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Sex Workers: Stigmatised or Empowered?

Patterns of Working

1. There is indirect and direct sex work

Indirect – lap dancing, virtual sex, dominatrix

Direct – saunas, clubs, hotels, flats, massage,
brothels, escort services and films

2. There is also the distinction of On – street
and off-street sex work,

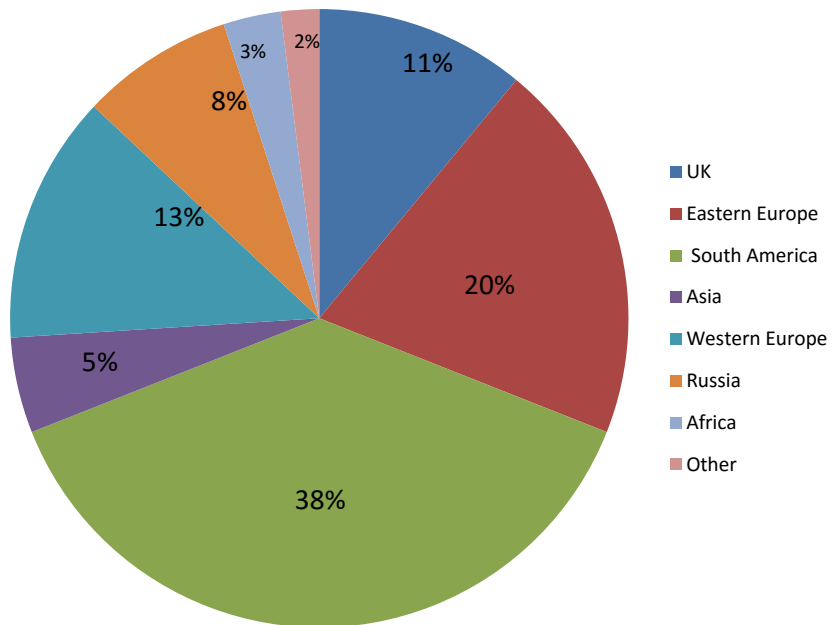
On-street sex work

- Usually British born sex workers
- However, there has been an influx of Romanian women doing on-street work...
- Strong links in the literature about homeless and drug use and sex work, particularly on –street work
- Can be targeted by law enforcement

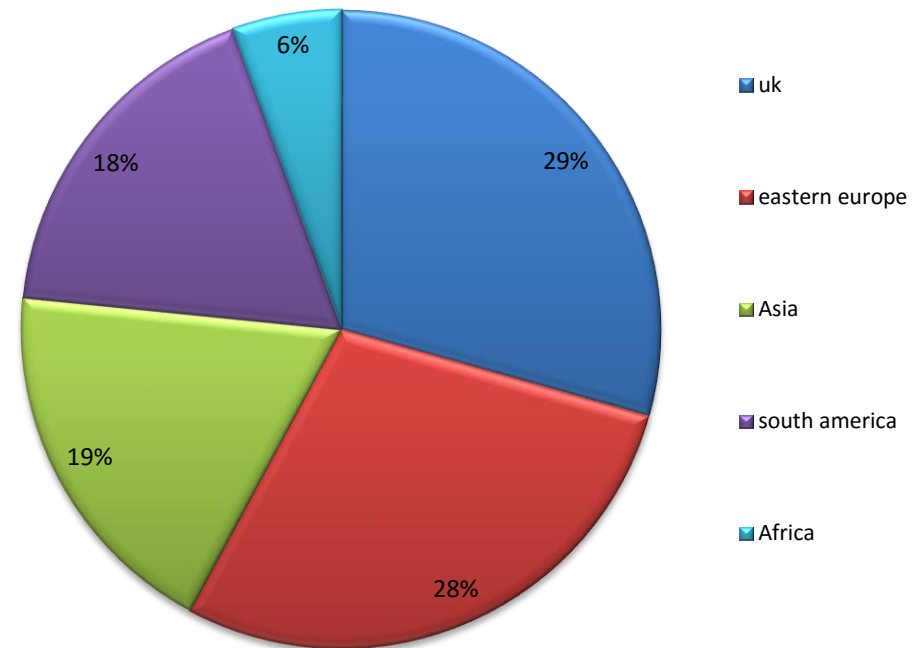
Off-street workers

- Working indoors
- More hidden than on-street workers
- May be independent or work from an agency
- Less likely to use drugs, however, sometimes drug use may still be a problem
- Overall less prone to risk than on-street workers

Country of origin 2008



Country of origin 2015



Migrant sex workers

- Who is a migrant sex worker?
- The no. of migrant sex workers have increased in recent times
- Majority of the migrant FSW are Eastern European

Stigma

what is stigma and empowerment?

stigma – *a social construct ...*

“an attribute that is deeply discrediting” where the stigmatized person is reduced “from a whole and usual person to a tainted, discounted one”(Goffman, 1963 cited by Yang et al, 2006)

JUDGEMENT BY
OTHERS

DRUG/
ALCOHOL
DEPENDANCE

CONTROLLED/
VIOLENCE

Sexual
Infections/
HIV

STIGMA?

POVERTY/HO
MELESS

IMMIGRATION
STATUS?

GENDER

Challenges from stigma

- Increased isolation
- Internalised stigma
- Poor health outcomes
- At risk to ill-health and complications thereof

Empowerment

‘It is the process where an individual gains control over his/her own life and is able to democratically participate in their community’
(Cornish, 2006)

CHOICE

SUPPORT

INCLUSION

Empowerment

CONTROL

ACCEPTANCE

ACCESS

KNOWLEDGE

Clinical Services

STI screening
Screening for adult film
actresses
Hepatitis A and B
vaccinations
Cytology
TB screening
Emergency contraception
Contraception
Pregnancy testing
TOP referral
Treatment for STIs

Referral to project for support
Referral to project for condoms
Health Promotion
Harm Reduction
Onward referral to on-site
specialists services
 Specialist sexual health
 HIV
 Psychology/ Psychiatry
Rapid results
Fast tracking to general clinic

Outreach

- To engage new clients and re engage existing clients
- Build relationships
- To working flats both 'walk up's/ phone
- Internet; newspapers
- Currently visiting 60 flats

Current issues:

- High turnover
- Saturated market
- Legislation
- Police raids

Conclusion

Sex workers can be on a spectrum

Diversity is at the heart of this group

It is important not to make assumptions

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