



Toolkit for Student Sex Workers – Keeping safe and access to support

The aims of this toolkit are to:

- Provide students who are involved in the sex industry with information regarding their work and the availability of help and support if needed
- Explain the legal status of sex work in the UK
- Provide safety tips
- Outline how to access support
- Detail relevant local and national services for sex workers in the UK

*“My flatmate saw my box of lingerie and my second phone and humiliated me by reading out the texts from customers at dinner later that night in front of my other housemates. I tried to kill myself that night and was referred to the university counselling service but I felt too ashamed to tell them why I really tried to kill myself”**

*“I’ve been studying psychotherapy for 3 years now whilst sex working. I would like to specialise in rape and abuse one day and I love to help people. I would never tell my University however because they might see me as a risk to patients or that I’m somehow too immoral to be a therapist. That’s not true at all and in fact, being a sex worker allows me to be a good therapist and allows me to afford my studies”**

*“I was outed as a sex worker whilst doing my PhD and it turned my life upside down. My colleagues didn’t want to talk to me and I felt extremely isolated. I had a good relationship with my PhD supervisor but now each meeting he spoke sexually and asked for small ‘favours’. One day he messaged me saying he was free to discuss my viva but he kissed me and grabbed my hand and put it on his penis. I requested to have my supervisor changed but it was rejected. I had to endure another six months of comments on my breasts and touching my leg. I didn’t put in a complaint because he was a world renowned professor and I thought nobody would believe me”**

*“One of my lecturers saw me in a strip club where I was working and said he wouldn’t tell anyone if I gave him a blowjob, so I did it, but he kept asking”**

*Testimonies from Student Sex Workers

Does any of this sound familiar? Or are you or someone you know feeling isolated or struggling with balancing their studies alongside working within the sex industry due to the stigma?

If you are a student who is involved in the sex industry, it is important that you feel able to seek support when and if you need it without fear of negative repercussions. The aim of this toolkit, informed by individuals involved in the sex industry, academic research and practitioners who offer services to sex workers, is to provide practical support, safety and advice to students who sex work, as well as reassurance that you are not on your own and there are avenues of support available. Research by the NUS LGBT+ and Women’s Campaigns, in partnership with ECP and SWARM, exploring the experiences of student sex workers, showed that less than 15% of respondents thought their universities or student unions were providing sufficient support and felt isolated from their peers. Additional institutional support was called for, alongside more awareness of student sex workers and for staff members to “acknowledge that student sex workers actually exist¹.”

¹ The Student Sex Work Project (2015) - <https://www.thestudentsexworkproject.co.uk/>; ² Student Sex Worker Briefing (2018) - <https://www.nusconnect.org.uk/resources/student-sex-worker-briefing-2018>; ³ Save the Student National Student Money Survey <https://www.savethestudent.org/money/student-money-survey-2018.html>; ⁴ Sex Workers and the Law (2017) <https://www.release.org.uk/publications/sex-workers-and-law-booklet>; ⁵ Camille Waring <https://whoretography.squarespace.com/photography-blog/sexworkingacademics>

Respondents also asked for information about students who may be coerced and want to transition out of sex work; information to raise awareness about sex workers in their institution; sex workers rights and their right to continue to study alongside sex work; campaigning and activism; how to reduce stigma; and information regarding support networks for student sex workers¹. It's hoped this toolkit, alongside the version for staff in Higher Education will provide this.

Rest assured you are not the only student working within the sex industry even though it can often feel like it; research shows that around 5% of students have engaged in the sex industry², 10% if an emergency demands money³ and 20% have considered it². High student fees and rising living costs are seeing students struggling to support themselves financially while maintaining independent study alongside long working hours in minimum wage jobs; the sex industry offers a more flexible, higher paid alternative for some but not without cost. It is understandable that some students decide to keep their involvement a secret due to the stigma that still surrounds it, and for fear of their peers or universities finding out which has led to sanctions or complete expulsions due to morality clauses. This has led to increasing reluctance to seek help and support when needed, which can then exacerbate feelings of isolation.

Student sex workers emphasise the need for easily accessible resources regarding sex work¹; this toolkit will hopefully provide that. It will explain the often confusing law within the UK regarding the sex industry and how to navigate it to ensure you stay the right side. Fellow student sex workers have provided tips regarding safety, different aspects of the industry and what to expect; what to consider if you decide you want to be open regarding your working life, (something that you shouldn't feel pressured about either way). It also provides useful links to peer led organisations with information on your rights and agencies who offer non-judgemental support if needed.

Global Legality of Sex Work

There are four legal models relating to sex work around the world:

- Firstly, there is **criminalisation**, where the buyer and seller of sex are subject to criminal sanctions.
- Secondly, **partial criminalisation**, where the buyer is criminalised, but the seller is decriminalised. This model, often referred to as the Nordic model or sex buyers' law is the most numerically popular model in the world amongst governments and policy makers. It may sound appealing, but it undermines the safety of sex workers and exposes them to violence.
- Thirdly, **legalisation** means that sex work is legal if it takes place in accordance with government-imposed conditions. In countries where selling sex has been legalised, many who work in the industry have found themselves worse off.
- Finally, **decriminalisation** is a removal of all sex work specific laws, which means that people who work in the sex industry can access the same labour rights and protections as those in other occupations. This model is advocated for by all sex-worker led groups globally, and by high profile human rights organisations such as Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, UNAIDS and the World Health Organisation. It is the legal framework which best upholds the rights of sex workers

to health, safety, and dignity. Under decriminalisation, trafficking and violence against sex workers remains illegal.

In England, the law pertaining to sex work is not straightforward; the buying and selling of sex is legal, but many associated activities are criminalised; knowing what is criminalised ensures you are working within the law. Under the Sexual Offences Act 2003 and the Policing and Crime Act 2009 the following main activities are criminalised⁴:

- Soliciting. Selling sex or attempting to sell sex on a street or public place
- Kerb-Crawling with the intention of buying sexual services
- Brothel Keeping. Sex workers can be prosecuted if more than one person is selling from premises; crucially, this relates to sex workers sharing a place for safety, which can incur a 7-year custodial sentence.
- Other offences like controlling, inciting and causing prostitution can be used against anyone who associates with a sex worker. For example if a sex worker is driven to an appointment by a friend, this friend is subject to criminal sanctions.

It has been shown that not knowing the illegalities of activities within the sex industry creates barriers to seeking support due to fear of criminalisation; you have the right to seek help/support no matter what your working life entails, or the reasons for sex working. Advocates of the industry, both peer led organisations and external supporters are working hard to ensure University staff are appropriately informed of how to offer needs led support to students who sex work.

Further details regarding the law within England and Wales can be found within the booklet *Sex Workers and the Law* (2017) link below:

<https://www.release.org.uk/publications/sex-workers-and-law-booklet>

In Scotland, the laws around sex work are similar to those in England and Wales but have slightly different acts/sanctions for example:

Civic Government (Scotland) Act 1982*

Section 46(1) states that anyone, who loiters, solicits or importunes in a public place for the purposes of prostitution shall be guilty of an offence and liable to be fined up to £500. The fine is imposed on offence; the person is only found guilty if the fine is not paid.

Prostitution (Public Places) (Scotland) Act 2007*

This Act makes it illegal for anyone, male or female, to loiter or solicit in a 'relevant place' for the purposes of 'obtaining the services of a person engaged in prostitution'. Conviction of an offence under this act is punishable by a fine of up to £1000.

Criminal Law (Consolidation) (Scotland) Act 1995 – (s.11)*

The law regarding sex work in indoor establishments, whether licensed or unlicensed saunas or flats, is governed by this act. Similar to England and Wales it is illegal to run a brothel, i.e. more than one person working together or to 'exercise control, direction or influence' over a 'prostitute' – the latter carrying up to 2 years in prison.

It is illegal for a man (but not a woman) to knowingly live in whole or in part on money earned through prostitution. This extends to living with or being 'habitually' in the company of someone selling sex, if he knows what they do for a living. It can carry up to 2 years' imprisonment (this could affect students if they share a flat with a male friend and help out

financially for example or have a boyfriend who could be accused of living off immoral earnings).

*The laws on indoor and outdoor working within Scotland are further explained in the SCOTPEP toolkit - <http://www.scot-pep.org.uk/sex-workers-toolkit/law>

Scottish policy defines sex work as commercial sexual exploitation; (Safer Lives: Changed Lives, Scottish Government, 2009; p7.) *and* (Equally Safe, Scottish Government, 2014, 2018), this policy is similar to the VAWG (Violence against Women and Girls) policy within the UK. So, while policing balances public and community safety (i.e. public nuisance) concerns they are also expected to exercise discretionary policing when it comes to sex workers themselves. This also extends to discretionary sentencing decisions by the courts who report their approach as being focused on those 'who force others into prostitution, exploit, abuse and harm them' (CPS, 2019).

Further detail regarding Scottish policy and the CPS approach can be found on the links below:

https://www.parliament.scot/S4_MembersBills/2015-09-3_Prostitution_Law_Reform_Bill_consultation_-_final.pdf

<https://www.cps.gov.uk/legal-guidance/prostitution-and-exploitation-prostitution>

In Northern Ireland, the sex industry is governed by the Human Trafficking and Exploitation (Criminal Justice Support for Victims) Act (Northern Ireland) 2015. The act makes it illegal to pay for sex adhering to the sex buyers' law or 'Nordic' model.

- Paying for sexual services of a person (indoor or outdoor) – fine and/or up to 1 year in prison
- Controlling for inciting prostitution – up to 7 years in prison
- Brothel Keeping – manages or assists in the management of a brothel can carry a sentence of up to 7 years imprisonment (this applies to people working together)

Further explanation regarding the NI law can be found on the link below:

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/nisi/2008/1769/part/5>

The table below illustrates the main professions that exist within the sex industry, and whether they are legal or not within the UK (basically what you can and can't do):

Legality of the Sex Industry UK		
Activity	Illegal	Legal
Independent sex work/Escorting (i.e. working lone)		✓
Sharing premises with another sex worker	x	
Selling sexual services in a brothel *(grey area in Scotland)		✓
Operating/managing a brothel/Arranging the purchase of sex	x	

Soliciting for sex on the street	x	
Webcamming (performances streamed online)		✓
Lap Dancing/Pole Dancing		✓
Professional Dominatrix/Submissive		✓
Sex chat phone lines		✓
Stripping		✓
Glamour modelling		✓
Butler in the Buff		✓
Selling underwear online for sexual gratification		✓
Sugaring (being a paid companion for a sugar daddy)		✓
Working in the porn industry		✓

**Information taken from <http://www.thestudentsexworkproject.co.uk/>

The link below provides access to further information regarding your legal rights from ECP (English Collective of Prostitutes):

<https://prostitutescollective.net/rights/>

Tips for safety and to stay within the law

The following sections, informed by a former student sex worker, provides safety advice during work, different aspects of the industry and what should be expected when involved.

Indoor general tips:

- Never haggle on your prices, it's a way clients sometimes test to push you
- Try not to change what you do and don't do - clients make you feel pressured and say 'well you did it last time'; just because they are paying, it doesn't give them the right to do as they please
- Be prepared to always turn down a client, no matter how much they offer
- Always go with your gut instinct, it's usually right and not worth the risk
- Try to be confident all the time, even if you aren't usually
- Stay in control of the situation and conversation - be firm but friendly
- Clock off when you say you will, set boundaries for yourself
- Don't exert yourself, being tired makes you less vigilant
- Remember they are usually more nervous than you, take advantage of this and be firm
- Don't delete texts, it reminds you of regulars
- Save clients under something distinctive otherwise you will never remember them
- Pay attention to how they text 'postcode now' vs 'Hello, I'm X and would like...'
- Don't shave every hair on your body, it's not necessary
- Avoid answering texts that ask, 'what are we gonna do together', they're time wasters

Indoor safety tips:

- Tell someone when you are working and make a plan if you do not reply
- Never wear anything around your neck
- Try to always ring the client as it gives you a good screening tool how they talk to you
- Don't tell them your full address until they arrive
- Get as much information out the client as possible - job, age, if they have children, accent, where they're from, roughly where they live
- Keep a rape alarm close by
- Remove/hide personal and identifiable items from your home
- Put the TV on in another room or tell them a friend is here
- Tell the client you have booked a cab so they think someone is expecting you
- Never drink unopened drinks and avoid alcohol entirely
- Use a different phone for sex work, don't mix personal/private
- Be cautious of clients who text you when you're not working
- Always take money first, never after and try and count it in front of the client
- Put your money out of eyesight of clients, ideally in another room and split the hiding places in case you are robbed
- Never return money, it gives them a chance to find your hiding place
- Always use a peep hole if you have one
- Safest sex position is on top, keeps you in control
- Doggy/behind is most dangerous sex position
- Put a mirror in the room so you can watch them in the reflection

RED FLAGS

- Client asking to be the last booking of the day, he might rob you as he knows you've will have earned money
- Turn down bookings when client asks to bring a friend, even if just in the car
- Calls from private numbers, ignore them, you can't trace the caller and they have something to hide
- Client asking for your real name, or personal and identifiable information
- Client asking for your full address before arriving
- Asking if you have a boyfriend, or to be your boyfriend/marry you
- 'We don't need a condom, I only have sex with my wife' – Never accept this excuse
- Asked 'do you want children' during sex - check the condom
- Client saying he will pay you after or next week when he gets paid - No, money first; some clients do this to get away without paying; this is rape as non-consensual
- If a client says 'I'll become a regular if you do X/give me a discount today'
- If a client pushes your head down during oral or restrains your hands
- Simple texts like '£40 bareback 15 mins'
- If a client says something like 'I won't do anal, I'll just put the tip in'
- Requests such as killing puppies in high heels/crushing snails
- Asking to do a free photoshoot
- Someone offering a service in exchange for sex – e.g. a cab driver

Agency work

It is not uncommon for people thinking of going into sex work to go via an agency first because they feel it is the safest and highest paid option. In addition, it takes away the need to advertise yourself online and build your own following. If this is something you decide you want to pursue, an industry insider advises ALWAYS meet the agency owner, never start without an interview or an inspection of the flat or where you will be working and NEVER give your full personal details such as passport, driving licence, address or even your real name.

Agencies work on an incall/outcall basis. An incall is when the agency provides the apartment for you to work which is yours for the booking. Depending on the agency, you are expected to then change the bed, towels and have a shower between clients; some agencies are better at this than others. An outcall is when you get a job to go to the clients house and an agency will often have 'drivers' who will drive you, wait and pick you up and have their own charges.

Outcalls have an extra layer to safety and this includes:

- Paying attention to all exit routes and quickest ways out
- Wear minimal clothes, take shoes you can put on quickly in case you have to run
- Avoid wearing tight skirts
- Check for laptop screens or if there is a camera running
- Have few personal belongings on you
- Try to hide where you put your money such as in your shoe/knickers
- Don't drink their drinks, ask for water
- Wave to a driver, even if it's just pretend, so they think you're not alone
- Check the number of cars on the driveway, if more than expected leave
- If attacked, leave something behind you can be identified by
- Leave immediately if client is drunk or you feel uneasy
- Take a cheap phone and have numbers on speed dial

Always tell your agency if you have a bad client as they will not rebook you with them. Unfortunately, some agencies do not ban the client from seeing other girls. You do not owe an agency anything, they need you more than you need them, if you're not happy then leave. Badly run agencies rely on girls feeling trapped or scared to leave.

Although agencies are perceived to be safer, the threats and safety precautions remain the same for indoor workers and outcall safety. Ultimately, you are still in a flat alone working with a man who is capable of doing anything to you in the time frame. The only difference is the agency found you the booking and not yourself. Agency owners often do not live close by so if anything was to happen, they are too far away anyway.

It is slightly safer because - it is the mind over matter issue - clients are aware that somebody knows you're there and is waiting for you to text them. For many, this is a huge relief and is effective. That is not to say this is the safest option. Always text your agency when the client has arrived and left the apartment; if a client tells you he has left money in his car or has to go to the cash machine, this means he is not coming back, be sure to tell your agency.

Remember that agency owners are not your friends and be wary of getting too close to them. If you anger an agency by not turning up to a job or refuse to pay their commission, they may threaten to reveal your face on their website or expose your real name. Do not submit to this, tell them you will report them to National Ugly Mugs or the police, and they will likely not follow through on their threat in fear of not being able to recruit girls.

All agencies operate differently so make sure you do your research. When contacting an agency make sure to ask them questions such as:

- How much commission do you take?
- What is my turnaround time between clients?
- Am I expected to work a certain amount of hours?
- What is your stance on drug taking?
- Will I be expected to perform certain services such as unprotected oral?
- Can I charge more for anal?
- Can I refuse a client?
- Are there drivers?
- What do you do to minimise risk?
- Can I have my own NUM (National Ugly Mugs) membership?
- Is the agency signed up to NUM?

Also be sure to talk to other escorts at the agency about the owners, types of clients and ask for advice; they are your greatest allies and best source of information. Many girls who work for agencies don't stay long, once their confidence has been built up in sex work they tend to leave to become independent workers.

Brothel Work

For many who want to sex work but have safety concerns, a brothel is considered the safest option due to the number of women working under one roof. Brothels also have a receptionist and a panic alarm in the bedrooms. In general, they are safer as there is always someone around and you can easily learn and talk to other sex workers. It is important to remember that running a brothel is illegal and should it be raided, you may be arrested. This is a particular risk if you are a migrant sex worker. Although working as a sex worker within the brothel is not illegal, they could try and prove that you are part of managing it.

Compared to agency work, you have to stay in the brothel for the entire shift and not leave. This means you could spend 12 hours at work but only earn £100 but have to give the brothel a minimum payment on top of money from bookings. Experienced individuals state there are pros and cons to both; agency and independent work allows you to work any hours you want, you can leave between bookings and are higher paid but of course, have greater safety risks. You need to weigh up whether safety or finance is more important and then make plans around either one, but always focusing on safety.

With regards to advertising, agency and independent is all done online or social media. In brothels, a client walks in and a woman is selected. Alternatively, some clients ring ahead and ask for a description of the girls working. For some, this can feel quite degrading and a

humiliating experience, especially if you don't like being compared to other girls - it could really knock your confidence.

Unfortunately, due to the criminalisation of running a brothel, if you are seriously attacked or raped, the brothel is unlikely to ring the police. This is because running a brothel comes with a hefty prison sentence and therefore, they do not wish to draw attention to themselves. Equally, should a violent man turn up, many will be hesitant to contact the police, and may potentially flee, leaving you on your own.

Safety/things to check for

- Does the brothel have a CCTV camera?
- Brothels pressuring you to do things you don't want to
- Take your own alarm into the room regardless whether they have one fitted
- Don't leave the key in the door, you could be locked in
- Don't lock the door yourself if you feel uneasy
- Don't rely on the receptionist to help you
- Make sure there are mirrors somewhere so you can watch
- Check rates with other sex workers to see if you're being overcharged
- Be prepared and not embarrassed to run out of a room naked

Online Work

Working online, including webcamming is most common among students. With the rise of OnlyFans and other platforms, it is the preferred method for many. However, being an online worker comes with a plethora of safety concerns that can be significantly detrimental to your personal life.

Cam girls or online sex workers have a higher risk of being identified than escorts because their face is exposed online, to a mass audience. This makes you easier to recognise and more likely to be outed as a sex worker in your personal life, identified in public and also online. This leads to concerns such as being added on Facebook, stalked in real life and your address being known and put in the public domain - also known as doxing.

Remember that your face is exposed during performances and on social media, and therefore can be filmed on a mobile phone and distributed online. Also, your IP address can be tracked to your address; this is easier if you're a student and inform clients which university you attend. In many aspects, online sex work can be riskier than escorting due to the more personal level of information that can be discovered.

Keeping Safe Online

- Be cautious about sending nudes to someone that makes you feel uneasy
- Install specialist software to prevent clients recording
- Keep personal and identifiable objects out of the room
- Use websites that allow you to block regional to reduce being noticed publicly
- Make it clear you don't want to be approached in public

- Turn off location when posting
- Cover your face until you feel confident with a client, or keep it covered if you feel uncomfortable
- Avoid revealing personal information such as schools, hometowns, university and always use a fake working name
- Get paid first
- Invest in a VPN (Virtual Private Network) to cover your IP address
- Use a different email address
- Don't follow people online that you know in your personal life
- If sending items, take picture of proof of sending and do not put return address

Link <https://www.beyond-the-gaze.com/safety-info/> for further downloadable safety tips from Beyond the Gaze regarding safety and privacy while working online.

Personal Care

Sex work, as with a lot of front facing physical jobs, can be both physically and mentally challenging. In addition, pressure for some people to keep it hidden, especially students due to fears regarding their universities or peers finding out, can create additional anxiety. Below are some tips to ensure you keep your health a priority:

- Look after yourself, not just sexually and physically, but ensuring your mental health is a priority
- Seek support if you feel sex work is detrimental to your mental/physical health
- Don't be ashamed of what you do, or let anyone else degrade you, it's nobody's else's business
- Be careful who you tell - bring up the topic in general to gauge people's opinions, don't out yourself if you're not comfortable (see section 'Disclose or not?')
- Seek support within the sex work community if you can't tell anyone close
- If outed, seek support, you're not alone in this
- Don't buy condoms/lube - you can get them for free from sexual health services or support agencies
- Stick to regulars if you can, it's safer
- Know your limits and when to stop
- Help other sex workers, that was you once
- Always try to tell a friend where and when you are working
- Take no shit from clients, they are there to see you
- Make safety your priority, no amount of money is worth being hurt

International Students in the UK

We understand that international students may have a different experience in the sex industry compared to UK sex workers due to having different status as citizens and different 'right to work' status which can affect their situation. Below are some tips to help with managing your situation:

- As an overseas student you may well be contravening employment rights if you do any work, and if found sex working, may well be subject to legal action including deportation; your student visa will state the restrictions and can be qualified here: <https://www.ukcisa.org.uk/Information--Advice/Working/Student-work>
- If you are a student struggling with language issues this can often put you off accessing services; most sex work organisations or those that offer services to sex workers (see the list at the end) can help with language barriers through resources in different languages or access to translators.
- Students from other countries CAN access services such as health care, contraception and sexual health services in the majority of cases; local sex work projects (see the list at the end) will advise where best to go in your local area. Many of these services can be accessed anonymously.
- You may feel more comfortable accessing information from the student union at your university; dedicated welfare officers should be available to point you in the right direction for local support services.

Working during COVID-19*

COVID-19 can be transmitted through either touch, saliva or breath droplets. Due to the danger of infection it is safer not to sell direct sexual services. If you are, take the following precautions where possible:

- Avoid the customers face anywhere on you (kissing, oral, rimming)
- Try not to see any customers who have a fever, cough, or shortness of breath; have they been overseas or in contact with anyone with symptoms?
- Ensure you have plenty of clean sheets & towels
- Always have hand sanitiser, antiseptic wipes and condoms nearby
- Clean/sanitise your hands, face and surroundings before and after every appointment or after touching money
- Avoid touching yours or the customer's face (sex from behind is recommended to lower the risk of COVID-19 but not usually recommended for physical safety)
- Tie your hair back to prevent it coming into contact with the customer's body
- Offer massage as well as/instead of full service
- Avoid oral services if possible but ensure that the condom and dam remain secure. Based on testing evidence, down the back of the nose into the throat is where swabs are currently taken for COVID-19 tests.
- Think about creative ways to minimise clients touching you as much; hand ties and or mental constraint or positions where you or the client are face down to reduce shared breathing space
- Try to shower frequently; change then wash your clothes when you have finished working

For clients:

- Ensure clients wash/sanitise their hands as soon as they enter, and after they have handled their wallet, (if you have difficulty finding sanitiser as stocks have been low, then purchase 75% alcohol (isopropyl alcohol) and mix with aloe vera gel)
- Ask clients to also wash their face

- Management of customer's clothing is different, this now has to be more stringent; droplets can live in clothing, when a person is undressing they are touching the droplets with their hands, then if they touch a surface it becomes a transmission risk. Hand washing after handling clothing is very important
- Ask if the person has been overseas, has a cough or flu-like symptoms or had contact with people with symptoms

*Information adapted from resources by: SWAI, GOSHH and Cork Sexual Health Centre; Scarlet Alliance – Australian Sex Workers Association

To Disclose or not?⁵

Research² has shown that stigma and the need to keep their involvement in the sex industry a secret is what students see as the most negative aspects of their involvement in the sex industry. Students who have disclosed cite friends as the people they disclose to rather than their student union or their personal tutor¹. Coming out as a sex worker within your institution is not an easy choice to make and there will be ramifications, good and bad; relief that you don't have to hide any more or lie to people about your activities, but also possible negative reactions from the people in your life, both personal and professional. A fellow sex worker⁵ who is out in academia regarding her sex work advises asking yourself the following questions, and possibly more before you consider outing yourself:

- Why do you want to be out as a sex worker in academia? What does it mean to you and are you prepared for the consequences? Are you coming out to everyone or just to a select few? Does it bother you who at university knows?
- How out are you in the rest of your civilian life, do friends and family already know?
- Are you face in or face out online? Meaning, do you show your face or not in photographs; this is really important to consider as if you are out in academia then sex buyers will be able to connect your real life to your working life online.
- Can you/do you want to research sex work without discussing your lived experience?
- Do you want to publish under your real name? Maybe not so applicable at MA level however, with a PhD your work is published upon completion; while you can have discussions about publishing under an embargo with a redacted thesis, do you want your real name attached to it? It is possible to publish under a pseudonym.
- Have you found out if your university has a morality code about student conduct? Sounds archaic but when I complained about whorephobia on campus I made the head of the faculty check the student code to make sure I was not violating it being a sex worker.
- Have you checked out your supervisor's views of sex work? A simple way to check is to listen to the language they use, if they use the word prostitute or sex worker – usually a good indicator of where their political/personal beliefs lie.
- Have you got a support structure in place? Are you going to need one?
- What legislative framework do you work under? This is hugely influential and makes a massive impact on your thought processes; for example, a sex worker working under legalisation will have a vastly different set of circumstances than a worker under criminalisation.
- Have you familiarised yourself with the student complaints policy and are you prepared to stand your ground and come out fighting if need be?

- Are you prepared to question where your loyalty lies and how this impacts research outcomes and methods? Is it to your community first, or is it to your research? Are you going to locate yourself within your research methodology which may not be possible if you are not out and if so is it really worth it just for methodology? Frankly, as a doctoral researcher your loyalty should be to your body of work, but you will have many internal dialogues about how you navigate sex work research as a sex working researcher.

Intimate Image Abuse

Intimate image abuse, also referred to as 'revenge porn', non-censual pornography or image-based sexual abuse is the act of sharing intimate images or videos of someone, either on or offline, without their consent.*

- It is an offence, within the UK for a person to disclose a private sexual photograph or film with the intention of causing distress
- It can be committed by anyone, sometimes an aggrieved partner or in the case of a sex worker, an aggrieved client or potential client; you do not have to be in a relationship for it to be considered intimate image abuse.
- Anyone can be a victim, regardless of your gender, sexuality or whether you are 18 or 80.
- Although sometimes an image is shared to embarrass or humiliate it is not always about revenge. Content can be shared as a form of financial extortion or blackmail sometimes known as sextortion; sex workers can be particularly vulnerable to this, being 'outed' regarding their work. This is often seen as an element of wider cases of stalking, harassment or domestic abuse.*

*The Revenge Porn Helpline (contact details below) offer a sex worker friendly service, providing non-judgemental, confidential advice. If you feel comfortable revealing your sex worker status this will help them provide the best advice and signpost to relevant and specific support if needed. The links below provide specific advice and support for those involved in the UK sex industry including a specific resource pack for students:

<https://revengepornhelpline.org.uk/how-can-we-help/who-can-we-help/sex-workers/>

<https://revengepornhelpline.org.uk/how-can-we-help/other-help-and-support/online-privacy-tips-for-sex-workers>

<https://revengepornhelpline.org.uk/resources/university-student-advice/>

National Ugly Mugs (NUM)

NUM is a reporting scheme to help protect people involved in Sex Work from violent and abusive individuals. Ugly Mugs is a safety and reporting organisation for sex workers; you can report online anonymously, under your real or working name or via an organisation who can help you fill out the form. Reports range from aggressive manner, racist abuse, robbery, assault and rape.

Every sex worker who reports to NUM is provided with follow-up support from our case work team that includes Independent Sexual Violence Advisors (ISVAs) and other trained professionals who engage with sex workers to access the resources that they request for their healing and recovery from within and outside of the criminal justice system. Members also have access to NUM's email and number checking services, as well as receiving alerts regarding perpetrators in their area to their mobile phone and email.

To become a member of NUM - <https://uglymugs.org/um/wp-login.php?action=register>

For more information regarding NUM - <https://uglymugs.org/um/>

Seeking Help/Support

Accessing support can be difficult for students who work within the sex industry; research reports that although services such as sexual health, disability services and counselling are accessed it was highlighted that information regarding specialist sex work support is lacking¹. Information provided here will give students who sex work the choice to access advice online or in person; a choice that student sex workers report as desirable¹.

National Services

Support for Student Sex Workers - An organisation run by former and current sex workers offering support to individuals involved in all aspects of the sex industry.

<http://www.supportforstudentsexworkers.org/>

ECP (English Collective of Prostitutes) - An organisation of sex workers working on the street and in premises with a national network throughout the UK.

<https://prostitutescollective.net/>

National Ugly Mugs (NUM) - Reporting scheme to help protect people involved in sex work from violent and abusive individuals. <https://uglymugs.org/um/>

Pineapple Support Society - Free and subsidised emotional support and professional therapy for adult industry performers. <https://pineapplesupport.org/>

Revenge Porn Helpline – service supporting adults (aged 18+) who are experiencing intimate image abuse, also known as revenge porn. <https://revengepornhelpline.org.uk/>

SAAFE (Support and advice for Escorts) - A collective of independent escorts offering advice and support to all adult industry performers. <https://saafe.info>

SWARM (Sex Worker Advocacy and Resistance Movement) - A collective founded and led by sex workers who campaign for the rights and safety of all who sell sexual services.

www.swarmcollective.org/

Regional Services

North East

A Way Out - Outreach & Prevention Charity offering services to women who are involved in street sex work. www.awayout.co.uk

Arch North East - Rape crisis service that offer a specialist service to support people involved in the sex industry who have experienced rape or sexual assault.

<https://www.archnortheast.org/archway-project/>

Changing Lives GAP & MAP Project – National Charity supporting men and women

exchanging and selling sex in various environments across the Northumbria area.
www.changing-lives.org.uk/

Newcastle University – Offers advice and signposting to support for student sex workers.
<https://www.ncl.ac.uk/wellbeing/physicalwellbeing/sexualhealth/>

North East Sex Work Forum – A collective of practitioners/academics who's aim is to inform policy, improve service development and reduce stigma for people involved in all aspects of the sex industry across the North East and beyond. The website provides a page dedicated to student sex work. <https://www.neswf.co.uk/post/students-in-the-sex-industry>

Yorkshire & North Lincs

Basis Yorkshire - Charity who supports indoor and street sex workers who identify as women, and young people who are sexually exploited. <https://basisyorkshire.org.uk/>

Sheffield Hallam University Student Union – Introduced a policy to support student sex workers. <https://www.hallamstudentsunion.com/representation/democracy/currentpolicies/>

University of York Student Union – Raising awareness and offering advice and information. <https://yusu.org/advice-support/support-a-z/supporting-student-sex-workers>

North West

Red Umbrella Project - A service to combat instances of violence and crimes committed against anyone in the sex industry. www.changing-lives.org.uk/services/

The Men's Room - Offer outreach & support to marginalised young men engaged in sex work or at risk of exploitation. <https://mroom.co.uk>

University of Manchester Student Union – Offers information and signposting to support. <https://manchesterstudentsunion.com/wellbeing-advice/sex-workers>

West Midlands

Jasmine House - Leicester based charity working with female survivors of sexual abuse, sexual violence and rape. <https://www.jasminehouse.org.uk>

Leicester Sexual Health - Providing a range of clinical sexual health services for commercial sex workers. <https://leicestersexualhealth.nhs.uk/leicester-sexual-health/csw>

Leicester Student's Union - Offering support to all student's including those who sell sexual services. <https://www.leicesterunion.com/voice/campaigns/current/studentsexwork/>

Nottingham – POW - specific support project for sex workers reaching out to students. <https://pow-advice.org.uk/students/>

SAFE - A sexual health service for people who work, have worked or may start working in the commercial sex industry across Birmingham and Solihull. <https://umbrellahealth.co.uk/our-services/safe>

The Annex - Project within Loughborough supporting sex workers with drop-ins and basic needs. <http://www.falconssupportservices.org.uk/the-annex>

London

Clinic S - All East Sexual Health, Advice and Support - a free and confidential service to women, men, trans and gender non-binary individuals, working in the sex or adult entertainment industry. <https://www.alleast.nhs.uk/clinic-s>

Goldsmiths University Student Union – Introduced a policy and campaigns for support for student sex workers. <https://www.goldsmithssu.org/democracy/asv/campaigns/sexwork/>

Open Doors – A free and confidential advice service in East London for people working

within the sex industry. <https://www.opendoors.nhs.uk/>

Royal Holloway University Student Union – Raising awareness for support and recognition for student sex workers. <https://www.su.rhul.ac.uk/referenda/motion/31/45/>

University College London Student Union – Introduced a policy to support student sex workers. <http://studentsunionucl.org/policy/up1717/supporting-students-in-sex-work>

Sussex

SWOP Sussex (Sex Worker's Outreach Project) – for women who live or work in the sex industry in Sussex. <https://www.oasisproject.org.uk/swop-sussex/>

Yada – The Esther Project – a discreet and confidential service for all self-identifying women who sell or exchange sex in the coastal West Sussex area. <https://www.esthersproject.org/>

Devon

University of Plymouth Student Union – Offers safety support and campaigns for the rights of sex workers. <https://www.upsu.com/advice/wellbeing/studentsexworkers/>

Northern Ireland

SWAI (Sex Workers Alliance Ireland) – An organisation that works with sex workers for better access to rights, health and justice in Ireland, including Northern Ireland. <https://sexworkersallianceireland.org/what-we-do/>

Scotland

Edinburgh University Student Union – Raising awareness and campaigning for the rights of sex workers. https://www.eusa.ed.ac.uk/eusapolicy/liberation/sex_workers/

SCOT-PEP - A sex worker-led charity that advocates for the safety, rights and health of everyone who sells sex in Scotland. www.scot-pep.org.uk/

Umbrella Lane - Umbrella Lane is dedicated to providing a rights-based holistic approach to the needs and rights of sex workers. Peer volunteers are available to chat through any issues in relation to work & life. <https://www.umbrellalane.org/>

Wales

Student Sex Work Project - Aims to generate new learning regarding student sex work and highlight the need for policy, guidance and training. www.thestudentsexworkproject.co.uk/

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