

**Recognising the links between the
sexual exploitation of children and of
women:
How can we end demand for both?**

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The re-framing of child sexual exploitation as outside the institution of prostitution

- In recent years, the use of language explicitly associated with prostitution has been removed from legislation relating to the sexual exploitation of children, and from national and local policy documents.
- This is helping to obscure the fact that the commercial sexual exploitation of children is an integral part of the wider sex trade.
- It limits our understanding of prostitution as an institution rooted in social inequalities, and therefore our understanding of the institutional basis of the exploitation of young people in commercial sex markets (Melrose, 2013); and makes the role of men who pay for sexual access to children invisible (Coy, 2016).
- It also makes invisible the commercial nexus between men who pay to sexually abuse children and the third party profiteers (pimps) who coerce and control the majority of the children who are sexually exploited.

The UN 'Palermo Protocol' 2000: Definition of trafficking in persons

Article 3(a):

Trafficking in persons shall mean the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, **by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation.** Exploitation shall include, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others, or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs.

Sexually exploited girls and women: The same pimps/traffickers

- Girls and women are trafficked across national borders by the same traffickers, and often taken to the same sex markets. It's estimated that 10-30% of trafficked females worldwide are minors (Kelly, 2002).
- Many of the pimps who exploited young women in the Rotherham and Newcastle “grooming gangs” also controlled adult prostitution (Casey, 2015, Perraudin, 2017). The girls and women exploited by the Newcastle pimping network were aged between 13 and 25.
- Research suggests that targeting minors is a common strategy of pimps (May, 2000, Scott and Skidmore, 2006).

The same buyers

- O'Connell-Davidson, in her study of children in global sex markets, suggests that attempts to draw a firm boundary between the prostitution of adults and of children, "...does not reflect the realities of sex commerce." She states that children and adults often "serve" the same clients (2005:3).
- Monzini's research found that adult women and under-age girls are often considered to be "interchangeable goods" (2005:3).
- Coy suggests that in commercial sex markets "youth is eroticised and prized", and "young women are sexualised as premium commodities" (2016:14).

Ages of entering the sex trade

- Farley et al (2003) interviewed 854 women in prostitution across 9 countries. 47% entered before the age of 18.
- Of 271 trafficked women and girls assisted by NGOs in Kosovo in one year the majority were minors - 32% were aged between 11 and 14 years old, and 49% were aged between 15 and 18 (International Office for Migration, 2009).
- The 2018 end of year summary of UK National Referral Mechanism (NRM) statistics states that 31% of females referred to the NRM as sexually exploited were minors (533 of 1,725). 53% of males referred as sexually exploited were minors (105 of 199)(National Crime Agency, March 2019).

Barnardo's earlier terminology

Definition of 'children abused through prostitution':

“any involvement of a child or young person below 18 in sexual activity for which a remuneration of cash or in kind is given to the child or young person or a third person or persons. The perpetrator will have power over the child by virtue of one or more of the following – age, emotional maturity, gender, physical strength and intellect.”

(Cited in Crawley et al, 2004: 5)

Barnardo's – Changing terminology

'Prostitution triangle'

Young
prostitute



Pimp



Punter

'Abuse triangle'

Abused
child



Abusive
adult



Child sex
offender

The passage of the Serious Crime Act 2015

Ann Coffey MP tabled amendments to remove all references to “child prostitution” in legislation, and argued that the term “child prostitute”:

“...implies an element of complicity and gives the idea of a consensual contract of a child offering sex in return for gifts or money...There has been a significant cultural shift away from talking about child prostitution to talking about child exploitation. Underlying that change is the acknowledgment that a child cannot consent to exchanging sex for financial gain.”

(HC Deb 5 January 2015, c 81)

Current law re 'paying for sexual services' - England and Wales

Paying for the “sexual services” of a child (anyone under the age of 18) is a criminal offence under section 47 of the Sexual Offences Act 2003.

Paying for the “sexual services” of an adult is not a criminal offence **except** where:

that adult is “subjected to force etc.”, which means that a third party has “engaged in exploitative conduct” to induce or encourage her or him to provide sexual services for payment (section 53A of the Sexual Offences Act 2003, as amended by section 14 of the Policing and Crime Act 2009).

The Ipswich Street Prostitution Strategy (Caton 2016)

This was a multi-agency strategy developed in response to the murders of five prostituted women in Ipswich in 2006. It implemented the principles of the Nordic model as far as it could within current law.

- It aimed to deter the buying of sexual access to others, provide routes out of prostitution, and prevent the entry into prostitution of children and young people in particular.
- The project identified and supported over 400 children who were at risk of sexual exploitation over a six-year period.
- This was facilitated by an understanding that the prostitution of adults and children is part of the same exploitative trade.

Children's voluntary sector involvement in the 'Turn Off the Red Light' campaign in Ireland

Statement of Tanya Ward, Children's Rights Alliance:

"We have been a member of Turn Off the Red Light since 2012 and are proud to have contributed towards the campaign's achievements to protect children and women. We signed up to bring a specific child-focus to the campaign. We were – and still are – deeply concerned about the exploitation of children and young people in Ireland's sex 'industry'. We also believe that the most effective way to tackle this exploitation is to place a criminal onus on the purchasers of sex...although strong legislation exists to prosecute child abusers, the demand for child prostitution still leaves vulnerable children at serious risk." (<http://www.turnofftheredlight.ie/prostitution-and-the-girl-child/>)