

Speaker Name	Statement
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**CHALLENGES IN ADDRESSING
HIV PREVENTION IN TODAY'S
INDOOR SEX INDUSTRY**



SERVICES for sex workers at SWOP

- **Brief interventions** – often delivered via assertive outreach:
 - condoms and other safer sex supplies
 - sexual health promotion , Chlamydia and gonorrhoea self-test
 - safer working
- **Advocacy and support with accessing health services** (including outreach support).
- **Dodgy Punter (Ugly Mugs) third party reporting scheme + support**
- **Care planned support to enable positive changes to health and wellbeing.**
- **Specialist support delivered alongside substance misuse treatment.**

Who do we work with?

- Women with substance misuse problems
- Migrant women (Romanian women account for 20-25% of contacts and 40-45% of all outreach contacts.
- Trans women
- Women with multiple and complex needs
- Women from a diverse range of social, educational and professional backgrounds.

The sex industry in Brighton 2001

- Parlours (“Brothels”).
- “One girl flats” – maid + worker (different woman each day).
- Escort agencies – usually with a base – agency managers met up with workers
- Independent escorts

Advertising via Friday Ad and local press, cards in phone boxes, some online advertising (agencies/ high earning independent escorts).

What changed.....

- Changes to legislation around advertising in phone boxes (2001)
- Economic issues/ Accommodation costs
- End Demand campaign:
 - Pressure on local press to stop advertising escort services.
 - Increased brothel closures in some areas (not Brighton and Hove)
 - possible knock-on effect however in other areas

INTERNET AND DIGITAL REVOLUTION

- Offered better opportunity for individuals to promote their services, accept card payments up front.
- Facilitated national and international advertising.
- Facilitated short term holiday lets (e.g. Air B&B)
- Dramatically changed how sex workers acquire and communicate with client base.

The indoor sex industry in 2017

- Very few “brothels” / parlours
- International and national independent escort websites which enable profile searches.
- Other online advertising (Craigs list, Friday Ad)
- Social media (twitter)
- Use of webcam
- Sugardaddy / Sugarbaby websites

Risks and challenges..

- Potential for increase in social isolation
- Lack of peer support
- Relying on text / phone app / messaging rather than direct telephone contact
- “Hidden” brothels
- May have advertising / customers arranged by someone else – less opportunity for direct contact.
- Sugar Daddy websites: less likely to identify as SW

Other challenges to engaging sex workers...

- Increasingly mobile - nationally and internationally. May work, live and use services in entirely different areas of the country / across borders.
- Tours – Air B&B / hotels.
- Short term visitors to city limits opportunities to engage with face to face outreach.
- Increasingly people are doing “out-calls / meets” whilst living in shared housing and so less willing to receive outreach visits.

Internet based work: Opportunities and advantages for sex workers...

- Increase in independence and agency for many
- Offers great potential for peer support networks and activism - less dependency on services.
- Can research their clients
- Easier access to sexual health information
- Webcam - safer
- National Ugly Mugs – online third party reporting (www.uknswp.org/um)

Responding to new challenges

Beyond the Gaze Project: The Working Practices, Regulation and Safety of Internet-based Sex Work in the UK.

www.beyond-the-gaze.com

Dr Teela Sanders & Rosie Campbell OBE (University of Leeds)
in partnership with National Ugly Mugs and Saafe.info

A participatory action research project

Online sex worker survey conducted November 2016- Jan 2017 with over 600 participants.

Look out for findings to be publicised later this year!

SOLUTIONS IDENTIFIED SO FAR

- Intensify internet based outreach
- Less restriction on regional borders
- Experts by experience/ peer networks essential
- Development of new partnerships and pathways across Sussex / Nationally

Tried and tested health promotion models

- Written resources been useful, effective and enabled information to be shared with peers (SU feedback).
- Experience has shown that targeted resources aimed at sex workers are better received.
- That messages promoted amongst peers can be very effective.

HIV home testing pilot

- Postal service for rapid result HIV self-test kits.
- Development of a web resource:
 - To facilitate ordering test kits.
 - Provide links and referral pathways
 - Targeted HIV prevention messages
 - Translated options for migrant workers

SUPPORT

- Offer internet and telephone based support and advice around the screening process and post screening.
- Offer interventions to facilitate the uptake of follow up screening / treatment

TARGET GROUP

**Targeted promotion to internet based sex workers,
with particular focus on:**

- Transwomen: *Estimated 19% HIV prevalence in Brighton
(Martin Fisher Foundation, 2017)*
- Migrant workers
- Sex workers based in more geographically isolated areas
- Women offering higher risk services

CONSULTATION, PLANNING AND DELIVERY

- Start small (Sussex), then expand (Nationally)
- Steering and consultation groups:
 - Service users / experts by experience
 - Transgender services and service user groups
 - Pathways, links and consultation with local and national sexual health services and sex worker projects.

WHAT OUTCOMES ARE WE HOPING FOR?

- Increase in uptake of HIV screening by target groups (300 kits).
- Increase frequency of HIV screening
- Improved access to targeted sexual health promotion and referral pathways for female sex workers.

What do we hope to learn?

- To what extent will more targeted internet based interventions increase engagement with harder to reach groups (e.g. trans / migrant women)?
- Is this an effective way to increase rates of HIV testing amongst female sex workers in the UK ?
- Is home testing a long term viable alternative for the future?

www.oasisproject.org.uk/services/swop

