwillingness to be housed in hostel accommodation. This view was based on past experiences of staying in a hostel where introduction to drugs, exacerbation of drug use and entrance into prostitution had occurred:

I don’t want to go back to a hostel environment…..Everybody, I would say ninety percent of people, that stay in the hostels, are junkies, the other ten percent are alcoholics, old guys…

I will never get off the junk (heroin) if I go back there (hostel).

Someone I met there (hostel) suggested renting.

While being roofless was not a current concern for some men, it was a situation they had experienced in the past:

I have my own place now, but when I first ran away (from care) I used to stay with friends and punters.

B. Past Homelessness

No male sex workers, at time of contact, identified as being homeless. The majority, however, had been homeless on at least one or more occasions in the past:

Homeless….I’ve been homeless four, five times.
I slept anywhere….various places.

I used to sleep in the graveyards.

I was homeless for two weeks and then I found shelter with my brother.

Homelessness was attributed to:

- Running away from the family home or care
- Being thrown out of the family home
- Debts and bankruptcy
- Arson
- An unwillingness to be housed in hostel accommodation

3.9 Summary

Those male sex workers who took part in the study ranged in age from 17 to 46 years. All male sex work contacts were white and in terms of their sexuality identified as gay, bisexual or heterosexual. When addressing the issue of type of sex work, it emerged that the majority of respondents’ experience in prostitution was not, either past or present, confined to one sector.

While the issue of participation in male sex work is central to this study, it is also important to look at the background of those men involved in prostitution, their upbringing, education, employment and housing status. Addressing these issues will enable us to begin to construct a profile of who male sex workers are, and will assist us to understand and map the route which some men take into prostitution.

In terms of family background, many male sex workers had a dysfunctional and unhappy family life when growing up, as a result a number of men had been in local authority care on at least one occasion during their childhood. Mens’ experiences in care were generally negative with references to incidents of physical and verbal assault, sexual abuse and emotional upset. Time spent in care, in particular in a secure unit, was also attributed to a decline in an individual’s mental and psychological well being.

With regard to education, while some male sex workers had successfully obtained a number of basic qualifications, and in a minority of cases a university degree, many men had left school with few or no qualifications. Homophobic
bullying at school and an unstable family life were two primary reasons which contributed to poor attendance at school and academic underachievement. The importance of obtaining some, or additional, qualifications now, or in the future, was, however, stressed by male sex workers along with the need for appropriate formal support, information and advice to achieve this.

In terms of employment status, many men while participating in sex work had, or were currently, working in mainstream employment. The majority worked in manual, low paid jobs and expressed little satisfaction, and in turn, little incentive to remain in employment. Reasons given for unemployment, at time of contact, included drug use, academic study, disability, need for an immediate source of money and the fact that some men saw sex work as their profession. As with the issue of education the need for specific formal advice and support to obtain suitable and desirable employment was required.

In terms of contact with the criminal justice system, a minority of men and/or their family members had been in prison as result of drug use, theft and extortion.

With regard to housing status, male sex workers, at time of contact, lived in a variety of settings the most common being rented council accommodation. Rooflessness was both a current and past concern for some men. While no male sex workers stated they were currently homeless, the majority of men had been homeless on one or more occasions in the past.
Section 4

Male Sex Work: How & Why Sex Work Began

4.1 How Sex Work Began

A number of explanations were given as to how sex work began. Routes of entry into prostitution were cited as:

- A chance interaction
- Recruitment through paedophiles, pimps and money lenders
- Friends
- Acquaintances
- Partner
- Sexuality – exploring sexuality and an awareness of male sex work through the ‘gay scene’.

A. A Chance Interaction

A number of men described how they had become involved in sex work as a result of a chance meeting with another older male who had offered them money to perform a sexual act. The most common site for this interaction was a public toilet (‘cottage’):

Well the first time I done it (rented) I was eighteen (years old). I was going to college and I was going to the (public) toilets, like for the toilet, and some guy was following me. I walked in (to the public toilets) and he walked in after me…. he stood there (in the toilets) eyeing me up and I was getting quite annoyed about it and I was about to say something and then he said ‘Can I suck your cock for a tenner?’ and I told him to fuck off. But he kept trying and kept trying, so I was thinking ‘a tenner?’ and I said to him ‘you can give me a hand job for a tenner’, so he said ‘right’… He gave me the money and I just left.

I was thirteen (years old), going on fourteen, I got offered money from a guy in a (public) toilet. I was in the toilet, doing the toilet, and then I got approached and got offered money … a fiver in those days was a lot of money…
In the case of the latter respondent, it subsequently emerged that the man who approached him was a pimp:

*He introduced me into everything (sex work)...He had people working for him, he was more like a minder... three or four boys were involved with him, more like a pimp, he’d get the punters and he got a cut of what I got, well, he was handed the money... I’d go to their houses or they’d come to his house...*

**B. Recruitment through Pimps, Paedophiles & Money Lenders**

- **The Pimp**

While one respondent was approached directly by a pimp (Section 4.1), other men were pimped, indirectly, through other young male sex workers. One man who had run away from home, described how he had met a group of young teenage boys at a railway station who offered him a place to sleep and a means of making money, renting:

*I was thirteen and it was a young crowd of boys who I met at a train station...at the time I thought they all just worked for themselves but they eventually told me that they worked for this guy. I met the guy that they worked for ...at the time it seemed OK, but then after a while I really felt uncomfortable with it...he owned the flats we stayed in ... he really made my skin crawl...I realised that I’d got myself involved with a bloody pimp, but at thirteen (years of age) it’s not something I could really kick up a fuss about.*

- **The Paedophile**

One man described how he and other young people at a youth group he attended had been recruited into sex work by the youth counsellor:

*I was fifteen when I met this guy through the youth group and became quite friendly with him...he was the assistant counsellor... I became really good friends with him.*

The respondent described how he did not initially realise and fully comprehend the situation he was in:

*It felt a bit strange (referring to him and other young people being at the counsellor’s house) but then I thought to myself, well he is a counsellor and he helps a lot of the kids with drug problems and hassles and things like that, so it didn’t occur to me what was going on... I did...*
realise once I’d been there (counsellor’s home) a few times. I had (at first) presumed they (clients) were friends of his, but I knew after a while what was going on…there were several older guys that came back to the flat on quite a few occasions and they disappeared with one of the boys up to one of the rooms, I clicked then what was going on.

The respondent described how he would make frequent visits to the counsellor’s home where he and other young people were gradually encouraged (‘groomed’) to actively participate in sexual acts:

I started to spend allot of my time staying with him at weekends and at night time…he had his own flat and me and several other boys and girls stayed with him as well who where all renting, so I got introduced to the gang…The first couple of times he would arrange for a friend, who would obviously be a client, to come round to the house and I would sit and have a few drinks and get to know the person first and then that would just lead on to sex after a while.

‘Grooming’ involved young people becoming familiar with a range of sexual practices:

Many of the clients might have certain interests in things so you have to have some experience in all fields… if a client comes in and asks you for red, it’s actually blood, causing cuts and wounds, that turns people on, yellow meaning water sports…

In order to become experienced in different sexual acts, young people were encouraged to experiment sexually with one another:

You were expected to be experienced in everything … I wouldn’t say it was exactly a training program, but everybody did have to know what each thing was to perform it, so a lot of the times you would have to play with each other, so to speak, to get experience …

When questioned as to how other young people he knew had been recruited into sex work he replied:

A lot of the guys (clients/paedophiles) who are involved are married and have maybe their own kids or kids friends (involved)... I knew a few of the boys (in sex work) when I was fifteen/sixteen, they were the same age as me, and they told me they brought their younger brothers and sisters along to the house to get a bit of cash. So I think 50/50 the parents know about it (child’s involvement) ....
While this man was recruited into sex work at the age of fifteen he recalled how the youngest individual he had met, who was involved in prostitution, was nine years of age.

While only a minority of men stated that they had been personally recruited by paedophiles into sex work, the majority of men acknowledged the presence of paedophiles in both Edinburgh and Glasgow:

*You know who they (paedophiles) are.*

*They’re (paedophiles) there (in cruising areas), don’t go near them, they disgust me.*

*I’m totally against it (paedophilia) and know and despise a few.*

Male sex workers also described how paedophiles would recruit young men and boys into sex work, inadvertently, through other young people involved in prostitution:

*A lot of paedophiles do get their contacts through escorts and rent boys. A lot of rent boys, if they are fifteen/sixteen (years of age), always know younger guys whether it’s their own relationships (boyfriends), or whether it’s school pals, whatever, they (paedophiles) have enough contact for younger ones.*

*It can get really quite sickening and I mean I have guys (clients) asking for twelve year olds and they will have full blown sex with them…(to them it’s) the younger the better…I’m not involved in that.*

*I presumed they (clients) were paedophiles because quite a few of the regulars that I had when I was fifteen (years of age) when I went to theirs to offer services they would show me their collections of videos and their magazines and photos of children. A lot of the time they (clients) would ask me ‘can you get someone younger?’ I told them that is not my area, if you are looking for younger than me then you are going to have to speak to the boss and find elsewhere.*

**• The Money Lender**

A number of men referred to rumours that some young men were being forced to sell sex to pay off debts that their families had incurred with money lenders.
C. Friends

Some men described how they had become involved in sex work through a friend who was selling sex. These men tended to be street workers who had become friendly with other rent boys during their time in care or while homeless:

He was a friend from the children’s home.

xxxx (friend and sex worker) was already renting when I met him on the streets.

D. Acquaintances

Those men who stated that they had become involved in sex work through acquaintances tended to be frequent drug users. In such cases acquaintances were other drug users who sold sex, whom they had met while staying in hostel accommodation:

I stayed in Glasgow and I was staying in the hostel and I just had (got) my (heroin) habit. So I was trying to keep my habit and someone I knew there (at the hostel) was joking about xxxx (cruising area). He was telling me that he did it (rent), but not to tell nobody else. He says he just gave these guys a hand job and stuff like that and you got good money for it…I was thinking about it and I was, like, it can’t be that bad...

E. Partner

A minority of men started sex work as a result of their partner’s involvement in prostitution:

I know why I started (sex work) – when I met my boyfriend he used to be a rent boy.

I met a few people at xxxx (cruising area) that was through another boy at the (children’s) home, he was my boyfriend. He took me to xxxx (cruising area) and introduced me to a few people and from then I just started renting.

F. Sexuality

• Exploring Sexuality

For some respondents, who identified as gay or bisexual, involvement in sex work began in their early teens when first exploring their sexuality. Knowing no
other young men who were openly gay or bisexual these individuals explored their sexuality in an adult environment, the male cruising scene. Cruising for sex then subsequently led to selling sex. In some cases, men described how, while cruising, they were offered money for sex:

_I started at fifteen, I came into the gay scene for just sex and then I went into the rent scene cause I got offered the money for doing it (having sex)._ 

Reflecting back on his initial decision to rent, one man saw his decision to sell sex as a step to affirming his sexuality:

_I wasn’t listening to anybody, it’s, like, ‘no, this is my life!, I’m going to go out and do it (rent’)… it (renting) can be soul destroying, but it’s also maybe the first adult choice you make and it can be a way of re-affirming yourself (your sexuality), if you are having to lie to your parents, lie to your friends ‘yes, I’m straight, yes I’m straight’._

• **An awareness of sex work through the ‘gay scene’**

A number of men were aware of sex work through the ‘gay scene’ and written press. This awareness then translated into an active participation in prostitution as a result of financial necessity:

_It (renting) was common knowledge, part of the (gay) scene. Everybody talked about the rent boys and me and xxxx (friend) were just thinking, well, why not (rent), we’re young, we’re good looking and really needed the money…_ 

_I was sort of aware of escort work anyway cos it’s advertised in the press… I suppose I had a little bit of knowledge of what an escort did from those experiences when I had paid for it (escort services)... I needed the money._

**4.2 Couch Testing**

While many men initially became involved in one area of sex work, some were then recruited into other areas of prostitution, agency escort and brothel work, through ‘couch testing’. Couch testing involved one or more individuals (recruiter(s)) testing and rating a man’s sexual performance. One man described how he and other men who rented were recruited into brothel work through men who posed as clients in cruising areas:
The guy (from the brothel) just picked me up at (cruising area) and there was another guy (from the brothel) in the car... they’ve (the brothel) got this guy and then they’ve got another one and he picks the person (rent boy) up and gives them money for whatever (sexual act) and then they go back (to the brothel) and say what they (potential worker) were like (looks and sexual performance) and if they sort of pass the test the other guy (who runs the brothel) will see them.

4.3 Involvement in Pornographic Films

A number of men referred to participating in pornographic films as a direct result of their involvement in sex work:

I have been involved in porn films, people I know make their own porn films. I’ve been involved in a few circulating out in the city...

4.4 Why Become Involved in Sex Work?

A number of reasons were given as to why men became involved in sex work:

A. No Real Viable Alternative

The majority of men became involved in sex work due to adverse personal circumstances attributed to:

- Drug Use

Some men initially became involved in sex work to fund their drug use and to pay off debts they had incurred as a result of their addiction:

I needed the money for my habit.... I owed two thousand pounds (to a dealer with paramilitary connections).

One man attributed his decision to enter sex work as the better of two evils, between that of committing a serious crime to purchase drugs and to pay off his debts, or to sell sex:

I had done assault and robberies and that before, and it was, like, you get heavy sentences... I seen it (renting) as sort of crime free, it wasn’t hurting anybody else apart from myself...I couldn’t stand going to jail...

In addition to requiring money to pay for drugs, men reported needing money to buy necessities such as clothes and food, to pay for housing, and to support a partner and, in some instances, their children.
• **Runaway: Roofless, Homeless**

For those men who had run away from home or absconded from care in their early teens, very few options existed, due to their age and personal circumstances, to earn money to survive:

*I was thirteen and I ran off (from home) to London. A thirteen year old, fresh faced laddie, can’t seem to find any other line of business but selling myself and that is what I did… it was self preservation really.*

*I was really stuck for money… I was living rough… I was only fifteen, there’s not a lot else I could do…*

• **Debts, Redundancy and Family Commitments**

Unable to manage both his and his partner’s debts, one man decided to start working as an escort:

*I started sex work to clear off the debts me and boyfriend could no longer manage… the boyfriend I had at the time was put in jail and all we had was taken away.*

Redundancy was the trigger for another individual to commence sex work:

*It was the money basically (why I started escorting). I used to have a very high profile, very well paid job. I used to work very hard for a company, but then they were taken over and I was on the redundancy list. I suddenly went from a very high income to nothing. I didn’t get much of a redundancy payment either.*

Left suddenly and unexpectedly without a job, and with financial commitments to his current partner, ex-wife and child, this man described how he had to quickly find an alternative source of finance:

*I suddenly faced the situation that I had financial commitments that I needed to finance somehow and I couldn’t get a job… I just needed to be inventive. I needed some money, I had lots of commitments and I thought while I’m looking for a more permanent job, this (escort work) might bring in a little bit of money. So I simply bought myself a mobile and put an advert (in the press) and just waited to see what would happen.*
• **Fund Academic Studies**

Unable to earn enough money from part time work to fund his way through university, one man decided to sell sex (rent and work in a brothel).

• **To Survive**

A common factor shared by men who simply felt they had no real alternative but to become involved in prostitution was survival: money for housing, food, clothing, to pay of debts, to support themselves, their partner and their children.

**B. No Choice & Peer Pressure**

Reflecting on their entry into prostitution, those men who were recruited by paedophiles and pimps concluded that they simply had no choice as to whether they wished to sell sex or not. These men referred to themselves as being ‘young and naive’ and ‘lured’ into sex work. In many cases they also referred to an element of positive encouragement, from boys and girls already participating in sex work, to become involved in prostitution:

*There was a bit of peer pressure, not a ‘go and do it (sex work)’ suggestions made, but a kind of nudge, nudge ‘you can do it (sex work)’... I made friends (with other young sex workers) and that was OK, but they had their own agenda, but (through renting) I knew people and had somebody to talk to (referring to time when he ran away from home).*

*I just felt left out at night time, not doing anything, and other people (in the house) were making money, I just thought there'd be a wee bit of a bond (between him and other children and young people in the house) if I joined in.*

Money was also used by paedophiles and pimps as an initial incentive for young men to become involved in sex work:

*I got offered money from a guy (pimp) ... at thirteen (years of age), a fiver then (in early 1980s) was a lot.*

*The money issue came up and it was quite appealing at fifteen (years of age).*
C. A Novelty

For some young men who had cruised, being offered money for sex, an act which they would have chosen to engage in regardless of payment, was initially seen as a novelty and a quick and easy way to obtain cash:

When I first started doing it I suppose, in a way, I didn’t see it as shagging a dirty old man. I just saw it as having sex and getting enjoyment and getting paid for it. That’s sort of gone away now.

One man described how he did not initially view what he was doing as renting:

I thought (when I started renting) this is cool, I’m getting this money for like sex… I never really knew (at the start) what I was doing, I never really knew it was renting at the start.

4.5 Sex Work: Initial Feelings

As the majority of men saw no real viable alternative, or simply felt they had no choice, in selling sex, it was not surprising that their initial feelings surrounding sex work were ones of fear, apprehension and repulsion. Words frequently used to describe their initial experience of sex work included: disgust; scared; threatened; nerve racking; worried.

4.6 Summary

There were a number of reasons as to how and why sex work began. Men were frequently coerced into prostitution, in their early to mid teens, by one or more individuals; pimps, paedophiles, money lenders, friends, partners, acquaintances and other sex workers being the main routes of entry identified.

Why an individual first became involved in sex work can be attributed to:

- Socio-economic issues
- Drug use
- Homelessness
- Peer pressure
- An absence of choice
- Exploring and affirming sexuality
A common element between many of these factors was the need to survive.

While many men were initially involved in one area of sex work, some men who rented, or had been initially involved with paedophiles, were later recruited into agency escort and brothel work. Involvement in pornographic films was also a by product, for some, of participation in sex work.
Section 5

Male Sex Work: Location & Client Contact

How clients were contacted and where sex work took place varied according to the type of sex work a man was involved in.

5.1 Independent Male Escorts: Client Contact & Sex Work Location

A. Obtaining Clients

Those men who worked solely as escorts, worked independently and not for an escort agency. They would obtain their clients through:

- Internet chat rooms and placing adverts on the internet:

- Placing adverts in the local and national press:

- Business cards distributed by past and existing clients:
• Adverts distributed among specific groups of individuals and displayed in certain locations:

B. Initial Contact with Clients

An independent escort’s initial contact with a prospective client was generally not face to face and was often made on the telephone, with a potential client phoning them, or through a written communication in an internet chat room. In each interaction the escort would outline the services he offered, the charge for those services and any travel expenses to be incurred.

C. Location for Independent Escort Work

Independent escorts worked from one or more locations:

• Solely from their own premises – This was either their own home or premises rented specifically as a venue for sex work.

• A combination of working from home and indoor public venues, primarily hotels and saunas.
• A combination of working from home, a hotel, sauna and their client’s home.

D. Geographical Flexibility of Independent Escort Work

Although the majority of independent escorts in the study lived in Edinburgh, Glasgow and surrounding areas, sex work was not always confined to these areas. Some escorts described how they would travel and meet clients in other towns and cities throughout the United Kingdom and, in one case, abroad. In such an event the client would pay their travel expenses and, in some cases, their time spent travelling.

While escorts based in Edinburgh and Glasgow also worked in other locations, equally, there were men who lived in other areas in Britain who also worked in the two Scottish cities:

A male sex worker who lives in London has just contacted me with regard to taking part in the study…… He informed me that he comes to Edinburgh to work as an escort a number of weeks each year. (Researcher’s Note)

The varied geographical locations for escort work is not restricted to those male sex workers who participated in the study, newspaper articles and escort adverts on the internet also attest to this:

XXX is available for in and out calls, and is prepared to travel a distance of 400 miles from XX. He is generally available at all times by prior arrangement.

Rates (Excluding Travelling Expenses) :-

<table>
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<th>Half Hour</th>
<th>£40.00</th>
<th>1 Hour</th>
<th>£60.00</th>
<th>2 Hours</th>
<th>£100.00</th>
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<td>£300.00</td>
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Contact - By Telephone on
Contact - By Email at

BRISTOL
also can travel.
(Cardiff, Bath, London, etc.)
23, hunky lad, with excellent body-fit, muscular and tanned. Friendly service. Also a good wrestler. Great in Speedos. Always horny.

Call :
5.2 Escort Agency Workers: Client Contact & Sex Work Location

A. Obtaining Clients

Agency escorts obtained many of their clients through advertising their services.

Escort agency advertisements were placed in the gay press and on the internet. While escort agency advertisements in the press generally referred to the agency itself, adverts placed on the internet frequently gave specific details on each individual escort, their picture, interests and contact email address:

1. Two examples of escort agency advertisements placed in the press

2. Two examples of internet escort agency advertisements
B. Initial Contact with Clients

Arrangements to meet clients were generally made through the escort agency. The escort was contacted on their mobile telephone by the agency and told when and where to meet their client(s). The sex worker’s first conversation with the client would, therefore, often only be when they first met.

C. Location for Agency Escort Work

Unlike independent escorts, agency workers did not tend to work from their own home. Sex work in these cases took place in an indoor venue usually of the client’s choice, the most common venues being a hotel or client’s home.

5.3 Rent Boys: Client Contact & Sex Work Location

A. Initial Client Contact

Rent boys generally did not advertise their services, and met their clients in the male cruising areas in Edinburgh and Glasgow. Cruising in Edinburgh and Glasgow took place in:

- Graveyards and surrounding roads

- Public toilets and surrounding roads
• Public green areas and surrounding roads

The men would walk about, or stand around, a cruising area until a client approached them on foot or in a car:

*I just walk down the opposite side of the road, turn round the corner and walk up (the other side of the road) and the cars, if you stand at the corner, then the cars going down can see you.*

The phone boxes in some cruising areas were also a source of contact between sex worker and client. For those men who had regular clients, contact was also made through the use of mobile telephones.

As well as making contact with their clients in cruising areas, an increasingly common and popular way for rent boys to meet prospective clients was in internet chat rooms. Some men would state openly in their communication in the chat room that they were renting, while others would use a coded net name to obtain and communicate with clients.

B. Location for Sex Work

While men who rented generally met their clients in cruising areas, this was not necessarily, where sex work would take place. Interviews and discussions with rent boys revealed that sex work also took place in:

• A Client’s Car

Rent boys described how they frequently met their clients in a cruising area and were then driven to a more private, often secluded location to have sex. These areas tended to be on the periphery of each city in a wooded and unlit area:

*Sometimes they will take you to a country park and you do the business with them there.*
You go away with someone (client) really private, like away out (of the city) and it’s just a wee place that’s really dark.

- A Client’s Home

Rent boys were frequently driven by their client to his home for sex:

*I’ll go back to theirs (client’s home).*

In some instances men would be paid to stay overnight at a client’s home:

*Sometimes I do overnights.*

*SOME OF THEM LIKE YOU TO STAY ALL NIGHT.*

- Sex Worker’s Home

There were less frequent accounts of a rent boy bringing a client back to his own home for sex. In such cases clients tended to be regulars:

*Well the only ones that come to my place are two of my regulars.*

- Room in a Sauna

Only one rent boy referred to having sex with some of his clients in a sauna. In these cases, sex work would only take place in a sauna if the client paid for a room there:

*There is this place... a sauna called xxxx, they have porn videos up on the television... I have been there (with clients) a few times. It (the sauna) doesn’t have a dark room in it, nothing like that, it’s just a normal sauna but you hire a room for a while and you go to the sauna with them (the client) and have sex in the room if you want... If it wasn’t eight pounds an hour (to hire a room) I would go a lot, obviously at eight pounds an hour the punters pay, you couldn’t afford it yourself else you wouldn’t make any money.*

5.4 Brothel Workers: Client Contact & Sex Work Location

As well as working as a rent boy, and occasionally as an agency escort, one man, at time of contact, also worked in a brothel, while two other men stated they had done so in the past.
A. Obtaining Clients

The advertisement of brothels was discreet, in great part due to the young age of sex workers. Clients became aware of brothels through:

- **Word of mouth, among a network of individuals:**
  
  *Several older guys would come back to the flat... he (brothel owner/manager) had contacts, he had friends of his own age who had friends of friends... It wasn't publicly advertised, it was all quiet, word of mouth, because most of the kids were under age...*

  
- **Flyers distributed throughout a network of specific individuals:**

  ![Flyer Image]

  **YOU CAN CHOOSE FROM 6 OF OUR YOUNGEST LADS HERE AT**
  
  **OUR BOYS ARE ALL VERY SEXUALLY EXPERIENCED.**
  
  **WE CAN CATER FOR ALL YOUR NEEDS, JUST ASK WHEN BOOKING.**
  
  **OUR BOYS OFFER:**
  
  **FULL BODY MASSAGE.**
  **ORAL SEX**
  **ANAL SEX**
  **FETISH**
  **RUBBERS/CHAINS/LEATHERS.**
  **FILMING AND PHOTOS.**
  **DUNGEON AND SERIOUS TORTURE.**
  **S&M**
  **WATERSPORTS AND SCAT.**
  
  **USE OF ANY TOYS AND EQUIPMENT PERMITTED.**
  **OUR BOYS WILL SUPPLY CONDOMS/LUBES AND Poppers.**
  
  **TO VIEW ANY OF OUR BOYS, CALL US FOR A VISIT.**
  
  **PHONE ON:**
  
  *(PHOTO ABOVE: 16YRS.)*
B. Client Contact

One sex worker described how he would wait at the brothel, generally the owner’s flat, which clients would either come into or telephone, and state their individual preferences and services required:

...basically they (clients) would come over to the flat and (they would choose from) whoever was there (sex workers) in the flat at the time they (those who ran the brothel) would introduce you to them (clients). If the client did not make his choice from those in the room he (the brothel owner) normally had photographs of all the kids he had at the time, but there was always people there (at the flat) enough to satisfy the client. Sometimes they’d (the clients) phone and they gave you a description of who they were looking for, the type of boy or girl and what they wanted...

Alternatively, another man described how he would often not present himself at the brothel, as the owner contacted him on his mobile phone to make arrangements to meet with a client, making brothel work, in this case, more comparable to escort agency arrangements:

They (those who run the brothel) have your (mobile) number and they’d just give you a ring and say ‘oh such and such wants to see you...’. You can go up there (to the brothel), there are loads of guys (sex workers) that go up and they (the clients) will phone up (the brothel)...

C. Location for Sex Work

While sex work took place in each brothel, men described other venues where the brothel owner would arrange for them to meet with clients:

- A client’s house
- A neutral venue pre-arranged by the client – for example, a disused flat
- Foreign destinations

One respondent described how it had been proposed that he should travel with a client to his home in South East Asia:

At the moment there’s a millionaire guy from xxxx, but he lives in Thailand and I’ve phoned up (his telephone number) to get him a few times, but each time I went (to the brothel) he’s not showed...I’m supposed to be going with him to Thailand.
D. Mixed Sex Brothels

When referring to the existence of brothels in Edinburgh and Glasgow, a number of male sex workers stated that they knew few which were exclusively male:

*I think there is only one kind of gay orientated brothel, but everybody seems to not know where it is, but there is plenty of mixed brothels…*

5.5 Summary

Male sex work took place in a variety of locations, both indoors and outdoors, in Edinburgh and Glasgow.

Type of sex work, that is whether a man was a brothel worker, independent escort, agency escort or rent boy, frequently influenced where sex work took place and how initial client contact was made. Methods of client contact included:

- Face to face contact with clients in cruising areas
- Adverts placed in the press and on the internet
- Contact with prospective clients in internet chat rooms
- Word of mouth through clients
- Distribution of business cards
- Distribution of private advertisements among networks of individuals
Section 6

Male Sex Work & Personal Safety

The personal safety of female sex workers in Scotland has, in recent years, attracted increased public attention. Through the media, reports of the murders and serious physical and sexual assaults on female prostitutes, particularly in Glasgow, have highlighted the risks and dangers involved in sex work.

While these incidents have raised the issue of safety for female prostitutes, there is, to date, still little known about the personal safety of men involved in sex work. In this section the personal safety of male sex workers in Edinburgh and Glasgow will be addressed to explore if safety is an issue and concern to men, as well as women, involved in prostitution.

6.1 Personal Safety: Issues Addressed

The personal safety of male sex workers was addressed in terms of:

- **Safety Precautions Taken**

  To discover if and what safety precautions were taken by male sex workers.

- **Safety: Place & Type of Sex Work**

  To investigate if male sex workers viewed one place as safer than another to work in, and if safety, with regard to location for sex work, varied according to type of sex work.

- **Incidents in Sex Work**

  Incidents in sex work which threatened men’s personal safety were investigated in terms of interactions between male sex workers and:

  - Their clients
  
  - Organisers of prostitution and their associates
  
  - Other male prostitutes
  
  - Members of the general public
Compromising Personal Safety

To explore if male sex workers felt that they had compromised their personal safety in any way(s).

Policing & Safety

To ascertain if incidents which occurred during sex work were reported to the police, and to explore the attitude of male sex workers to the police and the policing of prostitution.

Safety Information, Advice & Support

To discover if male sex workers received any information and advice on personal safety, if so, from whom, and the impact of such information. The issue of support was also addressed to ascertain if formal support with regard to personal safety was required and obtained by male sex workers.

6.2 Personal Safety in Sex Work: Safety Precautions Taken

A number of safety precautions were adopted by male sex workers:

A. Intuition: ‘Gut Instinct’

A safety measure adopted by all male sex workers was the use of intuition, which men frequently referred to as ‘gut instinct’:

If I didn’t feel safe with someone I wouldn’t go with them, I always go by gut instincts.

I always say go with your gut feeling.

If you ever get a wary feeling when you’re going with somebody then it’s not right and I’ve had that a couple of times. A couple of times I’ve said ‘stop (the car to the client)’ and got out of the car, every time I’ve got that feeling.

Intuition & Type of Sex Work

How, when and where intuition was employed was often dependent on the type of sex work a man was involved in. For men who rented on the streets of Edinburgh and Glasgow, instinctive safety measures were frequently adopted as a result of initial face to face contact with a potential client:
I would never get in a car with two people in it, they might try and attack you, I’m quite cautious that way you know.

You just know when you see them (client) if something isn’t right, can’t explain why, just a feeling you get.

For independent escorts the feeling that ‘something was not right’ was generally ascertained when a client initially contacted them by telephone. Independent escorts described how they would ask potential clients a number of probing questions in order to decide if the individual posed any potential threat to their safety:

I kind of suss them (potential client) out a wee bit on the phone, ask them about themselves…it’s a skill you acquire over the years.

I will turn it (the conversation) around. They (potential client) will say ‘describe yourself’ and that sort of thing, I will turn it around and say ‘well tell me about you, what do you look like?, what is it you want us to do?, were you wanting to explore something you haven’t done before?’ … I get them talking so I get a feel of what they’re like… you rely on your instincts a lot.

B. Safety Precautions & Environment

For many male sex workers, precautions to ensure their personal safety were a combination of using their intuition, and those taken according to the environment in which they worked. Common safety precautions taken by men according to sex work environment included:

1. If in a Cruising Area:

- Hiding objects to be used as weapons if and when required:

  You’re always watching your back, sometimes I’d go in (the graveyard) and plant a bottle and that here and there... just in case.

- Carrying a spray to be used in the event of an attack:

  Now when I go out I always carry a (deodorant) spray and after shave and I’d just spray them (attacker).
• Carrying a knife:

*I used to carry a wee blade (knife).*

• Other sex workers

A small number of street workers in Edinburgh saw each other as providing a degree of protection against attack:

*We’ll sometimes say to each other if there’s someone dodgy about.*

*It used to be if you fuck with one of us (rent boys) you fuck with us all.*

• Outreach workers

During the observation of male sex work sites it became evident that some rent boys viewed outreach workers as offering a degree of safety and protection from potential harm:

*xxxx (MSW) came up to the outreach van tonight and told us that there was a man beating up another man at the bottom of the road. xxxx said he thought we would know what to do. (Field Note)*

*It’s good that they’re (outreach workers) out there, I feel safer.*

*xxxx (MSW) came into the outreach van tonight. I was surprised to see him as he usually keeps his distance from me and the outreach workers. xxxx immediately sat down and asked if it was OK to stay in the bus for a while as he was trying to avoid someone. (Field Note)*

• Avoiding specific individuals

A number of rent boys referred to avoiding other sex workers whom they regarded as violent and troublesome:

*There is a few (other rent boys) I don’t feel comfortable with because they are really dodgy looking guys... just make me feel uncomfortable.*

*There’s one guy (MSW) who I don’t go near, he’s violent and mugs punters.*

*While I am talking to xxxx (rent boy) he points to one young man, another sex worker, sitting on a set of steps and states ‘don’t go near him, he’s a druggie, he’s trouble’. (Field Note)*
2. If in a Client’s Car:

- Making sure the car door was unlocked:

  *If I go in a car (with a client) I make sure it’s unlocked so I can get out if I think he’s (the client) going to turn nasty.*

3. If in a Client’s Home:

- Checking that the front door is unlocked.

- Checking that the windows in the room are unlocked.

- Checking that there’s no lock on the door in the room where sex work is to take place.

- Being aware of the layout of the client’s home and who else may be present in the house:

  *If it’s in someone’s home I’m a bit more cautious about where I’m going, whether there’s somebody else in the house I don’t know about, I’d look around to see how the place has been set out.*

- Phoning a partner or friend to inform them of their arrival at, and departure from, a client’s home:

  *I never go out by myself without anyone knowing. I would always say to them (flat mate) if I was to be at a house in xxxx for seven o’clock, I would tell my flat mate the address, what time I’m getting there and I would say to them I will give you a phone or you give me a phone on my mobile – say ten past seven. So they would phone me at ten past seven and I would either say I’m fine, everything is OK, or else if it’s a bogus address, or if it was something serious, I would tell them and they would come and pick me up.*

  *I’m very cautious. When I first go and meet someone, for example, just to make the signal very clear to them, if it’s somebody I don’t know, or if I’ve met them once before but I’m not totally sure about them, I will, as soon as I arrive, I will tell them that I’ve got to check in. And I will phone my partner and I will tell them if I’m OK, I’ve left the address (with my partner) so they know where I am and I’ve got a couple of code phrases. I also say to them (partner – on the phone) I will check in at the usual time again, without saying when that (time) is. They (the client) know I have to check in again, so I’ve got control again.*
Phoning a friend or partner was a precautionary measure that only independent escorts referred to taking.

4. If in their Own Home with a Client:

- Having another individual, a housemate or partner, at home when a client was present:

  *Even when people (clients) come to mine (home) it’s always a threat.... anytime I have people there I would have my flatmate in the next room so I always feel more secure.*

- Having objects which could be used as weapons hidden throughout the house:

  *I feel safer in my own home as I am in control there and I know where all the hidden weapons are for safety sake.*

5. If in a Hotel with a Client:

- Phoning a friend or partner to confirm their safe arrival at, and departure from, a hotel:

  *I’d phone someone when I arrive (at the hotel) and then when I leave.*

- Attracting public attention

One respondent stated that he would have no reservations in ‘causing a scene’ in a hotel if he felt he was in danger:

*In a place like a hotel it’s not in their (the clients) interest (to be aggressive) because I wouldn’t have any qualms about making a great big commotion, that reflects more on them than me.*

C. Safety Precautions: Refusing Intoxicated Clients

A number of male sex workers refused to see clients who had consumed alcohol believing this might affect their safety:

*They (clients) don’t get through the front door if I smell alcohol on them.*

*I don’t feel safe with them (clients) if they’ve had a drink on them... the attitude just changes.*
D. Safety Precautions: Personal Abstention from & Limited Consumption of Alcohol

While some male sex workers refused to see clients who had consumed alcohol, other men permitted some of their regular clients to drink while they, themselves, would not drink, or only consume alcohol in moderation:

I’m very, very conscious about drinking too much in case I misjudged the client and they did something to me. I normally won’t actually take a drink unless they’re a client I have met before…

It’s just a social drink before he (regular client) comes back to the house for sex.

6.3 Personal Safety & Type of Sex Work: Sex Work Location & Clients

Male sex workers discussed their personal safety in terms of the places were they worked and the clients whom they saw, two factors which where often influenced by type of sex work (Section 5).

1. Personal Safety: Location & Type of Sex Work

Male sex workers considered some places less safe to work than others.

A. Least Safe Locations for Sex Work

Three locations were repeatedly referred to by men as being least safe for sex work:

- A Client’s Home & Car

Men frequently viewed being in a client’s home and being driven by a client, to what was often a remote and secluded location, as the two settings in which their safety was compromised most. The former setting was frequented by both rent boys and escorts, while the latter was used solely by men who rented:

Getting an address ten/ fifteen miles away – you don’t know what you are going to turn up to.

There is a danger when you go out to people’s houses and doing out calls.
There has always been a lot of physical abuse in renting and even in escorting, not so much in your own home, but going out to other people’s houses. There has always been the chance of getting physically beat up and it does happen.

I’m scared something might happen to me especially when I go away (in a client’s car). It’s at night, and you go away with somebody really private, like away out (of the city), and it’s just a wee place that’s really dark.

**Cruising Areas**

Many men who rented, and therefore frequented cruising areas, expressed feelings of unease and apprehension when working in these locations:

*Most people are scared (on the streets) I feel nervous when I go out (to rent).*

*You have to watch your back all the time, some people will try and take advantage of you.*

Such feelings were generally attributed to:

1. **Incidents of attacks on cruising men**

Street workers referred to attacks on cruising men by members of the general public. Such incidents led to fears and concerns for their own personal safety:

*People have been slashed and beaten badly there (cruising area)... it frightens me.*

*Around xxxx (cruising area) there’s a lot of gay bashings, remember that tourist nearly got scalped one time a couple of years ago?.*

*The Thursday after the attack (on a cruising man) I went into xxxx (cruising area) about midnight and I barely got in there and I just felt really uncomfortable. It was a really dark night, I just felt really uncomfortable knowing that there were folk there that could have been there at that time (of the attack on a cruising man).*

Incidents of physical attacks, sexual assaults and rapes on cruising men have been the subject of numerous newspaper articles. The following headlines are exemplary of newspaper reports over the past two years:
2. Poor lighting & visibility in some cruising areas

A number of street workers felt apprehensive when working due to the poor lighting and visibility in some cruising areas:

*I was up in xxxx (cruising area) and that’s really scary because it’s like really dark, you don’t know what’s going on in there (graveyard) cause there’s that many places people could come from …. those crypts there’s loads of them.*

3. Location of cruising areas

A number of men who rented at times felt unsafe due to the location of the cruising areas where worked.

- **Cruising areas: Edinburgh versus Glasgow**

Some men who predominantly rented in Edinburgh viewed the cruising areas in Glasgow as being more dangerous and described employing extra vigilance when in these areas:

*I watched my back every second I was through (in Glasgow)... it’s a lot more dangerous than Edinburgh, you get a lot of gay bashers up there (cruising area).*
In Glasgow you just need to watch what you are doing... it's very dangerous.

I was wary all the time when I was there (renting in Glasgow).

- Cruising areas: Outdoor location

While street workers themselves partly attributed concerns for their safety to the locations in which they worked, a number of independent escorts also believed that men who rented placed themselves in greater danger than escorts due to the locations in which they worked:

I don’t go up to the cruising areas and say ‘yeah, I’ll do whatever’, because I am very conscious that you are very exposed. You get men that are homophobic, who have some sort of grievance and they might knife you for example, or you might go back to their place, or you’re in their car. They’ve got control, they could pull out a knife on you and that sort of thing.

The rent boys do have a much harder time and a more dangerous time, they are out on the streets, out in the open. Whereas most (independent) escorts advertise in the comfort of their own home and nobody knows where they live, it is very discreet.

Renting is more dangerous (than escorting) because you have to hang out around public toilets in city centres and hang around pubs.

B. More Safe Locations for Sex Work

- Own Home

Men generally viewed working indoors, in their own home, as offering a greater degree of safety than working outdoors, in a client’s home, or client’s car.

I would normally speak to a client (on the phone) and offer for them to come back to my place...it works out better for me to go back to mine, I’m secure and I know where I am.

If you are working from home it is much safer.

Most of my clients come to mine. I did a few hotel calls a couple of months ago. I would restrict my out calls because there’s too much danger involved in doing out calls. Even at my age (30 years of age) and experience I am a bit hesitant unless I know the person.
This location for sex work was, on the whole, only utilised by men who worked as independent escorts.

- **Hotel**

Working from an indoor public building such as a hotel was viewed as a safer location for sex work by many men. This was attributed to the feeling that in a location where other members of the general public were present, or easily accessible, a client was more likely to ‘behave’. This location for sex work was, on the whole, only utilised by men who worked as agency or independent escorts.

2. Personal Safety & Clients

A. Safety: Clients & Type of Sex Work

Place and type of sex work (Section 5) were also thought by some men to influence client type.

Those men who identified as independent escorts frequently saw their line of sex work as being safer than renting, a view not only attributed to where they worked, but also to the clients whom they saw:

_I think the sort of clients I tend to see are generally a bit different from what a lot of rent boys see... I provide a very professional service rather than just sex... I trust and feel safe with most of my clients... they (clients) are very different to the clients the rent boys see._

One independent escort stated how he would never, unlike those men who rented, consider picking up a client in a cruising area:

_I'm not an escort that will go up to a cruising area for gay men and offer myself very cheaply. I tend to go for the higher end of the market where it's people that have got money to pay, good money... people who are more decent, more trustworthy... I choose my clients very carefully... there are some shady characters that hang about cruising areas._

Observations and discussions with other male sex workers support such views, and revealed that some men who frequented cruising areas were:

- Known sex offenders
- Known paedophiles
• Pimps and/or their associates

• Ex convicts with a history of violent behaviour

B. Safety & Regular Clients

Regardless of the type of sex work a man was involved in and where sex work took place, many male prostitutes saw seeing their regulars as safer than meeting new clients:

_I feel safer with my regulars because I've known them for a while._

_I definitely feel safer with my regulars cause I know them, I don't even check in anymore, I don't need to phone cause I know I am safe._

_You know it's pretty safe if you’ve seen them (clients) before._

_I feel safer with my regulars as I’ve known them for years and they are more (like) friends now._

6.4 Personal Safety in Sex Work: Incidents

Despite a general concern and awareness for their personal safety, many male sex workers had been the victims of sexual, physical and verbal attacks. Such incidents were perpetrated by a range of individuals.

A. Incidents & Clients

It was not uncommon for male sex workers to fall victim to their clients. Incidents perpetrated by clients included:

• Rape

A number of male sex workers described how they had been raped on one or more occasions by clients:

_Once your head is forced down the pillow you don’t have a lot of time to think how to save yourself, a lot of the time they (clients) don’t even lubricate just fierce and arrogant they just bang in... nowadays you would classify it as rape._

_His (client) attitude was aggressive I told him that I didn’t want to do it (have anal sex), I told him that the first time that it was sore and I didn’t want to do it then, but then one time I went (to the brothel) and he was_
there and I really did not want to do it (have anal sex) but his attitude was ‘but I need your arse, I want your arse’.

JC: Have you ever been forced to have anal sex against your will by a client?

MSW: Yes...maybe a dozen times.

Some men had been gang raped. Common scenarios which led to gang rape were:

1. Meeting a client in a cruising area who then drove them to a flat where a number of other men were waiting.

2. Being asked to meet a client at a specific location by an escort agency or brothel manager only to realise on arrival that the client was not alone:

I’ve been in situations where there has been multiple sex when I was told there would be one or two (men) and I was stuck there and I couldn’t walk out the door, (I) had to take it as it comes. There have been times when it has been pretty serious sex involved and a lot of S and M and torture and it has been quite graphic and when I refused to do it I have been threatened ‘you will get done in you know’.

• Sexual Assault

Many male sex workers described incidents of sexual assault or attempted sexual assault by clients:

JC: Have you ever been forced to have oral sex against your will by a client?

MSW: Yes...he was bigger than me, so they went on and did it.

This guy tries to do it (grab him sexually) every now and then, I’m standing at the sinks in the (public) toilet and he just comes in and his hands are all over me...he thinks he can just go up and grope anybody that hangs about the toilet.

One time it got scary up there (brothel), a guy, he’s really big, in fact he’s taller than me, he just lay down on top of me and like I couldn’t move. I tried to get him off but I couldn’t move and for a second he held me down, felt me up and tried to fuck me and that scared me.
Physical Assault

Men described how they and other sex workers had been physically attacked by clients:

Sometimes there is not even sex involved they (clients) just want to beat you up and toss you out and that has happened a few times.

I've seen a lot of my friends, my close friends who are doing escorting, I've seen them in the street black and blue and bleeding all over when they have been assaulted by a client... there is a lot of distressing scenes.

Some guys just like to beat you up.

There have been times I have refused to do things and some (clients) have lifted their hand a few times, you just have to live with it and clock watch.

Some men attributed their clients’ use of drugs during sex to incidents of physical violence:

A lot of the clients are smoking hash, taking poppers...sometimes they just take too much drugs at the one time and they just get a bit physical and start slapping you and biting you or something...In that situation I just finish whatever I’m doing, I just stop and say ‘that’s it, I’ve had enough’. A lot of the time it has not been enough for them, they make a swing at you or whatever and pick up furniture and you just get out that door quick.

Threats of Physical Violence

I got a blade (knife) pulled out on me, I think he thought I was going to try to rob him.

I've been threatened that if I refused to do what I was told then I would get a kicking.

Not Isolated Incidents

Unfortunately incidents of rape, sexual, physical and verbal attacks perpetrated by clients were not one of occurrences:

I've been raped twice, I've been battered, I've been used. I've done the business then didn't get the money...it’s not fun...whenever I have seen
a young person up there (cruising area) I just say ‘look have you any idea what kind of people you may be associating with?... it’s not worth it...’

B. Incidents & Organisers of Sex Work & their Associates

While male sex workers fell victim to their clients, other perpetrators of, and accessories to, physical harm were those men who organised sex work and their associates.

When discussing sex work in the context of safety, those men who had been, or were, involved in organised prostitution, referred to incidents of:

- Threats of Physical Violence & Death

A frequent comment made by men who had become involved with paedophiles, pimps or brothel owners, was the extreme pressure placed on them not to divulge their, and other young peoples’, participation in organised sex work:

You got a warning not to talk about it (the brothel) to anybody, else something would happen to me.

MSW: When you are in a situation like that (referring to prior involvement with paedophiles between the age of 15 – 18 years) you don’t say a word, there is a pretty dangerous fall back if you start opening your mouth about things...when there are kids involved, you open your mouth and you are in danger, serious danger.

JC: What type of danger?

MSW: In that situation they would threaten to kill you, under-age kids, heavy drugs, anything like that, it’s serious and if they thought you were going to open your mouth they would threaten you, give you a verbal threat to keep quiet .

It was like an unspoken rule (when working for a pimp), you don’t ask where they (other sex workers) come from, you don’t ask what their age is, you don’t ask if it’s their real name, you don’t ask why they are doing it and you don’t tell anyone else about what you’re doing.

- Sexual Exploitation

A number of men who worked for escort agencies and in brothels referred to being initially ‘couch tested’ (Section 4.2) and then repeatedly made to partake
in sexual acts with those men who ran such establishments:

*He (agency owner) just likes touching you and I don’t like him touching me. I put up with it for a while and then it was like ‘not anymore!’; he’s not just running an escort agency he’s taking advantage of the people who work for him. His excuse for it was if you want to work in the sex industry then you have to get used to sex.*

Those men who had been involved in organised sex work, particularly those involved with paedophiles, described how they often had no choice about whom, or how many, clients they saw and where they met them:

*You would be told to turn up at a desolate flat in xxxx. You didn’t know what to expect, half the buildings (had) corrugated iron over the windows and there was this one wee flat on the top floor and you’d walk in and there would be about four or five people (clients) smoking and taking drugs.*

*Sometimes there is maybe three or four guys in their forties or fifties and it would be me and them together. I would basically service four or five guys and there have been times when I have turned up and there has been ten (men) involved as well.*

*When you are wee bit older it’s not too bad because you have got your own choice if you turn up in somebody’s flat and if there is more than one person you can try and just walk away. When you are at a young age you are vulnerable to anything, there is nobody to help you and you have got to stick to situations.*

As a result, a number of men, particularly those involved with paedophiles, had been placed in situations where rape and serious physical, sexual and verbal assault had occurred:

*It’s a different world ...what goes on when people go back to other people’s flats, the abuse a lot of them (young boys) go through, near death a lot of them, the drugs involved, the drink and under age sex...*

To the organisers of sex work these children and young men were ultimately seen, not as a person, but as a business commodity:

*He’s (boss) never really bothered with safety (of sex workers), as if he has never really cared, he was just there to get the business and get the clients.*
Those kids (referring to other children and teenagers who had also been involved with paedophiles) for whatever reason they are there, if it is their family that is involved in it, or if it is the friends of the family, whatever, the kids are there and they know what the situation is but they have no power over it at all. They are there to be used for business.

One male sex worker expressed his concern as to the fate of the other young people whom he had met as a young teenager:

I’ve always thought about the kids that I have seen over the years and you think, you wonder, what happened to them you just hope for the best.

C. Incidents & Other Sex Workers

Few incidents between male sex workers were recorded, those which were took place between rent boys. Men who worked solely as escorts stated they had little or no contact with other sex workers and hence felt that their safety was not affected by other workers:

I don’t really know anyone else who works.

I work very much on my own...I have very little contact with other escorts.

Incidents which took place between rent boys included:

- Physical Violence

Men referred to incidents of physical violence resulting from one sex worker charging less for his services than another:

We had somebody undercutting us and they (other rent boys) weren’t happy about it, some new boy from xxxx had been pals with them and had gone and undercut their prices and somebody gave him a kicking.

- Physical fights and verbal arguments resulting from general disagreements between friends and boyfriends who also rented:

I’ve fallen out with xxxx and xxxx (rent boys) a few times.

Me and xxxx (now an ex rent boy) had a fight last year, it was just a physical fight between the pair of us and that was it.
D. Incidents & the General Public

Male sex workers referred to incidents of verbal abuse and physical assault perpetrated by members of the general public.

1. Verbal Abuse

Verbal abuse was experienced by both escorts and street workers.

- **Escorts**

Verbal abuse for men who worked as escorts was generally not face to face, with threats and comments being made over the telephone:

> *I was told over the phone that I was going to be decapitated.*

- **Street Workers**

Street workers (rent boys) frequently experienced verbal threats and abuse directly, in person, usually from groups of young men walking or driving through cruising areas:

> You get abuse, it’s just boy racers and passers by… like ‘poofie rent boys’ and all that shit.

> When there was a bench up xxxx (cruising area) people passing they used to slag us (rent boys), that sort of shit abuse, just ‘street guys’ and all that.

2. Physical Assault

A number of street workers had been physically assaulted by members of the general public:

> *I was informed by xxxx (outreach worker) that xxxx (rent boy) had been attacked and beaten up in xxxx (cruising area). (Field Note)*

In some instances rent boys described how they had been assaulted by men who posed as clients:

> There’s been four occasions (of physical assault), one time I got battered back at a clients house and I got back there and there were other guys there, it was kind of like a gay bashing.
3. Kerb Crawling

One rent boy recalled how he had been kerb crawled on a number of occasions:

_You get folk that go up and down (the road) in their car and will follow you, just keep following you, until you eventually think ‘right’, so you go up to the car and sometimes tell them to fuck off and stop following you. But you get guys that follow you all night in the car and once you leave that (cruising) area they’ll still be following you, it’s pretty scary._

4. Stalking

One rent boy described how he was currently being stalked:

_…. I knew I was getting followed for some strange reason (leaving the cruising area) …I went home and the car followed me there, then (in the flat) I went straight to the window and looked down, I looked down and I let them know what flat I was in, it was just a natural reaction (to go to the window and look down), I remember the car… then I started getting phone calls, they managed to get my number, I was told I was getting my eyes gauged out, I was getting knives put through my door, it was a plastic knife, but it was wrapped up with a piece of paper and an elastic band telling me I was getting my throat slit, I was getting killed…_

E. Incidents & Luck

The minority of male sex workers who had not been the victims of violence, assault, or abuse, attributed this solely to extreme luck:

**JC:** Have you been slashed or stabbed?

**MSW:** No and that’s really rather good.

I’ve been very lucky, I know I’ve been very lucky.

I’ve been fortunate, I haven’t had any bad experiences.

One man felt that regardless of any precautionary measures taken there was little that could be done to wholly ensure his safety during sex work and thus placed his life in the hands of fate:

If I’m going to get done in (killed) and my body found somewhere it’s going to happen anyway. Fate is fate and if something is going to happen to you it will happen to you eventually, it won’t matter whether
it’s down xxxx (cruising area) or whether it’s somewhere else, it’s going to happen to you eventually so there’s no point worrying about it.

F. Visible Facial Scars

During fieldwork the researcher (JC) noted that many street workers had visible scars on their face, an indication of possible violent interactions.

6.5 Compromising Personal Safety

While many men believed that sex work was a risk taking practice regardless of precautionary measures taken, some men felt that they had further compromised their own personal safety through their excessive use of drugs, gas, glue and alcohol:

I’m sometimes out of my face on drugs so I won’t remember (what clients he’s had)…. I do remember getting into cars and stuff like that, but see sometimes I’ve been in punters’ cars and they’ve said I’ve been there before and I’ve thought I’ve never seen you before… that scares me…I’m probably in more danger when I’m on drugs.

However, while a number of men stated that they had compromised their personal safety through taking drugs, alcohol, gas and glue, they felt that without their use and consumption they would be unable to sell sex (Section 7.3).

6.6 Client Safety: Extortion & Muggings

An issue which emerged during discussions on personal safety was the extortion and mugging of clients by a small number of street workers:

I only know of one xxxx (rent boy) who is known for mugging punters.

It (mugging a client) is a common thing with some younger ones (sex workers). I know a lot of younger rent boys who go with clients especially if they are doing overnight stays. Some older clients like to sleep with them (overnight)…it’s commonplace that they raid the house, they (the client) can’t do anything they are not in a position to phone the police and it does happen… I have heard of people that I’ve known that have done it.

You know xxxx (rent boy 1)?… There is a lot of robbing going on so that messed up business for the other guys (rent boys). It was xxxx (rent boy 1) and another boy called xxxx (rent boy 2), now basically what they done was xxxx (rent boy 1) he went in and done the business (had sex)
with the guy and then xxxx (rent boy 2) kicked the door in and said ‘that’s my wee brother now I want money off you or I’m going to the police’. He (rent boy 1) used to tie people up, he tied a guy up in his house, he used his credit cards, he used his house for about a week and fed him every couple of hours. There is also an old priest that was done too. He drives past xxxx (cruising area) but he doesn’t stop now because xxxx (rent boy 1) blackmailed him.

Many male sex workers expressed their concern and annoyance at the actions of a minority of men:

He (rent boy) scares a lot of the punters away, the punters don’t like him because everybody knows what he has done (mugging and blackmailing clients)…It just annoys me because we are down there (cruising area) trying to get punters and he scares them away so we can’t get punters because he’s scaring them away.

6.7 Police & Safety

A. Non Reporting of Incidents

While the majority of male sex workers had been the victims of repeated sexual, physical and verbal attacks, none of them, at time of contact, had reported these incidents to the police. Non-reporting was generally attributed to:

- A past experience with the police, unrelated to sex work

One male sex worker described how a family incident in the past had led him to despise and distrust the police:

I don’t trust the police, I don’t like the police, I don’t like them at all …when I was younger there was one incident at the (family) house and they (the police) were just completely off. I mean my mums face had been completely and utterly smashed open and they (the police) had the attitude that he (mother’s partner) had done the right thing that he had hit a woman, and they (the police) were acting like this in front of me!... I don’t like the police.

- Fear

Those men who had first become involved in sex work in their early teens, and were therefore engaged in underage sex, conveyed their fear of the police at that time:
You were just terrified if you saw the police walk past you, you would run a mile, like you are underage and you are trawling for business, you think ‘they are going to arrest me and take me home to my parents’, you get beat up (by clients) and just accept it, just never go near the police.

I was very careful (when out renting to avoid the police) I knew where to hide (from the police).

- The view that attacks on male sex workers would be treated with little interest or concern by the police

A number of men believed that if they reported an incident to the police it would be treated less seriously due to the fact that it had occurred during sex work:

There’s no point (in reporting), there’s just no point, they (police) wouldn’t care about what happened to me...

Linked to this view was the belief, by some men, that the police would view any incident which occurred during sex work as being their own fault. These men subsequently saw the police as adopting a victim blaming approach:

The police just wouldn’t listen, they’d just say ‘oh well it’s your own stupid fault!’.

I wouldn’t (report anything to the police) because they would probably say it was your own fault.

- Perceived general homophobic attitude of the police

For some male sex workers who identified as gay, non-reporting of incidents was also linked to their sexuality. These men felt that due to the fact that they were gay the incident, if reported, would be treated differently, with their sexuality and not the attack taking precedence in subsequent police actions and reactions:

There is a very negative attitude from the police about gay people especially in the sex industry, they never seem to take a liking for it so I have always avoided going to the police especially if you are doing business (sex work) and something happens.

I find them (the police) not very nice, lets just say them finding out some of us (rent boys) are gay.
• Police harassment

A view reiterated by a number of street workers in Glasgow was that they had been repeatedly stopped and sometimes lifted by the police, for no justifiable reason. Such experiences had led to feelings of distrust and anger towards the police:

I’ve been stopped and they’ve (the police) just pure harassed me.

I spoke to xxxx (rent boy) tonight. In previous meetings he had discussed how the police had repeatedly stopped him each time he was out renting and on some occasions had lifted him and brought him to the police station for what, he felt, was no justifiable reason. He told me that he felt he could no longer handle such repeated police actions and failed to understand why he was the one individual who was always stopped and questioned. He told me that he had asked one of the outreach workers to arrange a meeting between him and a senior police officer to discuss his treatment. (Field Note)

I met xxxx (rent boy) tonight. I mentioned that I had seen him with two police officers the previous afternoon. He informed me that this was a common occurrence and that the police would often stop him, question him as to why he was in a cruising area, and on many occasions ask him to empty his pockets. He informed me that he had previously been lifted by the police for having a condom in his pocket. (Field Note)

I hate having to watch my back every two seconds to see if the police are about…sometimes you get lifted, I’m just walking along doing nothing and I get lifted!…they come down into the park, the police come down into the park and arrest people.

Men who rented in Edinburgh and Glasgow referred to the policing of sex work in Glasgow in more negative terms:

They (rent boys in Glasgow) have got more hassle from the police…it’s a whole different scene (in Glasgow).

The police don’t bother you in Edinburgh… I know a boy in Glasgow who has had loads of street cautions and he still goes down there (cruising area).

In Glasgow they (the police) are more rougher, you get pulled: Any tattoos?, Any scars?, What’s your name?. Here (in Edinburgh) they seem more relaxed, the police.
• **Contradictory policing**

A number of men in Glasgow referred to, what they viewed as, the apparent schizophrenic policing of male sex work:

*An officer asked me to watch out for this guy (who had been attacking women), but he was the same person that told me to get the fuck away from xxxx (cruising area) recently...It’s double standards, if we’re not supposed to be there why are we (sex workers) supposed to give them a shout!? (provide assistance).*

The issue of policing in Glasgow was also discussed in terms of how male sex work was policed in comparison to female sex work:

*They (police) treat us different to them (female sex workers) I don’t see them (police) hassling them (female sex workers).*

**B. A Change in Policing Required**

It was the view of some male sex workers that the present policing of male sex work, particularly in Glasgow, needed to change and improve:

*They may try and move it (sex work) out of one area, but it’s not going to stop, it’ll just go somewhere else...it’s the oldest profession.*

*I have a street caution, but see every six months or a year, I don’t know if it is six months, it (police record) gets changed back to the start again so you have got no cautions, so you get a clean slate. So people (rent boys) just go away for a while and then just come back down (to cruising area) again. It (being cautioned) is not going to change anything.*

*The police go down (cruising area) and they arrest people...anybody can walk down xxxx (cruising area), so do they jail everybody that walks down there !?, It (policing) needs to change.*

The latter man believed that if an alternative approach to policing male sex work in Glasgow were adopted, more male prostitutes would assist the police with various lines of enquiry:

*See the amount of answers you’d get (if policing was different), all what happened here (in cruising area) in the summer with people getting attacked. See if they (police) went to the rent boys and said ‘Did you see what happened?’ or ‘Do you know who did it?’, half the boys would say...*
‘Aye, I’d seen it’. But they (the police) don’t, they come up to the boys and say ‘Right, have you had any street cautions?’…

C. Male Sex Work: Going Underground?

A concern reiterated by some men was that if a change in the policing of male sex work, particularly in Glasgow, did not occur, male prostitution would increasingly become more covert, placing sex workers in greater personal danger. Indeed, a number of men already believed that male sex work was now increasingly moving underground:

*There are plenty of escorts and rent boys working, the majority is underground…nowadays I think it (male sex work) is more and more dangerous and more underground….*

6.8 Personal Safety: Professional Information, Advice & Support

The majority of male sex workers stated that they had received little or no formal information and advice on personal safety in sex work:

*I never got anything, it would be good. Is there any information to get?.

*Information on safety?, no, nothing.*

What professional information and advice some men did receive was minimal, but greatly appreciated, and tended to come verbally from outreach workers. This point was mentioned by male sex workers in Edinburgh only:

*The guy that got raped last week they (outreach workers) told me about it … They (outreach workers) will tell you to look out for yourself.*

*xxxx (outreach workers) are always telling us to watch ourselves.*

In some cases outreach workers and rent boys shared safety information:

*I get information from ROAM (Edinburgh outreach team), I talk to them about safety, I'd find out if there was anybody around robbing punters or anything like that and I'd alert them (outreach workers) if I knew anything.....I talk about if there’s been any trouble anywhere or they'll tell me…*

While for some men, outreach workers were an important source of information on the potential dangers in sex work, knowing how to protect oneself from harm...
(Section 6.2) was something frequently learnt as a direct result of adverse personal experiences while working:

_I know how to handle myself now and I know how to get out of situations now....You have to be assertive in this job. That’s something you have to learn the hard way._

Due to their experiences in prostitution, and their duration of involvement in sex work, many men felt that basic, general, safety information and advice would now be of little value to them. However, the need for such safety information when sex work first began was stressed:

_I’m a bit long in the tooth now but it (general safety information) would have been useful five years ago (when 1st started sex work)._  

_It would have been good if I’d got some (safety) information when I first started._

_There needs to be (safety) information for new rent and escorts._

Having received no information with regard to their personal safety when they first became involved in sex work, a number of men stated that they had not initially realised the dangers involved in selling sex:

_It’s very dangerous, I was very naïve ... wouldn’t advise anybody to do it._

Due to their duration of involvement and experiences in sex work, some men saw themselves as an important and vital source of safety information and advice to new sex workers:

_I could offer a lot of information to young people working, basically sensible things like making them (the client) leave their jackets and bags in the hall (if working in a flat/house). Let them (the client) undress first if you can, and if you can make it part of the game keep your boots on! Lots of stuff (safety information)..._  

_I consider myself well clued up, I could actually give advice..._

In the relative absence of any formal source of safety information, one man described how he was currently making his own efforts to contact and inform new sex workers about personal safety:

_I keep a very close eye on new faces on the escort scene and even some of the rent boys as well. I detect them in pubs, you are used to it – you know the signs, the body language, but especially the escorting..._
While point of entry into sex work was identified as the time when general information and advice on safety was required and would be utilised most, there was also a need for constant and more specific safety information throughout men’s involvement in sex work.

6.9 Summary

Personal safety is an important issue and concern to male sex workers, with the majority of men having been the victims of verbal, physical and sexual attacks. Those men who had not been attacked attributed this wholly to luck.

It is clear that male prostitutes are exposed and vulnerable to violence from a variety of individuals, from sex work clients and the organisers of prostitution, to other sex workers and the general public. While prostitution was generally regarded as a risk taking practice, renting and participation in organised sex work, in particular brothel work and involvement with paedophiles, were viewed as the more dangerous areas of prostitution. This was variously attributed to - the location for sex work; client numbers; client type; and the organisers of sex work themselves.

Acknowledging the potential dangers involved in sex work, a number of precautionary measures had been adopted by the majority of men. While almost all male sex workers referred to using their intuition, safety precautions, other than ‘gut instinct’, varied among sex workers according to the environment in which they worked and the type of sex work they were involved in.

While the majority of men appeared aware and concerned for their personal safety during sex work, this was often as a direct result of adverse personal experiences in prostitution and not as a result of safety information and advice received. Indeed, many male sex workers stated that they had not initially considered, or been aware of the potential dangers involved in sex work, they therefore stressed the need for new sex workers to have access to basic safety information and advice. While point of entry into sex work was identified as the time when general information and advice on safety was required, and would be utilised most, there was also a need for frequent and more specific safety information throughout mens’ involvement in sex work. Indeed, some men who rented in Edinburgh, at time of contact, referred to the active and pivotal role outreach workers played in discussing and relaying safety information and advice.

A major concern in terms of sex workers safety is their drug, substance and alcohol use. A number of male sex workers who used drugs and substances during prostitution reported being unable to recall clients they had been with. This is clearly an area of significant vulnerability for the male prostitute, however a number of men stated that without the ‘numbing’ effects of drugs, substances or alcohol they were unable to sell sex. Another concern is the use of drugs and
consumption of alcohol by sex work clients. In some cases a client's use of drugs and alcohol had led, or contributed to, incidents of physical violence and verbal aggression against a male sex worker.

In terms of the policing of male prostitution, there was a general negative attitude and distrust towards the police, a point particularly emphasised by those men who worked as rent boys in Glasgow. As a result, no incidents that had occurred during sex work had been reported to the police. Those men who were involved in sex work in Glasgow stressed the need for a change in the policing of street work and expressed their concern that if positive changes did not occur male sex work would increasingly become more covert, which, in turn, would increase the dangers involved for men in selling sex.
Section 7

Male Sex Work & Mental Health

When you do think about it (sex work), if you’ve been doing it for a long time, you think what has this done to me, what has this taken from me?... It’s fucked me up.

While the impact of male sex work on physical health, and in particular sexual health, has often been the sole or primary focus of a number of studies, an area which has received little attention is the affect of prostitution on mental health.

7.1 Impact of Sex Work on Mental Health

There was a consensus among many male sex workers that prostitution had had a detrimental affect on their mental health. A number of general references were made to the psychological impact of sex work:

Mentally it (renting) screwed me up, but not as much as it could have, if I had continued (renting full time) I would have been a basket case.

I’m not the person I was, it (sex work) messed me up (mentally).

There was something missing (in the guys he initially worked with) ... there was something missing mentally... I could see that could be me in a years time, two years time. I didn’t like seeing what the natural progression was.

It (sex work) can really fuck a lot of people up in the head... in every way.

You just start feeling like crap after a while... if you do it (sex work) too long it'll fuck you up.

More detailed and specific descriptions of sex work, and its emotional and psychological effects, refer to feelings of:

A. Depression

A number of men attributed being depressed to their participation in sex work:

It was like your basic, classic depression: slept all day, out all night,
coming back in totally mental…. one minute hyper, the next minute
down in the dumps.

I get depressed all the time about it (renting).

B. Apathy

While for some men prostitution did not induce depression, it did create a
general feeling of apathy, and an absence of interest in everyday life:

I wasn’t feeling depressed but I was feeling (that) I was definitely lacking
in something. I couldn’t find the joy in the simple things anymore. I
used to be able to enjoy a good book… I just didn’t want to do anything,
I couldn’t find the simple pleasures in life.

I wouldn’t say it (renting) gets me depressed, but it can get you down
slightly, but not to the depressed stage…I’ve no interests really, just
come here (cruising area).

C. Depreciation of Self Worth, Low Self Esteem & Self Loathing

As a result of their participation in prostitution a number of men perceived their
sole worth and value to lie in their ability to sexually perform:

I became less of a person and more of a sex toy.

They (clients) treat you like a piece of meat, they think ‘Oh, he’s a
prostitute, offer him thirty quid and I’ll get into his pants’.

Sometimes you feel very used… they (clients) don’t treat you with much
respect… They want you to come in, perform… at the end of the day I’m
still a human being who has feelings and I’m not a sex machine that
they can turn on, turn off, there to be used and abused.

Being treated as a machine, devoid of human feelings and emotions, in turn led
to feelings of low self esteem and a general lack of self worth among some male
sex workers:

You’re constantly being made to feel like a piece of meat and that you
just exist for sex and if you do something long enough you start to
believe it. That’s like ‘I’m not much’, that I’m just here to give men
pleasure, it’s not a nice feeling, it’s not a nice feeling at all. … I hate
anybody looking at me. I’ve been so used to being looked at as a piece
of meat.
My self-esteem is really low... I believe it’s the prostitution that’s done it to me.

I didn’t like it (renting). I didn’t like me. I’d get in the shower and I’d scrub myself, I used to go to my mate’s and get a shower. I used domestos (bleach) to clean myself – it (sex work) makes you feel dirty.

I feel embarrassed and ashamed of myself.

I thought less of myself for doing it (sex work).

D. Stress

Stress resulting from sex work was generally attributed to:

• The feeling of having to prostitute oneself

Sex work was, for the majority of men, something they felt they had to do due to their acute need for money:

It (the stress) can build up after being tired...It’s (sex work) stressful in terms of I feel I’ve got to do it for the money when I’d sometimes rather not.

It (sex work) just puts a lot of stress on me, having to live with myself everyday doing what I do, it’s just hard, but I have to do it.

• Client expectations

A number of men felt stressed due to their clients’ constant assumptions and expectations that they should always be available to provide their sexual services:

Sometimes they (clients) have no idea at all, they will phone and they think I’m gonna be there in half an hour. They’re oblivious to the fact that I might have other clients booked, I might be in Glasgow and they’re in Edinburgh and it takes an hour to get there. Equally I get calls (from clients) in the middle of the night, when I normally turn my phone off, they leave a message and it’s like one in the morning and I get this message, ‘Can you call me straight back?’ I think they (clients) expect you to be up all night... I choose to turn of my mobile at night to get some sleep, I mean during the day I have to be at work.

• Having to sexually perform
• Living a double life

Leading a double life, concealing their involvement in sex work from a range of people including partners, friends, work colleagues and family members, caused some men a considerable degree of stress:

You have got your psychological aspect (to sex work), you know, your reputation, you know if people are going to call you a prostitute...a whore. Friends may find out and they will just abandon you...

Myself, I try to be very private (about renting). I try to hide it, I don’t know if the other boys do...My girlfriend doesn’t know, I just tell her that I was robbing people up there (in the cruising area) and that.

My boss (at day job) is gay, I sometimes worry that he will phone (in reply to escort ad) ...It is sometimes like leading a double life, none of my friends know that I’m an escort, I don’t want to tell them... they might not approve. Occasionally I see clients at the pub when I’m out drinking, (with friends) I acknowledge their presence and say hello but I always leave it at that.

In a later conversation, the latter man discussed his worry and concern that if his ex-wife became aware that he was working as an escort he would no longer be permitted to see their child.

• Behaviour of potential clients

For those men who worked on the streets of Edinburgh and Glasgow the behaviour of potential clients in cruising areas was a frequent source of distress:

You get really stressed, guys just drive past you six or seven times (in cruising area), or they just do it all night and it’s just like ‘Well, are you going to stop and speak to me, or are you just going to drive past me all night!? and it gets really frustrating.

• Location for sex work

A number of men attributed stress in sex work to the locations where they worked:

I get stressed having to hang about (cruising area) waiting to get a punter.

I feel nervous, stressed sometimes not knowing what to expect when you get there (client’s home, or other venue pre-arranged by clients or
sex work organiser). It’s particularly stressful when I turn up and I find the place isn’t particularly the sort of place I’d like to be in.

E. Anxiety

Anxiety was variously expressed in the form of worry, fear, paranoia, and anger:

I personally went inward in myself. Sometimes you play out things that could happen in your head to go wrong, and it just keeps going and going, you end up scaring yourself too much, it’s weird.

You’re constantly worried in case a lot of men are thinking about you. Walking down the street you see an old man looking at you, it could be he’s just thinking ‘oh he has messy hair’ or it could be ‘Oh I want to kiss you’ and you think ‘Is he undressing me?’, and you just want to rip his face off and say ‘What are you looking at?!’. It (sex work) can get to you in a big way like that.

It’ll (sex work) fuck you up... folk that pay for it (sex) are usually older and if you go out and some old guy is staring at you on the street it really gets to you. Sometimes somebody gets to me so much I actually say something because they look like a punter and that’s what they remind me of... you just start to hate people cause of what’s happened (in sex work).

For one man, the sexual health problems he had acquired as a result of his participation in sex work, had led to feelings of fear and anxiety, which culminated in a nervous breakdown and hospitalisation:

I got an infection (STI), I can’t remember which one it was, but it was really worrying me and I was taking all sorts of drugs at the time, so I went looie and I went to xxxx (hospital) and I thought, I was paranoid, that I had AIDS....

F. Reduced Trust & Increased Cynicism

Losing trust in others and an increased cynicism with regard to personal relationships were two by-products of participation in sex work:

It’s (sex work) fucked me up. I always knew it affected me, but now I know (to) never take anything for granted, because you never know what people are thinking. You can never trust anybody too much, you teach yourself to talk to people and to relate to people, but always keep a bit of you to yourself, you never know what people are thinking.
I’m harder, less emotional, it’s (sex work) hard on me, it’s made me more cynical, a lot more cynical, a lot less trusting and overly cautious in relationships.

I hated all men (because of experiences in sex work). I couldn’t trust anybody. Trust goes away, you begin to know what men are like, you begin to know what they’re like when they want sex and you’ve seen married men, that have been married for years, and you think after all those years (of marriage) they’d be dedicated to their wives, but they are dedicated to their rent boys and their escorts. That’s what comes first, and you know that’s the way it works. So you get this, you build up this whole thing that that’s what all relationships are like, that love can’t work, this is what life’s really like.

The psychological impact of sex work, for some men, had an adverse affect on their ability to form and retain intimate personal relationships with others:

It’s difficult to explain, but it just never seems to happen, this one true love just doesn’t seem to happen. I get to a certain stage (in a relationship) and then it’s ‘No, enough is enough, see ya’. I stop myself, it’s not really fear of rejection, but it (sex work) has affected me...

Sometimes it (sex work) puts me off sex. When I did it (had sex with his girlfriend) I just thought about it (sex work).

All these years of doing sex (work) has affected me mentally. It has always been on a business-only basis. Being able to have sex with your boyfriend twice a day seven days a week, I wouldn’t know how to cope with that... With previous boyfriends I’d get the sex over and done with, sometimes I was even clock watching ...It will take me years to enjoy a relationship whether it’s a man or a woman...there is a lot of emotions involved (in a sexual relationship), because you are doing escorting and the renting you have no emotions, you are just doing a job....

G. Boredom and Isolation

For many men sex work was an integral part of their daily lives. The feeling that one’s life revolved around prostitution frequently led to feelings of boredom and isolation:

We (other sex workers) had a common life experience but that was the only thing we had in common. It was a very lonely existence. (Describing when he worked for a pimp at the age of 13).
It is (isolating) the way I operate, I mean I don’t belong to an agency… I very much work on my own, independently.

It’s actually quite sad when you think about it. It’s actually quite a boring life because all you do is spend your time hanging about toilets and graveyards having sex with people and then spending the money to try and impress those same people…That is all I used to do all day is hang about at the toilets, shag a punter and get money, go away feel guilty, have something to eat and go back to the toilet again and shag another punter.

7.2 Male Sex Work, Mental Health & Life Events

For some men, sex work was yet another contributory factor to their already deteriorating mental health:

I was always quite depressed anyway, but just things like it (sex work) bring you down more...

I never had an easy life, I mean life’s always slapped me in the face, so I never expected anything else. I always knew that it was going to be hard, because life is hard… you just have to get used to it.

I don’t think it’s just the escort work that causes the depression – it’s a combination of things. The fact that I used to have a very high powered, high profile job earning a lot of money, now I don’t, I’ve lost all of that. I’m finding it hard to get back to that sort of standard again. I get stressed because of my own relationship problems with my partner… I was quite depressed, I was actually on medication to try and treat my depression.

I get depressed sometimes about everything (in my life)... I’ve been attacked, robbed, burnt out of my house, my health (HIV positive).

The emotional and psychological impact of sex work and specific life events, for some men, manifested itself in self-harm:

**MSW:** I’ve been feeling depressed a lot lately, I mean I had a big argument with xxxx (partner) the other day, it was absolutely awful and I went of crying and cut my arms.

**JC:** Do you often cut yourself?
MSW: I used to, I used to do that a lot, my arms are completely scared (shows the researcher his arms which had multiple scars).

JC: Why do you do that ?.

MSW: To deal with anger, I don’t know how to deal with pain, the pain of everything. You see I don’t know how to let it out, so I let it out the only way that I’m allowed, I’m letting it out because I’m feeling pain... I’m just angry...

I thought of suicide at twenty four. I saw a shrink and that’s all I’m going to say about that.

I was in hospital for 3 ½ weeks and that was a breakdown, after that I o’d (overdosed) ... I felt suicidal... it was a cry for help.

I tried to slit my wrists... I once cut a little bit down there (pointing to one of his wrists) and I got about that far (pointing to a scar on his wrist) and I thought ‘No that’s too sore you don’t want to do that’. So I took some pills, it was because of the rapes (committed by clients). I was thinking about everything that had happened in my life, it all got too much.

7.3 Mental Health: Support, Advice & Service Provision

A. Existing Formal Support, Advice & Service Provision

Male sex workers referred to a general feeling of isolation, not knowing who or where to turn to for support to discuss the emotional and psychological effects of prostitution. When asked whom they talked to about their experiences in sex work, the general response was:

There is no one I can talk to....

I talk to no one.

There’s nobody to talk to, nobody at all.

In some cases the researcher was the only individual with whom the respondent had reportedly discussed their experiences in sex work in detail.

For those men who where initially involved in organised sex work, the need to seek psychological and emotional help was inhibited by threats from pimps and paedophiles not to confide in anyone:
Nobody, I couldn’t speak to anybody, I just went back to my boss, he just fixed me up (following attacks by clients) and I went back out again…There is so much going through your head at that age (15), so much happens and so many pressures and you just don’t know where to turn to, you just accept it (violence and abuse) and do what you can.

For a minority of men who had sought professional assistance, support was offered in the form of medication: antidepressants and tranquillisers, prescribed by their doctor. Medication was however reportedly of little, or no, help and these men emphasised the need to confront their psychological problems through appropriate, specialist counselling and psychotherapy:

**MSW:** I think the (doctor’s) idea is, it’s OK to feel depressed, but you can have these (pills) to fall back on. Kind of like (the doctor’s saying) ‘We don’t know how to help you so we’ll give you something that might be able to make you think you are OK’

**JC:** What would have helped you?

**MSW:** Not to be on such a long waiting list for psychotherapy.

Male sex workers highlighted the general absence, and need for, an appropriate service to provide emotional and psychological support for men who are involved in prostitution:

There is nothing here for somebody to walk in and say ‘I’m a rent boy and I’ve had a bad experience and I want to talk to somebody about it’. There is nothing here.

I would like support, it would be good from the point of view of just being able to talk to someone about some of the things I’ve experienced.

Just somebody to be there, it would be all right if there was somewhere to meet people.

**B. Male Sex Work, Existing Support & Coping Mechanisms**

In the absence of appropriate formal support to address the mental and psychological effects of prostitution, support for male sex workers took a number of alternative forms:
• Alcohol, Drugs & Substance Use

The consumption of alcohol and use of illicit drugs and substances such as gas and glue, were methods frequently used to deal with the emotional and psychological effects of sex work:

* I suppose it’s (taking drugs) a way of coping because I don’t like what I do.

* Everybody else (other MSWs) was on it (ecstacy), also the ones with the depressant mood swings it cheered them up for a short bit and then they would go a wee bit lower, so I thought, well, I’m a wee bit different from them (less depressed), if I can stay that we bit happier that wee bit longer...

A number of men stated that they could only sell sex if they were taking drugs, alcohol, or if they had inhaled gas or glue:

* I used to drink a lot (before going out to rent), say a bottle of vodka before I went out. I had to to deal with it, excuse me for being quite blunt here but some of the guys that turn up, they’re not very clean and if you’re in a proper state of mind it can be absolutely terrible, you just kinda have to be not sober.

* I take my glue out with me... just to keep me going, like when I go out doing punters I always take it.

For those men who rented on the streets of Edinburgh and Glasgow, cannabis was frequently smoked to relieve stress and boredom:

* When I’m out renting, cannabis is quite a constant thing.

* It (cannabis), it’s just something to pass the time (when out renting).

* I’m very partial to cannabis...sometimes you get really stressed, guys drive past you six or seven times, or they just do it all night...

While some men did not consume drugs or alcohol during sex work, they referred to taking them at other times in an attempt to obliterate the memory of their experiences:

* Sometimes I’d try and relax myself after I got paid (for sexual services) and I’d go and get a bag (of hash).
I used to drink, I used to drink an awful lot, but now I can’t drink as much cause the liver and kidneys won’t take as much.

The psychological pressures of sex work for some men were the trigger for their initial drug use:

I wasn’t using before I started (sex work).

For other men, with a pre-existing drug habit, sex work had exacerbated their drug use:

I take more junk now than I did when I started this (sex work).

• Cigarette Smoking

I smoke, that is my down side. I normally smoke about ten a day…I think a lot of pressures over the years (in sex work) has kept me on it (nicotine), that is why I have kept smoking, a lot of stress and pressure...

• Emotional Detachment

In an attempt to deal with their experiences in sex work some men tried to distance themselves, psychologically, from what they were doing:

I tried to separate what was happening to me, like they’re not getting me, they’ve got a body, they are doing what they like with it, but they’ve not got my mind.

I just try and block it (sex work) all out.

It’s my head, it’s just really messed up just thinking about things… It’s (sex work) disgusting….. I try not to think about it, I try and block it out.

After a while you learn to shut yourself of when you are actually doing a punter.

The strategy of emotional detachment, however, was on the whole, unsuccessful:

I have got to accept it (experiences in sex work) and get on with the rest of my life, but sometimes there are certain issues in my life that I just can’t put behind me and get on…
I still have a lot of memories and a lot of flashbacks and bad dreams about things in the past. It definitely affects you mentally.

7.4 Summary

There was a general consensus among male sex workers that participation in prostitution had detrimentally affected their mental health.

The adverse psychological impact of sex work was generally attributed to incidents of verbal, physical, sexual assault and abuse perpetrated by clients, organisers of sex work and members of the general public (Section 6.4). A culmination of life events, including experiences in sex work, also contributed to a reduction in psychological well being.

When discussing the impact that sex work had had on their mental health, the majority of men emphasised the pressing need for appropriate formal help, support, advice and service provision in this area. Current methods of support included the use of drugs, glue, gas, alcohol and cigarette smoking. At time of contact many men felt isolated, alone and vulnerable, unable to access appropriate support services to address and discuss their past and present experiences in and outside sex work and their impact, emotionally and psychologically.

In terms of research, the mental health of male sex workers is an area which continues to remain relatively unexplored and is certainly one that warrants future investigation.
Section 8
Male Sex Work & Physical Health

8.1 Background

The physical health of male sex workers has been an issue addressed in a number of studies. Research undertaken in this area, however, tends to be focused on the incidence of HIV and does not address the wider consequences of participation in prostitution in terms of physical health. Section eight looks at the issue of physical health in male sex work in the context of:

- Attitudes to sexual health
- Condom use
- Sexually transmitted infections (STIs)
- Personal safety in sex work
- The impact of mental health on physical health
- The impact of sex work on drug, substance and alcohol use
- The need for, and availability of, information, support, advice and service provision

8.2 Attitudes to Sexual Health & Sex Work

A. Attitudes to Sexual Health when Sex Work First Began

When asked if they had considered the affect that sex work might have on their sexual health when they first became involved in prostitution, the majority of men replied ‘no’. An initial lack of consideration for ones sexual health was attributed to:

- A lack of information and advice on sex and sexual health

You’re talking about 1982, you’re talking thirteen (years of age), getting some kind of idea of sex education. The town where I grew up, sex education didn’t start until fourth year secondary and that was just your basic bare minimum... There was no sex education from school and sex
education from my parents was non existent, at the time (when sex work began) I didn’t know anything.

I didn’t know what I could catch (when involvement in sex work first began)...I’d never done anything like that (sex work) before. I knew, obviously AIDS and something like that, but I didn’t know you could get other STDs... I’d never been told anything about things like that.

- Money, not sexual health, was initially their primary priority

For a number of men the need for, and enticement of, money initially took precedence over their sexual health:

*I was more interested in the money (at the start) – I didn’t really bother about my health.*

- Living for the moment

The initial attitude of some men to their involvement in sex work and sexual health was that they were infallible and not at risk of contracting infections:

*When you’re young you think ‘Nothing’s going to get me, I’ll be OK’. Well, that’s what I thought... I wasn’t really aware of some things (when I started renting). I just wanted to go out and have fun and go home. Everything else was too mature, it was too grown up and I wasn’t ready for that.*

B. Present Attitude to Sexual Health

While many men did not initially consider the effects that sex work might have on their sexual health, the majority of male sex workers now believed that their attitude to sexual health had changed, positively, over time. An increased concern for their sexual well being was attributed to an increase in knowledge and awareness of sexual health issues, generally acquired through:

- Adverse personal experiences

Acquiring an STI, infestation or, in a minority of cases HIV, was the trigger for a number of men to become more aware and concerned for their sexual well being:

*I think most people don’t think about it (HIV) until it happens, or until they get a scare, like come down with a sudden loss of appetite and lesions on the skin. And you think ‘Oh God, I’ve got AIDS’, or something else. For a lot of people it’s not until they get it (HIV), or they*
have a scare, that they actually realise the seriousness of it and you just need one client unprotected. Out of the hundreds (of clients) that you deal with every month, you just need one. If you have been doing it (sex work) that long you think ‘There is no chance of me catching it, I have had sex with hundreds of men’, and that is what a lot of the attitude is out there.

JC: Do you think you are more aware of your sexual health now, than when you first started renting?.

MSW: Yes.

JC: Why do you think you are?.

MSW: Because of what happened to me (referring to having crabs and gonorrhoea)... It (renting) is too dangerous that way for catching things.

JC: Do you think your attitude to your sexual health is different now to what it was in the past?.

MSW: Yes.

JC: In what way?.

MSW: Like I’m more aware of it now with my illness (HIV positive) and that.

- Professional information & advice

A number of men had become increasingly aware and, in turn, more concerned about their sexual health through information and advice they had received from outreach workers and other health care professionals:

It was them (outreach workers) that recommended I should get vaccinated for hepatitis... I never thought about getting jabs for stuff like that until they mentioned it.

I get all my information from ROAM (Edinburgh outreach team) and GUM ... I feel I’m very clued up now.
C. Passing On Information & Advice to Clients

An increased knowledge, concern and awareness of sexual health issues led some male sex workers to offer and pass on information and advice to their clients:

Yeah, I'm very concerned about my sexual health, I go to get checked very regularly, more because I'm aware that some of the transmitted diseases like chlamydia can show no symptoms at all that you have it... It could be doing damage and you could just be a carrier... So I tell my clients that while they're seeing other escorts or having casual sex aside from me that they ought to be getting checked.

...I sort of ask them (clients) 'do you see other escorts?' and 'do you normally go to clubs and pick up (men)?', if they 'yes' I'll normally, in some way, tactfully try and get into the conversation that they should get checked or ask 'do you get checked up?'...

A number of male sex workers believed it was not they, but their clients, that were either unconcerned, unaware, or ill informed about sex health issues:

I explain to them (clients) what they or me can catch (if they don't wear a condom), most of my clients are bi, married guys and don't have a clue about sexual diseases. Once I put them straight they are running for my condom store.

Those men who passed on sexual health information to their clients were primarily independent escorts.

8.3 Male Sex Work & Condom Use

A. Condom Source

Male sex workers generally used free condoms which they obtained from:

- Outreach workers
- Bar jars
- Sexual health clinics
- Use of C Card

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2 Bar jars - free condoms available in gay bars
3 A c card is a card that allows collection of free condoms from locations throughout Lothian
• Other sex workers

During observations of sex work sites it emerged that some male sex workers were taking condom packs from outreach workers to pass on to other working men.

C. Present Condom Use

The impact of sex work on sexual health was linked to the incidence of condom use with clients.

Despite an increase in awareness and concern for their sexual well being (Section 8.2), present condom use among male sex workers varied, with some men always using condoms with their clients and others using them occasionally or not at all.

1. Always Use Condoms

A minority of men stated that they now always used condoms when having anal and oral sex with clients:

_Oh aye, I use condoms with my punters, like if they’re having oral with me they’ve always got a condom on and I’ve always got a condom on, flavoured ones._

_I always use a condom, it’s important for yourself, for your own safety, but I think it’s also important for other people’s safety. You can never be 100% sure that at anytime you haven’t got anything._

Constant and regular condom use was attributed to the fear of contracting HIV and sexually transmitted infections:

_I worry about hepatitis, I worry about HIV, I worry about infections...It’s bad enough that I actually have to think about selling myself in the first place without catching anything from his (clients) body._

_Well you never know what they (clients) have got..._

2. Intermittent Condom Use

_I use them most of the time...sometimes it (sex) gets pretty unsafe._

While there were a number of sex workers who stated that they presently always used condoms with clients, the majority of men stated that they only sometimes, or most of the time, used condoms. These men fell into two categories:
• Those men who occasionally, or most of the time, used condoms when having oral and anal sex with clients.

• Those men who stated that they always used condoms when having anal sex with clients, but only occasionally used condoms when having oral sex with clients.

i. Those men who occasionally, or most of the time, used condoms when having oral & anal sex with clients:

I’ve done a few folk without using a condom…oral is sometimes protected.

I’m usually safe but there’s been times when I haven’t used them.

The intermittent use of condoms with clients was associated with:

• Exposure to infection & ejaculation

Some male sex workers believed that if a client did not ejaculate inside them during anal sex, this posed little risk to their sexual health:

It’s like if they (clients) don’t do it (anal sex) for long and they don’t come inside you, I suppose it’s a bit safe.

• Risk to sexual health & client image

Some male sex workers based their susceptibility to risk on a client’s image. Clients who appeared well dressed and ‘clean’, in terms of their personal presentation and hygiene, were considered by some men to pose little risk to their sexual health:

If they’re (clients) clean they’re fine.

If I’m not happy about the individual (client) when I see them, then oral sex has to be protected.

• Client preference

• Personal preference

Some men attributed occasional non-use of condoms to personal preference and pleasure seeking:

It’s not as much pleasure when you are using a condom.
• Desperation for money

Desperation for money was also linked to succumbing to clients’ wishes to not use condoms:

\[ It\ (condom\ use)\ depends\ on\ how\ desperate\ I\ was\ for\ money.\]

• Access to free condoms

Some men who rented stated that they did not purchase condoms due to their expense, but would take and use free condoms distributed by outreach workers. However, if they had no condoms in their possession when out renting, and outreach workers were not present, they would then have unprotected sex.

• Risk to sexual health & city were sex work takes place

Some male sex workers in Glasgow viewed selling sex in Edinburgh as posing a greater risk to their sexual well being in terms of contracting HIV:

\[ See\ Edinburgh\ has\ a\ lot\ of\ AIDS\ victims\ and\ stuff\ like\ that,\ Edinburgh\ has\ a\ bad\ name\ for\ that.\]

ii. Those men who stated that they always used condoms when having anal sex with clients, but only occasionally used condoms when having oral sex with clients

\[ I\ mean\ anal\ is\ always\ done\ with\ a\ condom,\ always,\ I\ wouldn’t\ do\ it\ otherwise.\ Oral – that\ depends.\]

\[ JC:\ Do\ you\ always\ use\ condoms\ when\ having\ oral\ sex\ with\ punters?\]

\[ MSW:\ No,\ no\ sometimes,\ not\ all\ the\ time.\]

The variable use of condoms when having oral sex with clients was attributed to:

• The association between risk to sexual health & ejaculation

Some male sex workers believed that if a client did not ejaculate in their mouth this posed little or no risk to their sexual health:

\[ I\ would\ never\ let\ them\ come\ in\ my\ mouth.\]
• **Client preference**

Despite acknowledging that unprotected oral sex might pose a risk to their personal health, a number of men failed to use condoms for oral sex as their clients preferred not to use them:

* I’m conscious that (not using a condom) exposes me, I suppose, to a higher risk (of infection), but a lot of guys (clients) don’t like using condoms for oral sex.

• **Desperation for money**

Desperation for money was also linked to succumbing to clients’ wishes to not use condoms during oral sex.

• **Personal preference**

Some men attributed frequent non-use of condoms during oral sex to personal preference and pleasure seeking.

• **Less likely to contract an infection through unsafe oral than anal sex**

While acknowledging that there was a degree of risk involved in unsafe oral sex, some male sex workers did not use condoms during oral sex with clients as they believed incidence of infection was extremely low.

3. **Never Use Condoms**

Those men who stated that they currently never used condoms when having sex with clients fell into two categories:

• **Men who did not use condoms for either oral or anal sex with clients**

• **Men who used condoms for anal sex with clients but did not use condoms for oral sex**

i. **Men who did not use condoms for either oral or anal sex with clients**

For those few men who presently neither used condoms for oral or anal sex with clients non use was attributed to:

• **Personal preference**

* I think I have been really unsafe cause I don’t like using condoms.*
In the case of one sex worker, although he now no longer used condoms with clients he stated that he had always done so in the past. Acknowledging the risks involved in not using condoms, this man felt it may now be ‘too late’ (in terms of contracting HIV) to revert back to his previous safer sexual behaviour. In this case the sex worker, although unaware, but concerned about his HIV status, had not considered the possible risk he might pose to himself, in terms of acquiring STIs in the future, and, if HIV positive, of infecting future clients and sexual partners.

- **Restricted access to free condoms**

A number of male sex workers expressed their concern that some young sex workers may not be using condoms with their clients due to barriers to acquiring them, something they attributed to:

- **Age**

There was a belief that condoms may be difficult to access for some young men due to their age, being unable to avail themselves of free condoms provided in gay bars:

> Now if the boys can’t go in xxxx (pub) and they are too young to go in xxxx (bar) and xxxx (club)... so they have got to get their condoms from someone...If the boys can’t get a supply of condoms that is another generation gone...I just feel that a lot of young ones nowadays, there is a lot more risks involved now (in sex work). There is still a lot (of young male sex workers) out there who don’t use condoms...There is a lot of clients now that are not as nice as they used to be, very aggressive...

- **Participation in organised sex work**

There was a general concern that some young men involved in organised sex work, particularly in brothels and those involved with paedophiles, were unable to access and use condoms.

- **Men who used condoms for anal sex with clients but did not use condoms for oral sex**

As with those male sex workers who occasionally did not use condoms for oral sex with clients, some men who presently never used condoms for oral sex attributed this to their belief that non use during oral sex posed little danger to their health:
I’d only use condoms for anal… as far as I’m concerned I’ve seen every study, everything about it (HIV) and there has been very, very, very few cases of HIV appearing from oral sex and those have been marked down to bleeding gums and mouth ulcers and the rest of it. When I have got bleeding gums and mouth ulcers there is nothing going in here (pointing to his mouth) but vodka.

As with other male sex workers, this man viewed the non-use of condoms and risk to sexual health in terms of HIV only.

C. Past Condom Use with Clients

While the majority of male sex workers presently used condoms most of the time with clients, many of them had failed to do so in the past. Non use of condoms in the past was primarily attributed to:

- An absence of choice

For those men who, in the past, had worked for paedophiles or pimps, non use of condoms was attributed solely to the fact that they had no power over the decision as to whether a condom was used or not:

When I first started (sex work) a lot of the clients never used condoms and I had sex with them. I was always afeart (scared) that I’d caught something… There was a three year gap between fifteen and eighteen (years of age), three years of constant sex, a lot of the time I wasn’t protected because we didn’t have a say. We couldn’t demand to wear condoms. We were told what to do, the clients told us what they wanted and we did it.

A lot of the kids were having full sex and there was a massive risk of catching HIV and hepatitis and other things. A lot of the kids didn’t wear condoms, like most of the clients didn’t want it (to wear condoms), so the kids have got to obey the clients.

- Lack of information and advice on sexual health

Many men first became involved in prostitution in their early to mid-teens and hence attributed their age and lack of information and advice on sexual health to initially not using condoms with clients:

I was young, I didn’t know any better.
8.4 Physical Health: Sexually Transmitted Infections & Infestations

Due to the variable use of condoms now and in the past (Section 8.3), the majority of male sex workers stated that they had had one or more sexually transmitted infections. The STIs referred to included gonorrhoea, genital herpes, chlamydia and hepatitis B, as well as infestations such as crabs and scabies. With regard to HIV, two male sex workers stated that they had contracted HIV from their clients:

*It (HIV) was definitely passed on to me in London by a punter.*

Referring to their past sexual behaviour during sex work, some men, somewhat fatalistically, attributed not having contracted HIV to good fortune:

*I am one of the lucky ones, I’ve managed to escape without anything serious. It is just the past two years that I have started getting all these infections and the rest of it, it’s just hitting me now, nature is being nasty to me. But at least I have nothing serious, just infections and viruses but they are all temporary things….. I’m just thankful in the ten years (been involved in sex work) I have not got AIDS and that is a big wow.*

While a minority of male sex workers professed to be HIV positive, a number of men stated that they were unsure of their HIV status as they had either never, or had not recently, been tested for HIV. Failure to go for an HIV test was primarily attributed to fear, the fear that they may have HIV and how they would subsequently deal with a positive test result:

*I’d rather not know … I’m petrified to go (for a test), before I was like ‘I can’t have HIV, it won’t happen to me’ but now I know much more about HIV and I’d rather just not know if I had it.*

*I have never felt the actual need for doing it (having an HIV test), it’s not the actual result but how I would handle the result if it was HIV positive and it was the case of you have x amount of time left. I know I have kind of up in the air plans for the future, to suddenly have a time frame put on those plans, no, that is not what I’m looking for, that is not the idea.*

Those men who were regularly tested for HIV, stressed the importance of routine testing:

*I just want to be that extra bit sure, to be honest I don’t expose myself to the virus other than what could be transmitted though oral sex I suppose… I normally go about once a quarter for an HIV test cause I*
know that I could have a test, I could see someone (client) tomorrow, go for an HIV test on Friday and it won’t show up. It takes three to six months to show up so I’m conscious that there’s time and that’s another reason why I’m concerned sex is protected.

8.5 Sex Work, Personal Safety & Physical Health

The physical health of male sex workers was closely linked to their personal safety (Section 6).

Incidents where male sex workers had been the victims of rape, sexual assault and physical violence impacted on men’s physical health in terms of:

- **Rape:** Transfer of STIs, cuts, bruises and scars.
- **Sexual assault:** Transfer of STIs, cuts, bruises and scars.
- **Physical violence:** Cuts, bruises and scars.

8.6 Impact of Mental Health on Physical Health

The majority of male sex workers believed that participation in sex work had detrimentally affected their mental health (Section 7), this, in turn, had also impacted on their physical health in terms of:

- **Attempts to take their own life**
- **Self harm and mutilation**
- **Commencement of drug use**
- **An increase in drug or substance use**
- **An increase in alcohol consumption**
- **A continuation to smoke cigarettes**
8.7 Physical Health: Illicit Drug, Substance & Alcohol Use

Sex work had affected the physical health of many men in terms of their use of illicit drugs and substances such as gas, glue and alcohol. For some men participation in sex work had:

A. Exacerbated Drug Use

For a number of men who were heavy drug users prior to their involvement in prostitution, sex work had exacerbated their drug use:

I use more now than I did before I started (renting).

An exacerbation in drug use was attributed to:

- Experiences in sex work (Section 6)
- An active encouragement by clients for male sex workers to take drugs
- An active encouragement by organisers of sex work for men to take drugs

B. Been the Trigger for Initial Drug Use

A number of men described how they had first started using drugs as a direct result of their participation in sex work. Male sex workers were introduced to drugs by:

- Their clients

Being offered drugs by their clients was, for some male sex workers, commonplace. One man described how easy it was to access drugs through clients and to subsequently become addicted:

MSW: I have strong will power and strong mental ability so I've not took drugs or anything like that, I've kept on top of my life...I must have been offered billions in drugs by now, a lot of the clients that I have had over the years have offered me drugs not just speed and hash, they have offered me bags of cocaine and heroin... I never touched it...

JC: What happened to the other guys you used to work with?

MSW: Most of them didn’t last long, they converted into druggies which was mostly what happened.
Sex work organisers

Men described how some organisers of sex work introduced men to heavy drugs for personal gain:

He’ll (brothel owner) get them (sex workers) onto drugs, get them addicted, so they go up and get the drugs from him…he told me he wouldn’t do that to me cause he liked me…selling drugs I suppose that’s where they make money from.

C. Led to an Increase in Substance Use

A number of men who used gas and glue described an increase in substance use resulting from sex work. As with those men who used drugs, gas and glue were used prior to, during, or after sex work as a coping mechanism (Section 7.3, pt B):

MSW: I’d take me glue out with me.

JC: Why would you take it out with you?

MSW: Just to keep me going…like I go out doing punters I always either have my tin of gas, or a tin of glue, and it just gives me, it gives me more confidence to do what I’m doing.

D. Led to the Excessive Alcohol Consumption

For some men, participation in sex work led to a radical increase in alcohol consumption and, in some cases, alcoholism (Section 7.3, pt B):

My average day was a bottle of vodka.

While many men did not believe they drank excessively, alcohol was often a regular component of sex work. Some men would often have one or more alcoholic drinks with their clients, while others referred to taking the ‘occasional brandy’ prior to sex work.

E. Continuation to Smoke

Some men attributed their involvement and experiences in sex work to continuing to smoke cigarettes (Section 7.3, pt B).
8.8 Professional Support, Information, Advice & Service Provision

A. Source of Professional Information & Advice

Male sex workers obtained professional information and advice on issues relating to physical and sexual health from a number of sources:

- Outreach workers

And to a lesser degree:

- GUM
- SOLAS 4
- Steve Retson Project 5
- Drugs services

This information was highly valued by those men who received it, promoting, on the whole, a greater awareness and understanding of issues relating to sexual health and well being.

B. Value of Outreach Workers

While formal information and advice on physical and sexual health was obtained from a variety of sources, outreach workers, particularly for men who rented, were the primary, and sometimes only, professional contact they had.

*It's good that xxxx and xxxx (outreach workers) are out there because if the boys can’t get supplies of condoms that is another generation down the pan.*

Outreach workers played a pivotal role in:

- Educating and informing male sex workers on physical and sexual health issues
- Providing individual assistance and support

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4 SOLAS - HIV & AIDS Organisation in Edinburgh
5 Steve Retson Project – Mens Health Project in Glasgow
• Distributing free condoms and lubricant

• Referring men to appropriate services, specific to their own individual needs

C. Development of Outreach Services

The value male sex workers attached to outreach workers was evident in their requests for the development of outreach services. Men referred to the need for:

• More regular outreach shifts

A number of street workers in Glasgow felt there was a need for more regular outreach shifts:

_They (outreach workers) need to be out more...sometimes you won’t see them for months._

Some Glasgow street workers stated that they saw outreach workers more during the summer than winter months:

_I can’t blame them (outreach workers) for coming out in the Summer, the winter, the weather is a bit of nuisance, but they do seem to come out a lot more in the summer._

• An alteration and/or the extension of outreach shift times

A number of male sex workers described having sporadic contact with outreach workers due to the time of day they rented:

_JC: Have you ever been on the outreach bus?._

_MSW: No it’s out a bit early...it’s about 10 o’clock (pm) or summit they (outreach workers) finish, but it’s always about 12 (mid night) when I go up to xxxx (cruising area)... it would be good if it were out then._

• A change in, or extension of, outreach shift days

Some male sex workers believed that outreach workers should re-consider not only the time of day they worked but the actual days when outreach was conducted:

_I have seen the cruising areas dead say on a Thursday but absolutely heaving (busy) on a Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday, dead on a Friday, then heaving on a Saturday. So xxxx (outreach workers) will be_
sitting on their tod most of the Thursday night cause the guys have been working the Wednesday night, they (male sex workers) need supplies (condoms and lube) but they just can’t get out of their bed (on a Thursday) cause they are so tired (from working the previous evening).

- Increased use of outreach bus

A number of men who rented in Edinburgh, stated that they would like to see the outreach bus out more than once a week. 6

- Continuation of internet outreach

During the research period the ROAM team in Edinburgh began to undertake internet, as well as street and telephone, outreach work. The ROAM team would access male sex workers through internet chat rooms.

Discussions with men whom ROAM had accessed via the internet highlight the value of this mode of interaction in harm reduction:

I met xxxx (MSW) tonight for a coffee. xxxx (MSW) referred to how he had first accessed ROAM through the internet. Revealing to the outreach workers that he worked as an escort he had asked for more information about ROAM, and then agreed to meet up with two of the outreach workers. He referred to the value of ROAM to sex workers and the fact that he would not have been aware of their work without their internet service.

- Increased funding for outreach services

A bit more funding for xxxx and xxxx (outreach workers).

D. Attendance at Sexual Health Services

Attendance at sexual health services such as GUM varied among male sex workers. While some men stated that they now always went for regular sexual health check ups, many men stated that they only sometimes, or had never, regularly accessed a sexual health service:

6 A bus is used for outreach work in Edinburgh only. The bus has a range of leaflets on safety, sexual and physical health issues displayed and available for male sex workers and cruising men to read and take away. The bus also has a seated area where outreach work can be conducted with male sex workers and cruising men.
I go about once a month, I'm very conscious about my own sexual health...

It was the Steve Retson Project that I went to (once)... but I have not been there since....

I went for some tests but didn’t go back for the results.

JC: Are you aware of these services (referring to a list of sexual health services)?

MSW: Yeah

JC: Have you ever considered going?

MSW: No, not really, it’s not my sort of thing...

- Regular use of sexual health services

Regular use of sexual health services was attributed to:

- A knowledge & awareness of sexual health issues

- An effort to prevent sexual ‘ill’ health – for themselves, their clients and their sexual partners

- To receive appropriate medical treatment & advice

- Intermittent use of sexual health services

Male sex workers who accessed sexual health services occasionally, attributed this to:

- A lack of motivation to attend for regular check ups

- A fear of test results

- Their chaotic lifestyle – a point particularly referred to by those men who were heavy drug users.

- The association between attendance at a sexual health service & sexual ill health

Some men did not see attending a sexual health service as a preventative
measure to ensure sexual well being but a service to be accessed only when they suspected they had an STI(s) or general sexual health concerns.

- **Location of sexual health services**

A number of men stated that sexual health services were not in close proximity to where they lived and/or sold sex.

- **Never access sexual health services**

Those men who had never accessed a sexual health service attributed this to:

- The fact that they simply had not considered accessing a sexual health service.
- Their chaotic lifestyle
- The association between attendance at a sexual health service & sexual ill health
- Limited access to & knowledge of sexual health services

An issue which arose during discussions around non attendance was the lack of knowledge and opportunity to access sexual health services some young men in organised sex work had:

*I’m just thankful that I have not caught anything that is my one priority ….but it would have been helpful if I’d known about it (sexual health services) being aware of something like that when I started because I would have went to it. It (attending GUM) probably would have been done secretly, I don’t think a lot of clients would have liked the fact that I was going to a health clinic that would scare a lot of them of.*

- **Client use of sexual health services**

During discussions around sexual health, many male sex workers expressed their concern that many of their clients may not be accessing sexual health services:

*I pass on leaflets to my clients and talk to them about their sexual health... most of them do not go to GUM ...*
8.9 Summary

Discussions with male sex workers reveal that prostitution has had a detrimental affect on many men’s physical and sexual health.

A. Sex Work & Sexual Health

In terms of their sexual health, the majority of men are more concerned for, and aware of, their sexual health now, than when they first became involved in prostitution, this, however, has not always translated into safer sex behaviour with clients. At time of contact men’s condom use during sex work ranged from always, sometimes, to never using condoms. Of particular concern are:

- Restricted access to free condoms by new and young male sex workers and those involved in organised sex work.
- Sex worker attitudes to condom use based on the association between risk to sexual health and:
  - Ejaculation
  - City where sex work takes place
  - Client image
- Non or intermittent use of condoms during sex work attributed to personal preference and pleasure seeking
- Intermittent condom use attributed to a desperate need for money
- Condom use and power relationships between client and sex worker
  In some cases it was the client who determined use or non use of condoms.
- Risk to sexual health is seen by some men in terms of HIV only.
- STIs and infestations acquired as a result of sex work
  Due to the variable use of condoms it was not surprising that the majority of male sex workers referred to having one or more STIs acquired from clients. Men also referred to getting infestations such as crabs and scabies from their clients. Two male sex workers stated that they had acquired HIV from a client.
- Varied attendance at sexual health services
  Like condom use, the use of sexual health services varied from regular, sporadic to never attending for regular check ups. Non attendance was attributed to:
- The association between attendance at a sexual health service and sexual ill health
- A male sex worker’s chaotic lifestyle
- Location of sexual health services
- Limited access to, and knowledge of, sexual health services
- A fear of test results

• Clients poor knowledge of sexual health issues and client non-attendance at sexual health services

A number of male sex workers expressed their concern that it was not they, but their clients, who were not accessing sexual health services. In such cases some male sex workers described how they had played a central role in imparting information on sexual health and sexual health services to their clients.

B. Sex Work & General Physical Health

In terms of physical health, a sex worker’s general physical health was, in many cases, affected by their experiences in sex work and the subsequent impact this had on their mental health and well being. Issues of concern are:

• The use of alcohol, drugs, gas, glue and cigarettes by male sex workers
• The use of drugs and alcohol by male sex work clients
• An active encouragement by clients for male sex workers to take drugs
• An active encouragement by organisers of sex work for men to take and become addicted to drugs
• Suicide attempts by male sex workers
• Recurrent episodes of self harm and mutilation by male sex workers
• Incidents of rape, sexual, verbal and physical assault on male sex workers and their impact.
Section 9
Leaving Sex Work

I need to get away from it.

9.1 Attempts to Leave Sex Work

A sense of regret prevailed among many male sex workers that they had ever become involved in prostitution:

It’s (sex work) not a good game to get into, it’s not at all... I think I was naïve, I mean it’s not OK, it’s degrading.

Yeah, I regret starting, I would have done anything for the money. I always did have morals but to be honest heroin takes everything from you, your values and all that stuff. I was desperate. I just can’t believe I was that desperate.

You don’t realise the implications. At the start, you think I’m getting paid and getting sex which is a bonus, that is the general attitude. Most people don’t realise the implications risk wise, the risk factors that are involved, both health, sexual, mental. It’s not just going out and having sex, there is so much behind it... You have got the psychological aspect of it, your reputation....

I thought it would be an easy way of trying to get money. Well, it’s not that easy, you don’t know (when you start sex work) what baggage comes along with it...I wish I hadn’t done it.

There’s loads of negative points (about renting). Stuff like meeting horrible people, being used, being treated like meat, being looked down upon, maybe getting a reputation like you’ll always be known as a rent boy. I mean there’s no real positive points...

As a result of such feelings the majority of men had attempted to exit prostitution on at least one or more occasions. Individual efforts to leave sex work were generally attributed to, not one, but a number of factors:

A. The Detrimental Impact of Sex work on Mental Health

The majority of men felt that sex work had had a negative affect on their mental...
health with feelings of: depression, stress, anxiety, apathy and low self esteem being some of the psychological effects experienced (Section 7).

B. The Detrimental Impact of Sex work on Physical Health

Participation in sex work had affected many men in terms of their physical health (Section 8).

C. Expiring ‘Shelf Life’

A number of rent boys felt that they were now too old to rent as they had lost their ‘boyish looks’. Renting was seen as a short term activity which would not last into older age:

I wanted to get out of it (renting). It’s not a career, it’s really good money but it’s only a job that will last so long… you are only nice looking to the punters for so long and after that you will never be able to do prostitution for the rest of your life because nobody wants to pay an old man for sex.

I’m not so new anymore, I’m getting that little bit older (17 years old) I haven’t got my boyish looks anymore. I mean guys love that, it’s really quite sick!.

People say you are past your sell-by date. Nobody wants you once you get to a certain age because you just look older.

D. Attempts to Stop Drug Use

For those men who had become involved in sex work to fund their drug use, entering a treatment program and making an attempt to confront their drug addiction had, in turn, resulted in efforts to exit prostitution.

E. The Initial Inquisitiveness & ‘Buzz’ from Sex Work had Diminished

It’s just hard for me to go out (renting) now, but when I was younger it was easier…it (renting) was new and exciting…when I first came out (as gay) I didn’t really have a standard and then I would sleep with anything… it didn’t really matter who it was, I could have sex with anybody, so that is how it was, it wasn’t difficult to have sex with a punter and get paid for it…. It was like the buzz from coming through to Edinburgh and the buzz of having sex with men…
F. The Need for a Normal Life – A Job, An Education

Part of many men’s attempts to exit prostitution was their need to introduce a sense of normality to their lives, to obtain a desirable mainstream job and qualifications:

_It’s like, do you want to be known for your body, or for your mind? I know which one I want. I want to be known for what I can do, not what I can perform, I have dreams... I’m tired of depending on my looks and on my body and want people to take me for me. I want to go out and learn all different stuff and want to be taken for what I know._

_It’s because I no longer want to be known as a number._

_If you are not trained to do anything then you will end up basically with nothing. You will end up with no qualifications and no job experience because you have wasted all your time renting... you will never be able to do it (sex work) for the rest of your life._

9.2 Why Attempts to Leave Sex Work Failed

Although the majority of men had attempted to leave sex work, a common pattern was to stop selling sex for a number of weeks, or months, then recommence:

_I have stopped on and off since I started, a couple of weeks here, a couple of weeks there, but the longest is a month and a half._

_I’ve stopped but I always go back._

_It’s like you say to yourself ‘What are you doing? (selling sex), you know you’re better than that!’... You just get into it and then you try and get out, but, like, maybe something will happen and you’ll go back into it... You’re determined to think to yourself, right, I’m going to go away from this, I’m not going to do this, but still you have to come back and do it sometimes..._

_I’ve stopped four or five times but started again._

Failure to permanently exit sex work was attributed to a number of factors:

A. A Desperate Need for Money

Many men described being caught in a vicious circle of poverty and deprivation.
It was the acute need for money to pay for food, clothing, housing, child support and debts that drew them back into prostitution. Sex work was a means of survival for these men and one in which they felt trapped:

You have to try and remind yourself you’re finding a source for money. It’s the quickest source that you can find at that point.

It makes you feel bad, but you need the money so you stay.

When you’ve got no money and you really need money you think, right, I can go up to xxxx (cruising area) and get some… It’s when you’re skint.

I done it (stopped renting) a few times, as I’d had enough. I stopped it but then I still owed some money and I ran out (of money), so I needed more money… I was desperate.

For some men who worked in mainstream employment and also sold sex, the primary reason for continuing in sex work was that the money they earned in their mainstream job was insufficient to cover their daily living costs and debts:

I need the money, money is not going to fall into your lap. I’ve got money now (today), but I know the feeling when I’ve no money. See I’m only (working) part time, Saturdays and Sundays, so when I get to the stage of having no money again I’ll be back up there (cruising area) renting.

At the end of the day I have got bills, debts to pay….It’s the frustration (not being able to stop sex work). I would like to have free time to go and do a training course in computing in the evening, so I could give myself more skills that are more marketable that could enable me to get a better paid job. But it’s a chicken and egg situation, I haven’t got enough money to pay for the course, so I do escort work to help me survive day to day.

B. Habituation: Money & Sex

A number of men referred to sex work as a ‘habit’. They stated that they had become ‘addicted’ to the ‘on the spot’ money acquired from selling sex:

It can be (difficult to leave sex work) because it does get addictive, you get addicted to the money.

…it is guaranteed money every night.
Although I have started an ordinary job I am still used to getting money on a daily basis (to pay for things), not waiting until the end of the month for a salary cheque. But hopefully one day I will get used to it (and stop escort work).

In the case of some men, the habit of selling sex was not wholly attributed to the need for money, but also for sex:

You get used to having a lot of sex.

...I need a lot of sex.

...I'm horny 24 hours a day, so I might as well do it (sex work), get that satisfaction and get money for it.

...the last couple of years it has not been the money, it has been the sex that has kept me (in sex work) ...

The habit of selling sex for one man meant that he now saw renting as an opportunistic act:

...it's an opportunistic thing and when I have one (a client) for the first time (in a while), it was an ego boost from hell, I was like over the moon, it was like good God I'm 28 (years old) and I'm getting about the same amount of money as, like, these 14/15 year old boys!... I would say over the last three/four years maybe 12/16 times (sold sex).

When I'm cruising, if I pick up a guy and he offers (money) I'll take it, because, fine, you (guy) were going to get with me anyway for nothing, but if you want to pay me thirty quid then, right, fine...I don't go out cruising to rent now...

A number of men who presently rented on a regular basis also held the view that future participation in sex work would be opportunistic:

I would probably still hang about here (cruising area) because it's habit, it's like I'm used to coming up here and I have come here for, like, over two years. I might come up (to cruising area) like just to talk to people that I know up here and I wouldn't come up here looking for a punter, but if a punter stopped me I would probably end up having sex with the punter... it's habit.
C. Drug Addiction

For some men, failed attempts to stop using drugs led to a re-entry into sex work as a means to support their drug habit and everyday living costs:

*I needed to get money for me drugs.*

While some men remained in prostitution to earn money to pay for drugs, for others their payment for sex came in the form of drugs, hence the reason for remaining in and returning to sex work:

*They go up and get drugs from them (brothel), to get the drugs they will have to give their (sexual) services to someone.*

D. Friendships in Sex Work

For some street workers their friendships, and in some cases their only support network, were confined to sex work. For these men leaving prostitution would mean cutting important personal social ties, something they found difficult to do:

*It is difficult (to leave renting if your friends rent too), that is at times you wish you hadn’t made friends with them (other rent boys)... I think when you start renting you take yourself out of the gay scene social group and you put yourself into that little social group and you stay in it... At the end of the day all your friends have been in the situations you’ve been in, you’ve been through it together.*

*If I hadn’t stayed in the rent scene I maybe wouldn’t have as close, or good, a friends that I have got just now.*

*I don’t so much go down to xxxx (cruising area) to rent now, I go down to xxxx (cruising area) to see some of my friends, some friends that hang about there... I don’t really care whether I get a punter or not...I’ll just hang about with my friends for a while, then I’ll go away and then come back the next day and try (and get a punter) again.*

E. Partner’s Involvement in Sex Work

On the occasions where both a man and his partner were involved in sex work the consensus was that one could not exit prostitution if the other continued to sell sex:

*I want to get away from it (renting) but I know for a fact that I’m not going to get away from it while he’s (partner) doing it. I’m just not going*
to, it’s not going to happen. The only way I can see is acceptable for me to handle that he’s actually doing that (renting), is if I’m doing it.

It would cause problems if I stopped and he was still doing it.

F. A Higher Standard of Living Resulting from Sex Work

Some men, particularly those who worked as independent escorts, attributed a return to sex work to the fact that the money they earned in mainstream employment was significantly lower than that they acquired through selling sex. As a result of sex work, they had become accustomed to a higher standard of living.

G. Lack of Support & Service Provision to Leave Sex Work

When describing their attempts to exit sex work each man stated that they had done so alone with no formal, and often no informal, support:

You try and get out of it yourself, unless you’ve got the support of friends, but mostly it’s just by yourself, you have to do it on your own.

If you want to stop (sex work) it’s up to you. It’s really hard you know....what I’m saying is I want to put it behind me but I need help.

If there was support there I would probably have went behind his (pimp) back. I knew the situation and I don’t think he would’ve liked that, but I would’ve probably gone behind his back and got someone to help me on the sideline, even try and help me get out of it.

Seven main areas of formal support and service provision, to assist in attempts to exit prostitution, were identified by male sex workers:

1. Education

A number of men referred to the need for specific specialist help, information and advice in the area of education:

I want to go to college, I want to do psychology but I don’t really know how to go about it all. I’ve been going to xxxx (internet café) but I didn’t have a clue what to do, I’m not good on computers and just thought right (I’ll put in psychology) and it came up with (suggested university and required qualifications) and I was like ‘oh they won’t want to know me’. I just want basic training for people at the bottom. I need qualifications, I need qualifications to get those (HND qualifications)
and I don’t know where to go to get those qualifications. I just don’t know where to go.

2. Employment

As with the issue of education, male sex workers referred to the need for specific specialist help, information and advice around the area of employment. Obtaining a ‘decent’ job was seen as a route to leaving sex work:

I just want to get away from it all (renting) and get a good job instead of going for some crappy job just for the money and end up hating it.

I’d like to be financially secure, I would like to have a decent job and have a good life.

3. Support to confront drug use

While a number of men remained in sex work due to their drug addiction many of these individuals felt that their efforts to confront their drug use and, in turn, to leave sex work, were thwarted due to inadequate formal help and support:

There was nobody to talk to, nobody at all. I’d go into xxxx (drug service) to try and get into rehab but I don’t think they were bothered actually. I told them I was selling sex and I says to them I want to go into rehab and that, and they were like you have to come down (to drug service) every day until you can get a place on rehab. It’s a hassle and difficult to go down there because people trying to get off it still need to feed their habit until you get somewhere, or something, to help you.

They (drug service) told me I wasn’t a priority. I went back down (to drugs service) and I said ‘I need action (help)’ and they said ‘There’s nothing else we can do’. There’s no security net. I said to them ‘Where’s the net before I fall to their stage again? (homeless and heavy drug users).…If it was one of your workers who was an ex addict you’d help them!, would you let them lose everything they had achieved!?”.

4. Long term support to build alternative social networks

For those rent boys whose social and sexual networks were predominantly, or wholly, linked to the ‘rent scene’ and other sex workers, support to build alternative social networks was required:

If I’m going to stop I need to get away from everyone (other rent boys), away from here (rent scene), but I don’t know how to do that…
5. Financial management

Obtaining money from sex work on a daily basis, or as and when required, differed dramatically to men’s experiences in mainstream employment, where wages were often received on a monthly basis. For some men who used sex work to ‘tide me over’ until pay day, there was a need to rethink the way they managed their finances:

I can’t get used to getting money at the end of the month....I spend it all when I get it, then there’s nothing left (for the rest of the month).

All the money I’ve earned (in sex work), I’ve no savings...

6. Support to exit sex work at point of entry into prostitution

A number of men referred to the need for information and support for young men when they initially become involved in sex work to immediately deter further participation:

I think if there was a place like that (centre to go to) when I was 15 (now 27 years of age) and I went along to it, I probably would have been persuaded to stop (sex work) then and there... a place to persuade the young ones to get off it (sex work) straight away before they get deeply involved... a lot of the kids at that age either wind up dead in an alleyway, or get raped or abused, or start on drugs...

7. Long term support following exit from sex work

While men stressed the need for initial formal support to exit sex work, they also emphasised the need for long term support to ensure that a return to prostitution would not occur.

9.3 Leaving Sex Work: A Gradual Process

Despite failed efforts to achieve a full and permanent departure from sex work, the majority of men believed that leaving prostitution would ultimately be a gradual, and not an immediate, process. Gradual attempts to exit prostitution included:

• A reduction in the number of clients

• A reduction in the time spent selling sex

A number of men stated that they now no longer spent as much time selling sex. A reduction in the time spent selling sex was attributed to entering mainstream
employment and/or undertaking a college or university course with a view to leaving sex work.

- **Leaving one area of sex work**

A number of male sex workers saw leaving one area of sex work, but continuing in another, as a step to exiting prostitution:

> *I don’t want to be dragged into that (escorting) circle again where the money is very good and you want to be constantly doing it and you want more and more (money) ... I stepped back from it (escort work) because I want to get a step closer to a normal life. (MSW continues to work as a rent boy)*

> *I won’t stop in the near future – maybe another year. I wouldn’t mind stopping renting and trying to work for an escort agency, make some money, then leave.*

### 9.4 Never Leave Sex Work

While the majority of men ultimately wished to leave prostitution, a minority had made no attempt to stop sex work. These individuals saw sex work as always being an integral component of their daily lives, a point they attributed to the length of time they had been involved in sex work and their subsequent lack of skills to obtain mainstream employment and an income equivalent to that earned through prostitution:

> *It’s difficult to stop, I’ve been doing it for all these years, well I’ve always done it, so I can’t see me stopping now.*

### 9.5 Summary

The majority of men had attempted to leave sex work permanently on one or more occasions. However, after what was often a short stop-gap, they returned to prostitution. A return to sex work was generally attributed to necessity and adverse circumstances relating to finance and drug use. Unsuccessful attempts to exit prostitution were also attributed to a man’s friendships and relationships with other male sex workers, this was a specific issue for men who rented. A return to sex work was also linked to habituation in terms of ‘instant’ money and, for a minority of men, an addiction to sex itself.

While most male sex workers wished to leave prostitution this was ultimately seen as a gradual process and one which would be successfully achieved over time through appropriate formal help and support. With no professional
assistance to exit sex work and no long term support after leaving sex work, many men felt trapped in prostitution.

Men emphasised the need for both immediate and long term formal support to permanently exit prostitution particularly in the areas of:

- Education
- Employment
- Drug use
- Building alternative social networks
- Financial management
- Sex addiction

It is important to note that some men believed that, regardless of any professional intervention, they would always sell sex due to their duration of involvement in prostitution and the fact that they simply felt that they ‘know nothing else’ but sex work. For other men, sex work was now an opportunistic act, and for some who currently sold sex on a regular basis, one that would be in the future.
Section 10

Male Sex Work
Future & Current Service Provision:
Needs, Format & Structure

I don’t think people (professionals and the general public) really want to think about it (male sex work) and how important it is to have something (services) for men (involved in prostitution), because it is important. Even though some people find it disgusting, but it shouldn’t matter what we are doing, what we are selling, the fact is we are still human beings and we can still catch diseases and still need medical attention, we still have got thoughts and feelings and need support...

In sections 3 to 9 the general need, and absence of formal services, providing support, information and advice to male sex workers has been highlighted. Section 10 summarises these findings and highlights male sex workers suggestions as why present service provision is inadequate and what structure and format future services for male prostitutes in Edinburgh and Glasgow should take.

10.1 A Summary of Current Needs & Service Provision for Male Sex Workers

Throughout this report extracts from discussions with male sex workers point to the need for appropriate professional services for men who sell sex in Edinburgh and Glasgow in a number of areas:

A. Mental Health

The need for appropriate counselling, psychotherapy and general support to address:

- Past and present experiences in sex work
- Self harm and suicide attempts
- Substance, alcohol and drug use
- Life events prior to involvement in sex work:

In-particular to address family relations and family dynamics during childhood and adolescence in relation to incidents of verbal, mental, physical and sexual abuse, experiences in care, homelessness and issues regarding sexuality.
Linked to the issue of sexuality is the need for some men to address their experiences of homophobic bullying at school.

From discussions with male sex workers there also appears to be a professional need to address, consider and understand such experiences and, in turn, to look at the current education structure in terms of addressing the issue of sexuality, homophobia and bullying. The existing care structure particularly in relation to homophobia, who is placed in secure units and experiences of verbal and physical assault in secure units also requires attention.

- **Present life events**

  Present life events which may not directly relate to sex work, but which involvement in prostitution may impact on, for example. relationships with partners, family and friends.

**B. General Physical Health**

- The need to improve awareness of and access to services in the areas of alcohol, drug and substance use – not only for male sex workers, but also for their clients.

- Long term support to address drug, substance and alcohol use – not only for male sex workers but also for their clients.

**C. Sexual Health**

- The need to improve male sex workers awareness of sexual health issues, and to encourage regular condom use, sexual health checks and HIV testing.

- To improve male sex workers access to sexual health services.

- To improve sex worker clients’ knowledge and awareness of sexual health issues.

- To encourage sex work clients to access and regularly use sexual health services.

- To extend outreach funding and service provision.
D. Personal Safety

- The need for general safety information and advice when sex work first begins.
- The need for specific safety information and advice throughout the duration of sex work.
- The need for a positive change in the policing of sex work, particularly in Glasgow to:
  - improve the safety of men who sell sex on the streets
  - improve relations between the police and male sex workers
  - encourage male sex workers to report incidents to the police of verbal, physical and sexual assault

E. Employment

Appropriate specialist support, information and advice to:

- Re-enter/ enter, for the first time, the employment market
- Obtain and enhance job skills
- Obtain information on a range of possible career paths

F. Education

Appropriate specialist support, information and advice to:

- re-enter the education system
- enhance awareness of a range of training and academic course options

G. Housing

Appropriate specialist support, information and advice:

- To obtain suitable and desired accommodation
- On financial management of housing costs: bills, rent, mortgage
- To discuss general housing needs, experiences and concerns

From discussions with a number of male sex workers there also appears to a need to look at the existing hostel care system, pinpointed by a number of men as the site for their route into prostitution, increased drug, substance and alcohol use.
H. Professional Support to Leave Sex Work

Specialist support, information and advice to permanently leave sex work in the areas of:

- Education
- Employment
- Addressing experiences in sex work
- Addressing drug, alcohol and substance misuse
- Building and retaining alternative social networks
- Housing
- Financial management
- Sex addiction

I. Long Term Professional Support to Permanently Exit Sex Work

- To ensure that the majority of male sex workers do not return to selling sex.

10.2 Why is Service Provision for MSWs Inadequate?

Men generally attributed a lack of formal support and service provision for male sex workers to negative professional and social attitudes relating to gender, sex and sexuality.

A. Gender, Sex Work & Service Provision

- A professional bias towards female sex workers?

A common concern raised by male sex workers was the apparent contrast in professional understanding and attitudes to male and female sex work. This, men felt, had a negative influence on the allocation of funding and service provision for male prostitutes:

*Women (sex workers), women, they’ve everything (services), I don’t think there’s anything (service provision) for men (who sell sex), well Spittal Street (ROAM team base) that’s about it ... I think they’re (government and professionals) more open about female prostitution than they are male... they don’t really know much about male prostitution, but they know about female prostitution cause you hear about it, but you never hear about male prostitution.*
It's the same for everything, I mean prostitution, anything (services) that exists are really focused on women. It's like the guys go through the same as they (female sex workers) do, guys (in sex work) do have the same problems as women (in sex work). It's like all the men have to fight to get the same help, it's like we have to shout a lot louder to get help, help us please!.

B. Sex Work: Sex, Sexuality & Service Provision

A number of male sex workers attributed a lack of funding and services for male sex workers to the view that men involved in prostitution tended to have sex with other men, thus adding the dimension of sexuality, as well as gender, to sex work. The issue of sexuality was felt to be an area were professional ignorance and homophobia prevailed, with professional and social attitudes influencing the allocation of funding and services for men in prostitution:

In the last couple of years I would say female prostitution is more, I wouldn’t say it’s more widespread, it’s more recognised, and it’s understood and accepted in inverted comas. Folk realise that these women are doing this because of a,b,c,d,e,f and g, so they understand it. The general public can understand why women will do it so it’s more accepted in the general population, so money will be given to it. But male prostitution, they can’t understand what happens... the general public just don't understand male prostitution and they don’t want to understand and recognise it. They don’t want to recognise it and if they don’t want to recognise it they won’t give any money for any services...they are quite happy to give money for female prostitutes, but are really quite fond of frowning on anything to do with men and sexuality...Section 28, I think it has fanned the fires again.

.... They (professionals and the general public) like to think it (male sex work) doesn't happen in their town.

A number of male sex workers also attributed inadequate service provision and the failure to seriously address the issue of male prostitution to individual professional fear regarding their own, publicly hidden, sexuality and the fact that some professionals were, reportedly, clients of male sex workers.

10.3 Future Service Provision: Format & Structure

Male sex workers made a number of suggestions as to the shape and format of future services. Men referred both to the need for the construction of new specialist services, and also to the development and expansion of existing ones.
A. Construction of New Services

With regard to the construction of new services, men saw the need for:

- **An Internet Service**

  An internet site for male sex workers where information and advice on a range of issues could be accessed:

  *I think there should be a website, or interactive information, that people can come on line and talk to a counsellor, it’s definitely a good idea.*

- **A Multi-Purpose Drop In Centre**

  The need for a multi-purpose centre for male sex workers which provides information, counselling and advice in a variety of areas:

  *There should be some sort of drop in clinic, maybe not doctors and nurses all the time, but to come in and speak to a counsellor…*

  *You know how you get places that you can go in and get out of the cold?…things like that, there’s nothing here for us.*

  *I’m still strong on my point about Glasgow having its own Streetwise type place. Definitely there needs to be some kind of drop in place, not just on sexual health, but on counselling, especially counselling on homeless issues, as well as parents and families come into it too, to be able to speak to someone about family problems and financial problems.*

  *They should have a wee unit for people in the sex industry…there is nothing friendly here to go to.*

- **An On Site Service**

  Some men who rented on the streets of Edinburgh and Glasgow referred to the need for an on site service in the areas in which they worked:

  *There needs to be something in the area. If I wanted to talk, to talk to somebody, I would talk to them about it (sex work and related issues), but I wouldn’t go away (from cruising area) and look for them (professionals) to go and talk about it.*

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7 Streetwise Youth is a project based in West London offering services and advice to men aged 25 and under who are selling sex.
The (other rent) boys that I know that are working in that (cruising) area stay around that area and any centre has to be near by because if they are working until 4 or 5 o’clock in the morning, they are sleeping all day, if they are getting up at 4/5/6 O’clock at night they are not going to come all the way along there (reference to location of existing health service).

B. Specially Trained Staff

Regardless of the future format of any service(s) for male sex workers, whether it is a new service(s) and/or an expansion of existing services, men felt there was a specific need for specially trained staff to work with men who had, or who are currently, involved in sex work:

...There should be trained skilled people there to help.

Some men felt that male sex workers themselves also had a vital role to play in the delivery of any service in terms of offering support and advice based on first hand experiences:

I feel a centre for male sex workers dedicated to convincing young people in sex work that there is more out there, that they can do a job in society, whatever they choose, anything is possible. I am proof of that. I was out of the workforce for five years and because of my determination I am working full time on a good salary. I would, however, say that someone like myself would be useful working in one of these centres as I can relate to these people, along with, obviously, trained staff.

10.4 Future Funding for Services a Real Reality?

While men made a number of suggestions as to the future format of services for male sex workers, many were sceptical that future funding would, in reality, be available to develop such services:

You would have to get funding from the council, now the council aren’t going to do it...

10.5 Summary

Discussions with male sex workers point to a significant gap in service provision and funding, in Edinburgh and Glasgow, for men involved in prostitution. Inadequate support and money for services was attributed by some men to professional and social ignorance, homophobia and a denial that men sell sex. In contrast to female sex work, men felt there was an unwillingness and fear by professionals to assist male sex workers.
It is clear from the experience of male sex workers that appropriate formal support and service provision is required, in a wide range of areas, at five main points:

- Prior to entry into sex work – with a view to preventing entry into sex work
- At point of entry into sex work
- During the duration of sex work itself
- To leave and when leaving sex work
- Long term following exit from sex work
Section 11
Conclusion

The study reported in sections 2-10 moves beyond the general HIV paradigm which dominates male sex work research and seeks to provide us with a broader picture and understanding of who male sex workers are; their social and family backgrounds; how and why they became involved in sex work; efforts to leave sex work; and their experiences in, and impact of, selling sex.

A number of important issues emerge from this study:

At an individual level the research has provided a long awaited and much needed public voice and forum for male sex workers to convey their views, feelings and specific life experiences. Some of these directly relate to their involvement in sex work, some identify factors that have contributed to their initial and ongoing involvement in sex work, and others describe the way in which they have been affected by their involvement in sex work.

The study sought to contribute to the enhancement in both individual and collective awareness, knowledge and understanding of male sex work and male sex workers’ lives. The research challenges the traditional and stereotypical image of a prostitute, a sex worker, as a female, while also highlighting that the issues of personal safety and mental health are concerns to men, as well as women, who sell sex.

At a service level, the research has highlighted the need for increased funding and resources for both the voluntary and statutory services that presently work with male sex workers. The study also points to the need, from a male sex work perspective, for increased service provision and improved access to existing services for men who sell sex in a wide range of areas including: education; employment; counselling; psychotherapy; drug, substance and alcohol misuse; sexual health; sex addiction; self esteem; social skills; housing; financial management and personal safety. The study also points to a need for a review of the policing of street work, particularly in Glasgow; the need to address the impact of homophobia and homophobic violence and bullying in schools and within the care system, and the experiences and impact of physical, verbal and sexual assault in local authority care, particularly in secure units.

At a policy level, the study emphasises the need to address the issue of male sex work in terms of preventing men from becoming involved in sex work, harm reduction during involvement in sex work and immediate and long term support to permanently exit sex work. There is a need to look at the existing policies for male prostitutes in these areas, what new policies are needed and the barriers-
professional, political and social which exist to prevent, or delay, policy change and development.

While the study succeeds in addressing a number of issues, it also raises further questions and highlights areas which require future depth research in order to obtain a fuller picture and understanding of male sex work. Areas of particular interest and concern include:

- Male sex worker clients.
- The ‘gatekeepers’ and organisers of male sex work.
- The views and experiences of ex male sex workers.
- Obtaining the views and experiences of more men who work, and have worked, as independent escorts.
- Obtaining the views and experiences of more men who work, and have worked, in brothels.
- The views and experiences of male sex workers whose clients are predominantly female.
- The social and sexual networks of male sex workers.
- The role the internet plays in male sex work.
- The link between money lenders and male sex work.
- The link between paedophilia and particular areas of male sex work.
References


