



Sorted Men

A GUIDE TO SELLING SEX

UK NETWORK OF SEX WORK PROJECTS

UKNSWP

The UK Network of Sex Work Projects (UK NSWP) is a non-profit, voluntary association of agencies and individuals working with sex workers.

The aim of the UK NSWP is:

To promote the health, safety, civil and human rights of sex workers, including their rights to live free from violence, intimidation, coercion or exploitation, to engage in the work as safely as possible, and to receive high quality health and other services in conditions of trust and confidentiality, without discrimination on the grounds of gender, sexual orientation, disability, race, culture or religion.

The UK NSWP recognises and supports the rights of individual sex workers to self-determination. This includes the right to remain in sex work or leave sex work.

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Foreword

The UK Network of Sex Work Projects (UK NSWP) has developed this booklet for men working in the adult entertainment and sex industry. It gives information and guidance to help you stay safe, be informed and know your rights. Those involved in putting this booklet together include health and social work professionals, sex worker activists and male sex workers. We have drawn on information already published by SW5 (UK), HOOK (USA) and Scarlet Men (Australia).

The booklet is frank and to the point. It is for men who work in the business, as well as men who may be thinking about doing so. The language used to describe sexual acts and services is direct and what some may consider 'base'. It is not intended to cause offence, but to ensure understanding.

This booklet can't answer all questions and cover every eventuality, so we have suggested other sources of information. The booklet will also be given out by UK NSWP member projects. If you have any questions, project staff will be happy to assist you. They may not always know the answer or have the information to hand immediately, but they will do their best to help.

1 Sex work: is it for you?

Selling sex between consenting adults in the UK is legal. If you are wondering if sex work is for you read on...

Are you over 18?

If you are under 18, it is not illegal to sell sex but it is illegal for someone to pay you for it. This can make sex work risky, as your clients would be committing a crime by paying for your services. Payment does not have to be with money; receiving gifts, treats, new clothes, a meal, a place to sleep, in exchange for sex, if under 18, is considered sexual exploitation.

Why sell sex?

Firstly, you need to establish why you want to sell sex. Typical reasons include:

Because you can: perhaps you have a very active sex life, and think that you could turn this into a financial opportunity. You have lots of sex, so why not get paid for it? This sounds simple enough in theory, but in practice, clients may request services that you are not used to providing. This could be uncomfortable, and you may be asked to do things you would have previously refused to do. In your personal life, you usually have sex with people you find attractive – this is unlikely with clients. Turning sex into something more clinical may make you feel lonely and isolated. So if you are planning to sell sex, make sure you can separate the sex you have on a personal level from that reserved for clients.

Transformation: you may believe that sex work is a chance for you to lead a glamorous, and perhaps secret, double life; to create a more exciting persona than your everyday self. But leading a double life and maintaining boundaries between two personae can become stressful.

Easy money: whether selling sex is easy money is debatable. Performing sexually and personally with new people on a regular basis can be hard work and a skill, particularly if you don't find the clients attractive. Calculate how many hours you think you need to work each week to meet your expenses (for example to pay for a college course or your rent) and assess whether this fits with your lifestyle. Remember – not everyone makes hundreds of pounds every week, so be realistic.

Survival: sex is sometimes exchanged for somewhere to stay or something to eat; essentially to meet basic needs. Contact a sex work project for advice, as you could be placing yourself in a dangerous position by doing this.

No choice: if someone is forcing you to have sex against your will in return for basic needs, money, drugs or other forms of reward against your will, it is **not** sex work but exploitation and abuse. Contact the police or a worker at a sex work project to tell them about your circumstances or ask for help.



Most of this section (unless otherwise referenced) is taken and adapted from SW5 service leaflets. See www.sw5.info for more information.

Identity

Sex work means different things to different people, and you have to decide for yourself what it means to sell sex. The decision to sell sex is best made when it is informed and empowered. If you feel under pressure to sell sex, you may put yourself into an uncomfortable (risky or dangerous) position. Try to speak to friends or a sex work project if you feel like this.

Sex workers often use different names, dress in different ways, listen to different music and work in different settings to distinguish sex work from their personal lives. Keeping your work persona different from your personal interests and tastes can be challenging. But remember, lots of people have different work and home personalities – the key is maintaining an identity which reflects the true you. Remember, you are more than ‘just’ a sex worker. Keep a sense of yourself, which reflects your personal interests, lifestyle and background.

While the gay scene can sometimes glamorise male escorts, in reality, society tends to view sex workers negatively. Many people do not recognise sex work as true work, and believe that all ‘prostitutes’ are drug-addicted victims who have no choice but to allow themselves to be exploited by abusive men. The stigma is very real, and can lead to loneliness and isolation. It can be difficult for you to discuss your work with friends, housemates, family and others in your personal life, as they may also hold negative views.

Your approach to sex work – occasional or career?

Sex workers provide a wide range of increasingly professionalised services:

- Anal, vaginal or oral sex
- Bondage, domination, sadomasochism and asphyxiation
- Fetish
- Exotic dance, strip tease, lap and pole dancing, and peep shows
- Pornography: films, photos and modelling
- Phone, cyber and webcam shows
- Escorting: a companion for dinner, theatre, social functions, holidays
- Massage: erotic touch and genital stimulation

These are just some examples, and men work in different places to provide these (see chapter 2). Some sex workers draw boundaries around the services they provide. For example, some men do not let clients fuck them whilst others do; some kiss and cuddle and let clients touch them whereas others don't. Some exchange sex for money, others for drugs, a place to stay, presents, clothes or lifestyle. Sex work can be a full-time career for some, occasional in response to a short-term cash crisis, or one-off to make some money. Decide what approach you want to take towards your work – and remember it's OK to change your mind! Sex work projects will be happy to talk through your options with you.



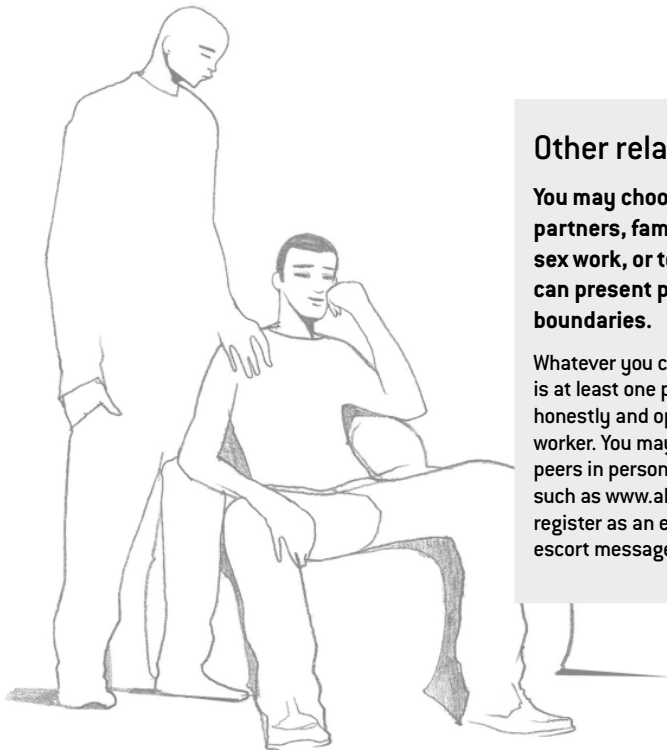
Clients – who will purchase your services?

Clients may or may not be what you imagine them to be. Research suggests that the client group of sex workers is varied. There are also specialist services for those with unique needs or disability (see www.tlc-trust.org.uk). Most clients wanting to pay male sex workers are male. If you want to restrict yourself to women, you may struggle to find enough clients.

You should not have sex with people if you do not want to. However, needing money or being contracted to a bad employer may mean you do something you regret. Learn from this, and plan so you do not have to do it again. Always make sure you know what the client expects, and set your boundaries. If you feel uncomfortable, threatened or frightened, leave as quickly, calmly and safely as possible.

If you are assaulted whilst working, try to talk about this with a sex work project and, if possible, report it to the police. Violence against sex workers is a crime.

You need to decide how to market/advertise yourself. If you are working through an agency or brothel or at a venue such as a private members club or lap-dancing club, the owners are responsible for procuring your clients. However, if working independently, this will be your responsibility, and the marketplace is competitive. If working on the street or in a public sex venue, marketing may be about clothing and positioning; if you are an independent escort, you may have a website or online profile, or advertise in the gay press or neighbourhood newspapers. Remember, to make money, you usually need to invest, and you need to take this into account when starting out (see also chapter 3).



Other relationships

You may choose to be honest with partners, family and friends about your sex work, or to keep it secret. Either can present problems and issues about boundaries.

Whatever you choose to do, make sure there is at least one person with whom you can talk honestly and openly, whether a friend or project worker. You may be able to get support from peers in person, or through internet chat rooms such as www.absolute-male-escorts.com. If you register as an escort, you can use the private escort message board.

2 Where will you work?

How sex work is organised in an area depends on the visibility of the men selling sex: the more hidden the sex worker population, the more dangerous it may be to work there. It also depends on local conditions and history. Before thinking about working, you should have a clear idea of how sex work is organised in your area, and how you will reach the different forms of sex work markets.

The best advice is to set your own limits. Try to keep this central. If you are forced to cross your own limits, your psychological and physical health may be damaged. Using condoms, avoiding dangerous sexual techniques, having sexual health check-ups, accepting vaccinations, seeking medical help for suspicious symptoms – these are all decisions which require you to be in control of your sex work. Occupational psychology theories clearly demonstrate that job-related stress is directly proportional to the level of control/autonomy (perceived or real) the individual has to organise their own work, as opposed to the demands of the job or amount of work.

Lack of money reduces your ability to control the work. If you need the money urgently, for example to pay debts, feed children, send to family back home, or buy drugs, then it is much more difficult to decline an offer of extra money for unsafe sex or services you would not normally agree to. You need to have strategies to minimise risk. The long-term consequences of catching HIV or Hepatitis B outweigh the benefits of a short-term injection of cash.

Your sense of self-esteem is also important for keeping control. Bad experiences and mental health problems can reduce self-esteem. Given society's negative attitude towards prostitution, you are not likely to be respected for your choice of work. You may feel you have to hide your job from people who are important to you and to lie

about it. The people you come across in sex work, such as brothel keepers and agency managers, may also take away choice by insisting that you perform services you would not normally agree to. If you are from outside the UK, lack of legal status and discrimination against migrants may make you vulnerable to exploitation and may disempower you.

You need to take account of this when deciding how and where you will work. Your decisions should take account of personal safety and your ability to set limits and boundaries and to stick to these. The examples below show how male sex work is organised, and highlight points to consider if working or planning to work in these places. It is not an exhaustive list.



Street work and other public sex environments (PSEs)

Some sex workers solicit their clients on the street, and give sexual services in cars, hotels or parks. When working on the street you need to decide whether you will go with a client and where you will take them. If your lifestyle is a bit chaotic, perhaps because of drug or alcohol misuse, working on the street may seem like an easy option. You don't need to rent premises, and there is no 'employer'. But working on the street is more dangerous, and you are more visible, and, therefore, more likely to come to the attention of the police.

Some sex workers prefer to work in public sex environments (PSEs) rather than the more organised and commercial sex-working scene. PSEs encompass any location, which offers willing participants and opportunity, such as toilets in parks, lay-bys, shops, theatres, town centres and rural communities; back alleys near gay bars and clubs; paths by rivers and canals; beaches; car park and truck stops; saunas and swimming pools; trains/coaches and stations; back rooms in bars and porn cinemas; and the street.

Some of these places may increase the risk of unsafe sexual encounters, as there is often little discussion about the sex, making negotiating safety with clients more difficult. Other dangers include 'queer bashing' or police harassment.

In some places, there are established commercial scenes, bars and nightclubs where men selling sex go both to socialise and to look for business. Be careful when working here. Whilst some managers and bar staff may 'turn a blind eye' to your activities, others may respond to complaints from other customers, especially

if you are having sex on the premises, in case they lose their licence to sell alcohol. You don't necessarily want to be known as a sex worker as this could make it difficult to get into other venues. If you use alcohol to socialise with clients, over the course of an evening you could get very drunk. This makes it more difficult to negotiate safer sex, and some clients will try to take advantage if they think you are intoxicated.

Some bars and clubs (mostly gay), have a secluded area, a room or series of connected rooms, which are poorly lit, and used for sex. These are often referred to as the 'darkroom'. Darkrooms are areas where men go to engage in anonymous casual sex while using the facilities of the bar or club. As the name suggests, these rooms are dimly lit, making it difficult to work safely. It is difficult to see and assess clients' genitalia, increasing the risk of exposure to sexual infection such as warts and herpes. >>>



Escort work

There are various ways to work as an escort or masseur:

INDEPENDENT

Most men selling sex indoors advertise their services in the gay press or local newspapers, and online through websites or chat rooms on social portals such as Gaydar (www.gaydar.com) and Gay Romeo (www.gayromeo.com). If you are considering this, you will be responsible for all aspects of your work, including advertising, managing the client and dealing with finances. You need to decide whether to restrict yourself to outcalls only (going to visit the client), although most sex workers allow clients to come to their premises. Whilst selling sex in the UK is legal, the activities associated with selling sex are not. This means you need to sell sex discreetly to avoid unwanted attention from neighbours, landlords or the police.

You need to decide whether to rent premises specifically for sex work (this can be very expensive) or, more commonly, sell sex from home. Although rare, there is potential for violence, as you deal directly with the client, without the involvement of anyone else. It is worth making safety arrangements and learning tips to reduce risk (see the UK NSWP booklet: *Keeping Safe – Safety Advice for Sex Workers in the UK*).

Think about your personal space, especially if your home is small. If you live and work in the same space, you risk developing an almost clinical detachment: your home will be very clean and functional, and you may hide anything personal, such as photographs or mementos, which tell clients about you

as an individual. This may help you create boundaries, but can affect you. Devise simple strategies to combat this, such as having different bed linen for work and rest, or even placing the pillow at the opposite end of the bed to help differentiate between your work and home life, even if it's the same physical space.

WORKING THROUGH AN AGENCY

There are escort agencies in most towns and cities. Modern communication technologies and the web mean that most agencies have an online presence. Sexual services are usually given as outcalls to a hotel, or the client's house or workplace, although clients may also want to go to the escort's premises. Escorts are paid by the hour. Sometimes a client hires an escort to go out for the evening, for an overnight or for a short holiday.

Agencies are responsible for finding and screening clients. This reduces your advertising costs, and may increase your safety (the agency will have the client's details and should operate a call-in system when you arrive at and depart from the assignment). However, be cautious. Some agencies charge large joining, introduction or membership fees in return for the promise of work which never materialises. It is best to approach several agencies, check their fees and working conditions, and, if possible, get recommendations from other men working before joining. Agencies take a significant percentage (often up to half) of the money paid for your services, and you may not have the freedom to work when you like, because you will have to be available at set times. Assignments are not guaranteed, and there may be long periods without work and, therefore, no money. You need to plan for this, and for times when you are sick or on holiday.



Tips for outcalls¹

Plan for outcalls and overnight stays with clients – never assume that they are prepared for safer sex. Prepare a travel kit and keep it handy in a small and easy-to-grab hand-held bag. Avoid backpacks and bags with straps as they can get caught and slow you down if you need to make a quick exit. Your travel kit should include:

- Condoms, lube and gloves
- Napkins or a small hand towel
- A spare change of clothes and slip-on shoes (if the client turns nasty or you feel threatened, even if naked, you can grab the bag and run – stop to get dressed again once you are clear of immediate danger)
- A mobile phone, fully charged, with credit or phone card for emergencies

- A small amount of emergency money, in case you need to exit in a hurry, so you can get a taxi home
- Spare set of underwear (often clients like you to wear your underwear, and this could become soiled)
- Emergency contact numbers for a friend or trusted colleague – remember, if you need to leave in a hurry, because you are in danger, you may have to leave your mobile phone behind and need to be able to call someone

Most outcalls are straightforward, and most clients are not dangerous, but it's better to be prepared than caught unaware. For further safety tips see the UK NSWP booklet: Keeping Safe – Safety Advice for Sex Workers in the UK, or speak to a project worker.

¹ Adapted from the HOOK Male Sex Work Handbook

Saunas and massage parlours

Many saunas and massage parlours do not provide sexual services, so you need to be careful if you are thinking about selling sex in them. Some managers and reception staff may 'turn a blind eye' to your activities; others may respond to complaints from other customers in the venue, because they don't want to get a reputation as a brothel. You don't necessarily want to gain a reputation as sex worker, as this could cause problems with entry to other venues.

There is a difference between working in an overtly gay sauna and a regular private or municipal sauna. In gay saunas, it may be possible to come to an arrangement with managers/owners so that your sex work is explicit: they may turn a blind eye because having cute, young guys available for sex with older guys is



good for drawing in customers. In regular saunas, it is highly unlikely that such arrangements will be possible.

However, many saunas rely on clients seeking sexual contact so they can remain profitable, and a significant number in a sauna at any time may be men seeking sex. Unless they are very naïve, the owner/attendants will be aware that sexual activity of various kinds (including selling sex) takes place in the sauna. However, in such situations, sexual activity is tolerated to a greater or lesser degree, if it is reasonably discreet.

It can be difficult to follow safer sex practices, as being naked or wearing a towel means that carrying condoms and lube can be difficult. While some venues provide safer sex packs and have lube dispensers mounted on the walls, others do not, so you need to think about using a clutch or a small bag to tie around your waist. You also need to think about how you will take money and keep it safe (lockers aren't always secure).





Brothel work

Brothels are organised differently but have the same general working practices: in most, you take a client to a room to provide sexual services for a fixed period of time. The client pays the house, or 'management', and you receive a percentage. You may earn more money by providing extra sexual services when you are alone with the client.

Because brothels are illegal, they tend to operate discreetly and front as another type of business, such as an unlicensed massage parlour or an indoor escort or introduction agency. In most establishments, you will be required to work a shift, and most operate a day (from noon till 7 or 8pm) and night (from 7pm – 2am) shift system. Depending on the size of the venue, there may be anything from three to 15 other men working the shift with you. >>>

The establishment is responsible for recruiting and selecting customers, who visit the premises in response to expensive and glitzy advertising in the gay and/or local press, and/or via a website. The standard layout is a reception/waiting area, to which clients are shown on arrival. This usually adjoins an area where you wait between clients. It is usually fitted with basic cooking and showering facilities and a television. Often this room is fitted with a one-way mirror, which allows clients to view and select the sex worker. There are also bedrooms in which sex takes place.

The benefits of working in a brothel are that the establishment is responsible for all overheads such as advertising. It is also safer than working on the streets or in a PSE, as there are other sex workers on the premises (should a client turn nasty), and, to some extent, clients are pre-screened (a well-run establishment will turn away drunk or stoned

customers). It allows you to make a clear distinction between home and work.

Also, you are not working in isolation, so you can meet and socialise with other sex workers. This is useful if you are new to the business as you can learn from experienced sex workers.

However, although expected to comply with certain rules such as being on time and working set shifts, you are not recognised as an employee. Managers argue that you are a self-employed masseur or entertainer who hires rooms by the hour, and resides on the premises during your working day. This means they do not have to comply with employment legislation such as the Working Time Directive or minimum wage. If you are not picked by any clients during your shift, you will not be paid. Establishments typically keep at least half of any money customers pay.

Safer sex is usually the norm, but brothels do not usually provide condoms or lubricant in case the police raid and cite this as evidence that sex is being sold. You will, therefore, be expected to supply your own condoms (if in your possession during a raid, it can be claimed that the condoms are for your personal use). Often, staff from sex work projects visit brothels and give out information and condoms/lube. They are not part of the authorities, immigration or the police, but are there to provide you with help, support and safer sex supplies. So do meet with them, they can give you useful information! They may seem friendly with the management or receptionist, but this is so they can get into the place. Anything you discuss with them is confidential, and will not get back to the managers.



Pornography

The UK adult entertainment industry has grown and there is now more opportunity to make 'hard-core' pornographic movies and DVDs, including bareback movies (no condoms). Production companies increasingly recruit young men to 'model' or act. Whilst starring in a porno production is not selling sex, it is very much part of the commercial sex industry, as it promotes the idea of sex, and models have sex with other models for money. Also, many production companies 'recruit' new models from escort adverts or escort sites online. The crossover between porn and escort work is thought to be somewhere between a quarter and a half in some cities.

There are two main issues to think about with porn. Firstly, think about the longer term. It may seem attractive to get paid for having sex with other cute models, but, when you sign a contract, you often waive control of the use of your image. The production company can, therefore, not only make the DVD, but sell your image (video clips, photo stills and so on) to third parties for wider distribution. In five, ten or more years' time (when you may have finished your studies and have an important position),

do you want someone to find a clip of you and post it on YouTube? Think about the longer-term repercussions of your actions, rather than immediate financial gain.

Secondly, think about the sexual health risks, especially if making bareback porn. Whilst companies are supposed to require certificates to ensure models have been tested for HIV and other sexual infections, not all companies are strict about checking or enforcing these. Also,

whilst some models only have sex without condoms on set, thinking they are protected because the models have certificates, other models have bareback sex and casual shags without condoms off set. Certificates and testing can't guarantee protection as people

can be in a 'window period' when they test (it takes up to three months for HIV infection to show in the blood). When selecting a production company, make sure they adhere to the voluntary code of practice which is available on the GAIKISS website (www.gaikiss.org.uk).



Erotic performance

Erotic performance does not necessarily mean engaging in sexual acts with your audience, but it may include having sexual contact with other performers. Clients may approach you for paid sex as a result of watching you perform. Erotic performance includes:

LAP AND POLE DANCING

Venues including gentleman's clubs, bars and nightclubs offer lap and pole dancing as entertainment for customers. Whilst most focus on women performing for men, some venues have gay or ladies nights with male dancers. Gay venues focus on a gay male clientele. Most of these venues have a 'no touch' policy which is strictly enforced by security staff (bouncers) and closed circuit surveillance monitors. However, if you are

doing such work you should expect to have offers, and clients may pass notes, business cards or telephone numbers to you with their 'tips'. If working in these venues, you should check their policy on contact with clients outside work, as some have a strict code of behaviour, which they expect their dancers to follow. Also check their other employment practices. Is the venue safe, are the poles secure or is there a risk of injury while performing? What about pay and terms and conditions of work? Take advice from other dancers and try different venues to find one that you feel comfortable working in.

STRIPPING

As with escorting, you can work as a stripper through an agency, which organises and manages your bookings for a fee; or you can work freelance, which means organising

everything for yourself from advertising, making bookings and taking payment. A number of guys combine stripping with escorting, often meeting clients through a performance and then charging extra if the client wants sexual services. If working through a booking agency, check their policy on contact with clients outside the stripping event. Many straight guys with a good body think that working as a stripper will give them access to women, but stripping can be demanding: a room of drunken women on a hen night can be daunting. They may also be expected to take bookings from gay men.

SEX/PEEP SHOWS

A few venues offer live sex shows or peep shows in private cabins. This means limited contact with clients, and the performance rarely proceeds to sex with the client(s) watching. Many peep shows require you to masturbate

and use dildos for the clients' entertainment, but some peep shows and all sex shows require you to have sex with other performers, and sometimes this can be bareback. These venues rarely require any form of health screening or certification, so it is important to seriously consider the risks to your health before agreeing to do such work.

SEX PARTIES

There is a trend for sex and swinger parties. These parties are often arranged on the internet. People (as individuals or couples) attend the party for sex, as invited or paying guests. Increasingly, the organisers of such parties have sex workers present as guests so that they can charge extra for having commercial sex available, or to guarantee some gorgeous people who will attract a large number of party-goers.

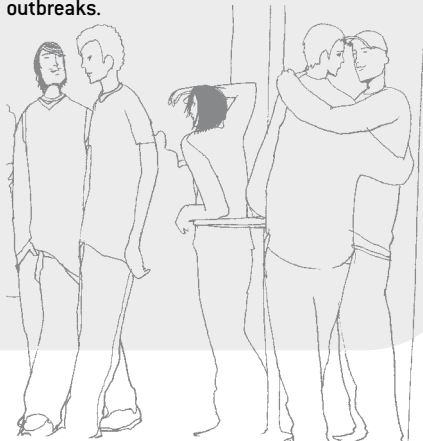


If you are thinking of such work, and are invited to one of these parties (organisers often respond to escort adverts in the gay/local press or listings on the internet), be sure to negotiate the terms with the party host. If they are going to pay you, get the money on arrival, before the host becomes too drunk, stoned or 'involved' in the party. If the host expects guests to pay you directly, check that this has been made clear to guests. You don't want a guest to refuse payment because they didn't realise that was the deal!

Some escorts arrange parties themselves, inviting other escorts, and charging clients a large fee to attend. They may share the proceeds with the other escorts; or charge the escorts and then allow them to negotiate their own rates/terms with clients; or simply host the party and allow free rein. The risk with this is that if the activity comes to the attention of the police, you could be charged with 'keeping a disorderly house used by members of the public'. A disorderly house is 'not regulated by the restraints of

morality, and which is so conducted as to violate law and good order'. It is a hard offence to prove, but the penalty is a fine or up to twelve months in prison.

As well as the legal risks, such parties have been linked to outbreaks of sexual infection such as syphilis. The activity may then become subject to public health agencies which may have a responsibility to investigate and contain such outbreaks.



The internet and new technologies

The World Wide Web, chat rooms and portals are the most rapidly expanding medium through which sex is sold globally, and many men use these to establish contact with clients. Many independent indoor sex workers advertise themselves on the internet; have their picture and/or details registered with, and hosted by, a web-based escort service; or have their own website for their sex work.

Escorts may cruise for business in chat rooms, areas of commercial websites and community sites/portals which have discussion rooms that facilitate 'real time' text-based chat between registered users. Such sites tend to be gay, and whilst most internet service providers (ISPs) and community websites regulate against any form of prostitution within the chat forums (through the terms and conditions of use which you agree to when registering), the reality is that it occurs constantly. In fact, sites such as gaydar.com and gayromeo.com have become so tired of trying to regulate against escorts chatting to clients online, they now provide escort-specific areas

on their sites. Many such sites charge a monthly fee to have an escort profile. If you try to work without a commercial escort profile, other escorts who have paid may get annoyed and report you to chat room moderators.

Trawling through websites and chat rooms can be time consuming, and yield little or no results. Many escorts say there are 'time wasters' – guys who chat and ask for pictures to be sent to them (often explicit cock shots) but with no intention of hiring the escort. They are just having a 'cyber wank' (masturbating while chatting with the escort).



If you plan to work in chat rooms and online forums, you need to think about how flirtatious to make your chat to avoid time wasters. You also need to decide about the nature of photos and images you have on your profile or website: how explicit these are; whether they are available to all; or whether to limit more explicit images so they are only available on request. Some escorts do not provide explicit images, but some clients will not hire you if you refuse. You also need to decide whether to reveal your face online, in your profile or by request only. You need to think about disclosure and potential 'outing' as a sex worker if you are recognisable, especially if you only sell sex part-time or have other work. You reduce your chance of being selected if clients can't see your face, so you need to balance this against the risks.

Many sex work projects make contact with men selling sex online, so you may receive an instant message or email from a project when

online. However, be aware that some clients may pose as such services. Most sex work support projects working online have their own website, and their initial message will usually contain the URL to their site. This allows you to confirm that they are from a support service. Do chat to them online, as they often have useful advice, and if it's a quiet night, can be a friendly contact.

Other new technologies used for selling sex or sexual services include online video streaming, DVD pornography, pay-to-view web cam shows, sex chat lines and G3 multi-media downloads to mobile phones and other hand-held wireless portable devices. Much of this new technology is expensive and, as with pornography, is controlled by the people behind the technology (such as porn producers, webmasters and so on). So if you are thinking of working in this way, the issues about working in porn or on the net apply and it is important to consider these.

Fetish work

Fetish services are a specialist area. Some men prefer it because such clients like to be dominated and this reduces the amount of sexual contact required. Fetish scenes include role-play, water sports, scat, sadomasochism (SM), domination, asphyxiation, catheterisation, scarification, whipping, caning and adult babies. Mostly, the client prefers the escort to have the active/controlling role, so it's important that you know what you are doing, as practices at the heavier end of the SM scene could be dangerous if undertaken by someone inexperienced. There are free courses to help develop skills and expertise – check the gmfa website (www.gmfa.org.uk/sex).

You also need to think about the legal position. Services which involve hitting, caning, whipping or inflicting any other physical blow or injury on a client could cause bodily harm, and could result in a charge of indecent assault or assault. In the interest of public safety, a person should not harm another in order to 'gratify sexual desire,' so even if the client requested it, that may not be a defence. To help reduce the risk, agree a safe word that the client can use, which means you will stop immediately. Many sex workers who offer SM services also agree with clients that if the safe word is used, the activity will not recommence during that session. Don't let a client restrain, gag or in any way imprison you, as this removes your ability to control the situation.

3 Providing sexual services

Deciding your boundaries

If you are going to sell sex, you need to be in control. You should not sell sex because you feel you have no other choice. If this is the case, you risk doing something you may regret later. If you think that selling sex is your only option, but you really don't want to, don't do it. There is always a choice, and sometimes you need guidance or direction. Speak to a sex work project. They can take an objective look, and help you explore your options.

Selling sex should be an informed choice, and something for which you need to set your own limits. Think about what these limits or boundaries are and try to stick to them. This includes how you work. For example, you might be an escort, but only do out calls; or make porn, but only safer sex productions with condoms. You need to think about when you will work. Some men find the work becomes addictive, and that their mobile must be on 24/7. This is not healthy, physically or psychologically. Think about times when you are available for work, and times when you will have rest periods, perhaps a night or day off, when you don't take calls from clients. Some guys find having two lines on their phone, a work and a personal line helps with this distinction.

You also need to think about which services you are prepared to offer. Before meeting a client, decide what you are and are not willing to do. Be willing to turn down a client if he has a particular request you aren't happy with; trust your own instincts and don't let a desire or need for money compromise your safety or standards. If there are certain sexual practices you don't do – don't do them, no matter how much money the client offers. You offer a service, and maintaining your boundaries within your work will actually help to ensure a consistent standard, which in turn will build you a regular client base.



Payment methods

Once you have decided your limits, what you will and won't do, you need to consider your pricing structure. If you have contact with other working guys, try to find out what they charge, and be competitive. If you are too expensive, you could price yourself out of the market. Trying to undercut the other guys could give the impression to clients that somehow your service isn't as good.

There is no formal contract, so you need to negotiate with every client. Charge by the hour or time period (e.g. an overnight), not by the sexual act, and be clear to clients about how much your time costs and what they are paying for, whether they cum or not. They are paying for your time, not your body. If you have a time limit, make it clear to the client at the beginning of the negotiations.

Ensure you collect the payment up front. If you don't, the client may refuse to pay. Some sex workers think this is a breach of contract, if you made a verbal agreement about the service and cost. But it is actually 'obtaining services through deception', and you have the right to report the theft to the police. If this happens to you, speak

to your local sex work project. They can link you in with a friendly LGBT police officer who can investigate your complaint.

Take payment in cash only. Be careful of cheques, especially company cheques. There have been cases of clients using stolen company cheques, and the escort being investigated for money laundering or fraud as a consequence of a wider criminal investigation into the client. There is also a risk in taking goods, such as expensive presents or designer clothes, as these may be stolen, and you could be accused of receiving stolen goods. Do not allow clients to make online CHAPS payments either as this can lead to all sorts of problems.


Managing finances

Once you have set your prices and worked out how you will take payment, think about what you'll do with your earnings. Many guys are tempted to just spend. When you start sex work, you may be popular as a new boy on the scene, and make a lot of money quickly. But this won't last long, and you need to plan for the longer term. Think about surviving during the quiet times when there is not much work, or when you are sick or want to take a holiday.

Having a bank account is a good idea, and necessary if you want to develop your business. Opening a bank account can be problematic if you have a bad credit history or are new to the UK. But it is not impossible. Speak to friends, other working guys or your local sex work project. They will be able to tell

you which banks are more welcoming. Once you have an account, try to save some of the money you make; set limits on what you spend, and targets for saving. When you have saved a large enough amount, take advice from a personal banker or financial adviser about how to invest it.

If you are selling sex full-time and taking the work seriously, you should consider setting yourself up as self-employed. Speak to an accountant, who can assist you with this, but make sure they are registered with the FSA (Financial Services Authority). This will help you to legitimise your business, and allow you to pay tax and national insurance contributions as a self-employed individual. For those claiming income support or benefits, you could be prosecuted for benefit fraud if you are found to be selling sex and claiming benefit, so you need to take advice. Your local sex work project can assist you, and help you find a reliable accountant.



HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) has been identifying tax gaps in the adult entertainment sector. These range from businesses which do not declare the true levels of tax or VAT to workers who do not declare any earnings and operate outside the tax system. To address this, a national tax education and awareness programme is being considered.

HMRC is looking for the best way to advise the whole sector about tax obligations and how to meet them. It is not looking for individual names, details or assessments of tax but simply the most suitable and effective way of communicating the information to ensure that taxation support and advice are available to all workers. Your local sex work project can give you details of this programme as it develops.

If you want a mortgage, you will need to be registered self-employed as an adult entertainer, sex therapist, masseur or body worker. It will cost approximately £300 to £600 to have an accountant or mortgage broker assist you with a mortgage application, and you will need between six and 12 months of documentation, with receipts, bank statements and so on to apply for a self-certification mortgage. Joining the International Union of Sex Workers (IUSW), which is part of the GMB trade union will qualify you for 20% off some accountants' fees (see chapter 9).

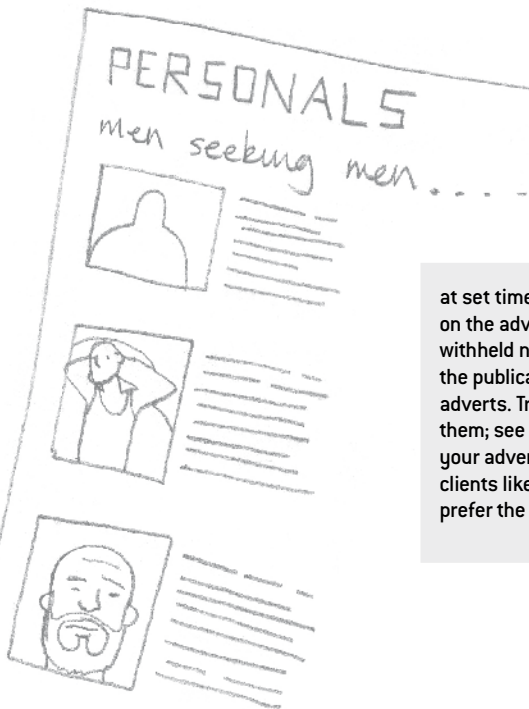
Marketing yourself

It is not illegal to advertise sexual services unless the adverts are graphic and likely to 'deprave and corrupt' as defined under the Sexual Offences Act 2003 (see chapter 4). You need to market your business in order to get clients. This means setting a budget and putting money aside to ensure you can continue your adverts, either in the press or online. You need to plan and think ahead. If you pay for an online profile and get work from it, don't just spend the money on a good time, leaving yourself short of cash to renew it. Take a business-like approach, and think of advertising as an ongoing overhead for which you need to budget.

Think also about the nature of your advertising. Many escorts use explicit pictures in specialist gay publications like *Boyz* or *QX* magazine. There are potential long-term implications of putting explicit images of yourself in the public domain. Some guys try to get around this by concealing their faces, but this may restrict calls, if clients think you have something to hide. Many guys take their own photos using digital cameras or mobile phones, but some spend money getting a professional photographer.

Try to link the visual image of your advert with the type of service you are offering. If it's just quick and dirty sex, then an explicit image may be fine. But if you are offering a professional escorting service, then a smart and clean image will present this better. Think about the wording, and ensure your contact details are clear (mobile/email). If you only want to work





at set times (such as evenings), state this on the advert. If you don't accept calls from withheld numbers, make this clear. Think about the publications or websites where you place adverts. Try to get market information about them; see what their clientele is like; and place your adverts appropriately. Remember, not all clients like muscle-bound big-cock boys; many prefer the ordinary 'boy next door' look.

Customer service

Over time, sex workers may develop negative attitudes towards clients, but it is important to treat clients as you would want to be treated. Be respectful, and remember that they are human beings too and not just walking wallets! Try to be polite: a pleasant manner is essential for both parties. After all, sex is meant to connect two people and relax them. Many sex workers give clients attitude, so being friendly and respectful will help you build a client base. Clients respect qualities such as honesty, reliability and friendliness.

Make things clear from the start. Don't be afraid to speak clearly about your wishes, needs and expectations. There is no need to feel embarrassed about doing so, and you need to

set the boundaries. A clear agreement should be made between you and the client about when and where you meet, the price, any incidental expenses, the kind of services offered and the length of your meeting. Agreeing this beforehand helps avoid misunderstanding and possible recrimination.

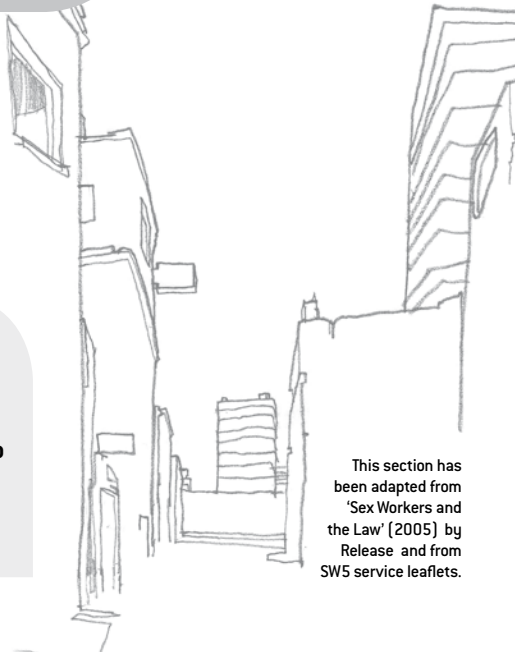
If working from home, try to present a welcoming image. Think about areas where the client may go, the reception hall, the bedroom and the bathroom. Ensure that these areas are clean and tidy, change bed linen, use air fresheners, have a fresh bar of soap in the bathroom, clean hand towels and maybe fresh flowers. These small touches make a good impression and portray a professional image. Think about offering a refreshing drink on arrival, and have a selection of bottled waters and fruit juices available.

4 The law and regulation

This chapter refers to the law and legal regulations as they apply in England and Wales. There may be variations especially in Scotland and Northern Ireland. Your local sex work project can advise you further.

Laws relating to sex work

Selling sex is not illegal as long as it is between two consenting adults. However, some practices relating to sex work are still illegal, so you need to be careful when you are working. These offences relate to the Sexual Offences Act 2003, which came into operation in 2004.



This section has been adapted from 'Sex Workers and the Law' (2005) by Release and from SW5 service leaflets.



STREET WORK

Street sex work is the riskiest way of selling sex as far as the law is concerned. The Street Offences Act 1959 bans soliciting or loitering in public places. Soliciting includes tempting potential customers through words, winks, glances, gestures, smiles or provocative actions. A 'street' includes any public place, and can include a road or lane, bridge, footway or path, subway, court, square, alley, passageway, doorway, entrance to premises, towpath – basically anywhere that the public can go! If you get caught soliciting for business in the street, the police will issue you with a caution. The third time you are caught you get a fine.

Anti-Social Behaviour Orders (ASBOs) are also associated with street sex work. These are issued to people who are seen as having behaved anti-socially in the eyes of the law in 'a manner that caused or was likely to cause

distress to one or more persons not of the same household'. These orders can prevent you from entering certain areas or socialising with specified groups of people or having sex in any public place. If the order is breached, the person with the ASBO could face up to five years in prison. ASBOs have come under great criticism from sex workers and those who work with them.

Having sex in a public place is also illegal, and if caught could result in a fine or a short prison sentence. If you do get caught soliciting, then you can go to a sex work project involved in running court diversion schemes.



BROTHEL WORK

If you work with other sex workers in premises, then those premises become a brothel. The premises remain a brothel whether you work there at the same time as others or not; whether they offer sexual services or not; and whether they charge or not. If the premises are made up of different rooms, and let separately to different individuals, they may still be treated as a brothel if there are shared services such as toilets, washing facilities and so on. Working solo with a maid is not illegal, and as long as the maid is not selling sexual services or has no element of control over the business, then s/he can get paid. It is controlling and gaining from sex work that is illegal. So, if the maid assists with the management of the business or has any control over its running in any way, s/he is breaking the law and is liable for prosecution (an unlimited fine and up to seven years in jail). Control can consist of banking, paying bills, advertising services or even helping to set prices. Cleaning,

making coffee and taking the rubbish out do not amount to control, but if you are working with a maid, it may be best to set up a contract and job description.

ESCORT WORK

It is legal to work as an independent escort. It is legal to work as a sex worker for an escort agency. You need to shop around for agencies which offer the best support and don't charge high fees for adding you to their books. Seek recommendations from other workers (see chapter 2).

PORN

If you are over 18, it is legal to perform in a pornographic film and to take part in a pornographic photo shoot.



ADVERTISING YOUR SERVICES

It is legal to advertise your services, however 'carding' (placing cards which illustrate or describe your business near or in a public telephone) is illegal. The person who puts the cards in a phone box is liable to prosecution, although the sex workers could be threatened with having 'aided and abetted' them. Many transgender sex workers advertise in this way, and some sex work projects have seen more trans workers prosecuted for this than non-trans sex workers. It is illegal to place an advert which is extremely graphic and likely to 'deprave or corrupt'. Many men advertise with graphic images in the gay press. This is acceptable if these publications carry warnings, and are only available in restricted outlets. However, graphic adverts in local newspapers could be subject to prosecution under the Obscene Publications Act 1959.



PLANNING REGULATIONS

If you work from home, planning regulations could affect you. Are the premises you work from work or home? You can work this out by looking at how much space is given over to work, the number of clients visiting and how much nuisance is caused. If the premises are primarily used for work, then you may be breaching planning relations. Also, in some cities (such as London) you need a licence if you offer massage services.

RENTED SPACE

If you are renting space, and the use is clearly not residential, you could be breaching regulations, especially if your tenancy arrangements ban business use of the property. Renting space from another tenant within a property also breaks the law.

LIVING OFF YOUR EARNINGS

Unless you have control over someone else's sex work, it is legal to gain financially from sex work

and to support children, family or partners using your income.

HIV POSITIVE SEX WORKERS

The law is unclear in this area. We recommend condom use for all practices with risk of bodily fluid exchange for anyone who feels unable to discuss their HIV status with partners or customers. Condom use is important for all workers regardless of HIV status in order to prevent potential infection from or to sexual partners. However, you could be prosecuted if you knowingly infect someone else with HIV.

SEX OFFENDERS REGISTER

If you are convicted of or accept that you have committed a sexual offence (such as one relating to sex work) then you could be placed on the sex offenders register. It is important to get legal advice if you are charged or asked to accept a caution relating to your sex work.

Child sex offences and child protection

The law states that abuse of children through prostitution or pornography constitutes:

- Paying for sexual services of anyone under 18
- Causing or inciting prostitution or pornography involving anyone under 18
- Controlling a prostitute who is under 18 or someone under 18 who is involved in pornography
- Arranging or facilitating prostitution or pornography involving anyone under 18

If aged ten or above, you can be charged with prostitution-related offences. For most young people (under 18) this is unlikely to happen, and only occurs in the most extreme and

persistent of cases when every other option for help and support has been exhausted. Local authorities have a duty to safeguard children and 'investigate cases where a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm' (Children Act 1989). This applies to any child involved in sex work. Local authorities, social services and police forces across the UK should have a multi-agency policy and approach to working with those aged 17 and under working in sex work.

If you are between 16 and 18 and selling sex you are not breaking the law but the people who buy the sex are.



If you are under 18, it is important that you try to talk to someone about your sex work in confidence. This could be a family member, friend, teacher, social services worker or youth worker, or you could call a sex work project near you. You could also contact Childline on 0800 1111. The number will not show on your phone bill. You can also visit the website www.childline.org.uk.

If you decide to speak to someone about your sex work, they may encourage you to talk to the police about it. It is your decision whether to do this. If you choose to go to the police, it is important that you get the support you need. Sex work projects can help you with this from start to finish, usually by allocating you a key worker.



Vulnerable adults

A vulnerable adult is defined as 'a person over the age of 18 years who:

- is or may be in need of community care services by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness

and who

- is or may be unable to take care of himself or herself
- is unable to protect himself or herself against significant harm or serious exploitation.'

'Harm' is defined as ill-treatment (including sexual abuse and forms of ill-treatment that are not physical); the impairment of, or an avoidable deterioration in, physical or mental health; and the impairment of physical, intellectual, emotional, social or behavioural development (taken from Law Commission 'Who Decides' and Department of Health 'No Secrets').

If you receive care in the community because of a physical or mental health condition, you may be considered a vulnerable adult. Clients who buy sex from you could be seen as causing you harm and sexually exploiting you. If you are unsure, speak with your community carer or contact a sex work project which will be happy to advise you.

Likewise, if you provide sexual services to clients who fit the definition of a vulnerable adult, you could be seen as causing harm and sexually exploiting them. If you are unsure, discuss your concerns with a sex work project, which will be happy to advise you. People with a severe disability have the right to a sex life, and often use sex workers to provide sexual relief – for further information visit the Sexual Freedom Coalition website at www.sfc.org.uk



Legal advice

If you are called to the police station on a charge of a prostitution-related offence, you are entitled to free advice from the duty solicitor. This solicitor is independent, does not work for the police and is approved by the Criminal Defence Service. You have the right to have a solicitor with you at the time of your interview.

Call the Community Legal Service Direct on 0845 3454345 (9am-5.30pm Monday-Saturday) or see the website www.clsdirect.org.uk for more information on local solicitors' firms. Your solicitor can advise you about the court process.

Remember that you have rights if arrested. These rights include:

- The right to silence. You don't have to say anything if arrested, and what you do say may be taken and used as evidence in court. Likewise, if you do not mention something
- when questioned by the police, and you later rely on it in court, it may go against you.
- You may have reasons not to want to discuss anything with the police upon arrest, and you have the right to representation during a police interview, provided free by an independent duty solicitor (see above).
 - If you have requested a duty solicitor and none is available immediately, you have the right to remain silent during the police interview. It is not wise to talk to the police until you have consulted with your solicitor in private. Remember there is no such thing as a 'friendly chat'. Whatever you say will be taken down and may be used against you later in court.
 - You have the right to read the Police Code of Conduct which governs your rights and how you should be treated.
 - You have the right to speak to the custody officer who is responsible for your welfare.
 - You have the right to have someone notified of your arrest (not to make a phone call yourself), although this may be delayed in exceptional circumstances.

Violence against sex workers is a crime

If you are raped or sexually assaulted when working, being a sex worker should not affect your case, but it can make it difficult if it goes to court. If you have been raped or sexually assaulted, try to go to a local sexual health clinic or a Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC) which helps victims of sexual assault.

The Havens in London is an example of this type of clinic (020 3299 1599 9am-5pm or 020 3299 9000 out of hours). Contact the service and tell them about your experience, and ask how they can help you. If you are not sure what services are in your area, go to your local police station and ask to speak to a Sexual Offences Investigation Trained (SOIT) officer. They are trained to work with victims of rape and serious sexual assault. Your local sex work project should be able to help.

If you are physically assaulted, you can go to the police, but you may prefer to notify them through a sex work projects which can deal

with the report anonymously. Project workers may also want to take information on violent clients or 'dodgy punters' to share with other sex workers and the police to help reduce violent crime. You can contact your local project for more information. You can also contact CrimeStoppers on 0800 555 111 to report 'dodgy punters'.

For further information on violent or sexual crime, see the UK NSWP booklet: Keeping Safe – Safety Advice for Sex Workers in the UK.

5 Health and safety at work

Safer working practices

The UK NSWP booklet: *Keeping Safe – Safety Advice for Sex Workers in the UK*, provides specific safety advice for different working environments. We have adapted the following information from the HOOK Male Sex Work Handbook (Hook website no longer active).

- **Footwear:** wear comfortable shoes that come off easily but also allow you to run such as athletic shoes, lightweight boots, casual dress slip-ons. Do not wear shoes with high platforms, extra-long shoes or with strings/laces, heavy hiking or work boots, flip-flops or sandals.
- **Jewellery:** avoid wearing jewellery when working, but if you do wear a necklace or earring, make sure these are small and come off easily, and that they aren't valuable or meaningful, so they can be left behind in an emergency or if the client tries to rip them off you. Be cautious of large crosses on chains or sharp charms which could be used as weapons if taken from you. Use clip-on earrings and fine necklaces with loose clasps. Don't wear long earrings or those with loops; heavy or thick chains; or valuable metal/precious stone jewellery.

- **Body piercings:** ideally, you should remove these before seeing clients, as they can be grabbed and ripped out. If body piercings are a selling point, be clear when negotiating services about safe play so that neither you nor the client is injured.
- **Clothing:** keep it simple; the fewer clothes, the fewer items to keep track of, have stolen or lose, and the less to grab in an emergency. Wear clothes which can't be used to restrain you or be pulled over your shoulders to restrain your arms.
- **Underwear:** avoid if possible. Thongs or g-strings might irritate or chafe, and underwear with straps or strings can be grabbed. A jock strap allows easy access and does not need to be removed if getting fucked, but be careful of clients pulling the elastic straps.
- **Bags:** backpacks and over the shoulder bags are risky as the straps can be used to restrain or choke you. If you need a bag for outcalls, see chapter 2 for guidance.
- **Personal items:** keys, wallets, credit cards, iPods, should be kept somewhere safe and discreet, such as concealed pockets or hidden linings.
- **Pubic hair:** keep trimmed short to avoid being pulled accidentally or intentionally. This also enables you to check easily for lice (a hazard of the job unfortunately).
- **Vision:** ensure you can see the client clearly. Wear contact lenses or glasses if you have poor vision. If using drugs or alcohol, be aware that these can affect your vision. If it's a new or unfamiliar client, try to keep him in sight at all times. Position mirrors in your working area so you can still see him even when your back is turned.
- **Body language:** instil confidence and control. Maintain eye contact, use direct language to negotiate with your client and watch his hands for gestures. Set clear limits, state your boundaries and stay focused on the behaviour of your client.



- **Mouth care:** maintain oral hygiene and keep your mouth moist by drinking plenty of water; this will prevent lip, gum and throat irritation during sex. Sucking mints or boiled sweets also helps keep the mouth wet. Try not to brush teeth before seeing clients; if you want fresh breath, chew some fresh mint gum. Remember that certain drugs, like cocaine, dry your mouth, so try to drink extra water if getting high with clients.
- **Cover sores:** small cuts and abrasions can increase the risk of infection and chances of getting a sexual infection if they come into contact with clients' sexual fluids. Put a plaster on hangnails and paper cuts, and check your penis and arse daily for small sores, cuts or tears.
- **Eat right:** if you are getting fucked often, drink lots of water and have a healthy and balanced diet to maintain your bowel health – lots of fruit and fresh vegetables.



Minimising harm

When working, you want to stay safe for your wellbeing and also for your clients' wellbeing.

ALCOHOL AND DRUGS

If you can, avoid using drugs when working. If a client knows you use drugs, or wants to use with you, you are less likely to stay in control. He may also try to pay you with drugs instead of cash, which means you could lose out on money that you might need for rent or to renew your advert. If you are using, then stay hydrated; most drugs dehydrate you, so drink lots of water. Avoid mixing drugs and alcohol, or even drugs with prescription medicines; there may be drug interactions you aren't aware of. If you are taking HIV medication, check with your clinic doctor before mixing with recreational drugs.

Give yourself space/time between hits; remember to enjoy what you have taken and appreciate that some drugs take time to reach their full effect. Try smaller doses. Some sensory enhancing drugs like E (Ecstasy), GHB and K (Ketamine) can give more pleasurable effects at relatively low doses – high doses may actually lessen the effect. If you have a bad reaction, seek help immediately; people have died from using recreational drugs. Get medical help and be honest about what you have taken.

Avoid mixing stimulants like poppers (amyl nitrates), E, speed or cocaine with Viagra: it can cause a sudden lowering of the blood pressure and/or stress on the heart, and has been linked to sudden deaths. Be aware of the source of your supply; buy and use only from trusted dealers. Remember, you don't know what could be in a drug a client gives you.



If you become unconscious, he could sexually assault you or steal your belongings or, at the least, he could leave without paying.

Plan ahead. How you feel about sex when high can be different to when coming down, so make sure you are prepared for sex before taking the drugs. If you are injecting, use only your own clean works, and be careful. Remember that crack is a binge drug that is highly addictive. Once you start, you may not want to stop, and you may soon end up working just to buy that next fix. If you think your drug use is becoming a problem, or is affecting your work, speak with a sex work project. The FRANK website and helpline (0800 77 66 00) also has free and confidential information if you are worried about your drug use (www.talktofrank.com).

GOOD NEGOTIATION AND LANGUAGE SKILLS

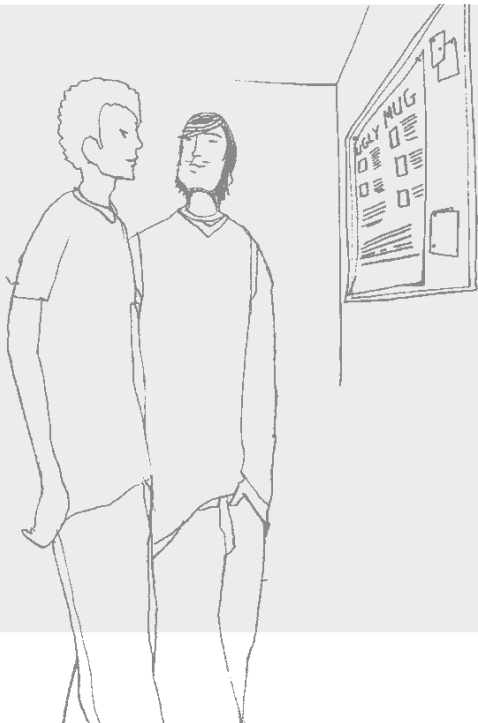
Negotiating with clients and setting boundaries are extremely important for working safely (see chapter 3). If English is not your first language, then you need to learn some basic phrases in order to negotiate effectively with clients. Your local sex work project will have information on local classes, and in London you may be able to go to the IUSW X:TALK classes (see chapter 6).

GOOD COMMUNICATION AND PEER SUPPORT: IDENTIFYING DODGY PUNTERS

Work with your colleagues and share information. One escort website (www.absolute-male-escorts.com) charges a small fee for guys to register and create an online profile, but has a private escort message board where you can share ideas with other escorts. You might find it beneficial to attend the drop-in at your local sex work project, where you can meet other guys, and share information, particularly about dodgy clients.

FETISH SERVICES: FIRST AID

If you are planning to offer a fetish service, especially one with some of the rougher SM activities, consider learning some basic first aid skills, as you never know when you might need them. You can also use this as a unique selling point. Clients might feel safer doing certain activities with you, confident that you know what to do if something goes wrong. Free training courses are available through the St John's Ambulance Service (www.sja.org.uk/sja/training-courses.aspx) or ask your local sex work project for details of courses in your area.



Sexual health

The risk of catching a sexually transmitted infection (STI) during sex work varies and is affected by several factors. Clinical research for HIV shows a low prevalence of HIV in sex worker populations in the UK, with the exception of intravenous (IV) drug users, where the risk lies in sharing contaminated injecting equipment, and migrant sex workers from countries with high rates of HIV, who mostly catch their infection in their country of origin.

For other STIs there is less data available, but several studies show that the risks for an STI in sex workers is related more to unsafe sex with private sexual partners than clients. However, studies show that the more partners you have, the greater the risk of coming into

contact with an STI, although the type of sexual activity is more significant than the number of sexual partners.

Unfavourable living and working conditions may also influence risk-taking behaviour.

Condom failure may bring you into contact with body fluids from a client of unknown STI status. A condom will not protect against all infections (such as herpes simplex virus (HSV) or human papilloma virus (HPV) – warts) or infestations such as scabies or pubic lice. So STIs are, therefore, an occupational risk.

You should know what to check for. The signs and symptoms which suggest that an STI may be present include:

- Rash, lumps or bumps in or around the penis, ball sac (scrotum) or arse, particularly after recent sexual contact

- Lower tummy (abdominal) and pelvic pain/symptoms
- Pain or discomfort when passing urine
- A discharge/fluid leaking from the tip of the penis
- Painful balls (testicles – swelling and acute pain)
- Itching or burning around the opening to your arse
- Pain or discomfort when taking a shit (opening your bowels), especially if you notice blood or pus when cleaning afterwards
- Acute red sore eyes (conjunctivitis)
- Blisters or sores around the inside of the mouth or on the lips
- Sudden onset of a sore throat, especially after sucking cock
- Swollen lymph glands

If you develop any of these symptoms, you should seek medical help quickly, and you should stop having sex with people until you get checked out, as if you have an infection, you could pass it on. You can see a doctor (GP), attend a local sexual health clinic (GUM clinic) or, in some areas, there are specialist sex worker sexual health clinics/services – check the UK NSWP directory for details for your area. Sexual health care is free to everyone, even undocumented migrants.

When you visit the clinic, the nurse or doctor will discuss your symptoms. The decision to test for STIs is made with you, following a risk assessment, during which they will ask about your recent sexual activities. You can then make an informed decision about risk. Depending on the problem and risks taken, testing may involve blood taken from your arm, a cotton swab used

to scrape the back of your throat, a small plastic loop swab of the inside of your piss-hole (meatus), a urine sample, or a swab of your rectal lining using a small plastic tube about 7.5 cm in length (called a protoscope) inserted up your arse.

Depending on the clinic and tests, you may be given a diagnosis and treatment immediately, or it may take as long as two weeks for some results to come back. During this time, or whilst taking treatment and for up to a week after treatment, you will be advised not to have sex. This is because you may still be infectious, and could pass the infection on, or be more at risk of catching another infection because the site of the original infection has not had enough time to heal properly.

If an infection is diagnosed, the clinic will also talk to you about 'partner notification'. That means trying to contact recent sexual partners to tell them that you have been treated for

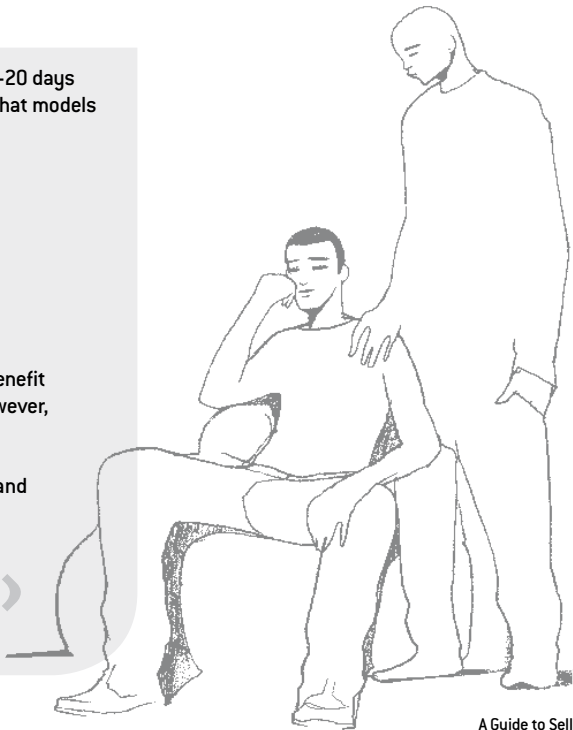
an STI, as the chances are that one of them infected you. This can be difficult with clients, but is important, especially if you have regular clients, because if they have the infection, the next time you see them you might be re-infected. Your private sexual partners, boyfriend/girlfriend or fuck buddies need to be seen and treated, even if they feel fine and have no symptoms.

One way to stay sexually healthy is to have regular check ups, even if you feel fine. Some infections, like chlamydia, have no symptoms. The Gay Adult Industry Keeping Its Sex Safer (GAIKISS – www.gaikiss.org.uk) has worked with professional health advisers from a leading centre for sexual health to develop a 'code of practice' to promote sexual health amongst the gay models working in the gay porn industry. They suggest that models should have certificates that show they have been tested within the last 30 days before a shoot

(although some producers want 14-20 days before a shoot). They recommend that models are tested for:

- HIV
- Gonorrhoea
- Syphilis
- Hepatitis B and C
- Chlamydia
- Non-specific urethritis (NSU)

All men in the sex industry would benefit from this, not just porn models. However, the frequency of screening for STIs depends on the number of sexual partners, type of sex, condom use and other associated risk factors.



There are several reasons to screen regularly for STIs:

- Condom use is not 100% protective against transmission of STIs
- Most STIs are not self-limited and need treatment
- Many STIs can exist without noticeable signs and symptoms
- Many STIs are treatable, and early treatment prevents further spreading and the development of complications
- Sex with private partners is often without a condom

It is also a good idea to learn about sexual infections. Sex work projects have lots of information, and training events are also sometimes available. The Lesbian and Gay Foundation (LGF) in Manchester and 7blue studio recently ran sexual health and HIV awareness training for models. 7blue studio

is also developing safer working practice booklets for their models, which is a good example of best practice within the industry.

VACCINATION

Effective vaccines are available to protect against Hepatitis A and B infections (there is no vaccination to protect against Hepatitis C). These are viruses which cause acute infection of the liver and can cause serious illness with stomach cramps, diarrhoea, vomiting, nausea, and, in the worst cases, yellowing of the skin and whites of the eyes (jaundice). Hepatitis B and C can develop into chronic conditions, damaging the liver, with risk of death. Vaccines are available free for all sex workers from sexual health clinics (GUMs) and many GP services. Before giving the vaccine, many clinics will do a simple blood test, as some guys develop a natural immunity to the infections, and may not require the vaccinations.

Vaccination for Hepatitis A can be given after a possible exposure for immediate protection, with a booster after six months for more lasting protection; there is no requirement for a repeat blood test after vaccination. Hepatitis B is given in three doses, using either the rapid regime (means you develop protection quicker) immediately after exposure, at

seven days and 21 days. Alternatively, the more traditional course is immediately after exposure, one month and two months. In both cases, a blood test will be taken to confirm success and effective protection six to eight weeks after the final vaccine dose, and with the rapid regime, a booster vaccine at one year is recommended.



Condom failure and PEP

If a condom breaks, it is usually due to user error rather than a fault with the condom itself. Often, it is because the condom was not put on the penis correctly; the wrong condom was used for the wrong type of sex; or lube was not used with the condom. If you find condoms break a lot, there may be something wrong with your technique. Don't be shy or embarrassed; speak to a sex work project worker about it. They can assess your technique using a condom demonstrator, and tell you about different types of condoms and use of lube.

Remember **NEVER** to use oil-based lube with latex condoms, for example household products like mineral oils, suntan oils, margarine, coconut butter, burn ointments, baby oils,

edible (cooking) oil, fish oil, haemorrhoid ointment, petroleum jelly, palm oil, dairy butter, insect repellents or rubbing alcohol. These weaken the rubber and make the condom more likely to break.

If a condom does break, you need to think about the risk of an STI. Monitor for any signs or symptoms of an infection. Bacterial infections such as gonorrhoea and chlamydia can be tested for two weeks after a break, and syphilis and HIV at six weeks, repeating the tests at three months if negative. If you have not been vaccinated, you should consider starting a course of Hepatitis B vaccine. However, immediately after a condom failure/break, you should consider post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP) for HIV.

PEP is treatment to prevent a person becoming infected with HIV after (post) a situation where there has been a chance for HIV to enter the

blood stream, such as a condom breaking at the point of ejaculation.

The key facts about PEP are:

- It could stop someone getting HIV
- It must be started as soon as possible after unsafe sex or a condom breaking and within 72 hours (three days)
- It involves taking anti-HIV drugs for four weeks
- It has side effects which can be severe
- It is not guaranteed to work

Studies have shown that by taking anti-HIV medication (anti-retrovirals) within 72 hours of an exposure risk to HIV, there may be an opportunity to prevent infection by stopping the viral replication of the virus, and preventing it taking hold.



However, risk of HIV transmission is complex and affected by many factors, including whether the partner (the person with whom the risk occurred) is HIV positive and the nature of the exposure.

Even when the source is known to have HIV, how infectious they are can vary. The following are likely to increase the risk of HIV transmission:

- Their plasma viral load (level of HIV in the blood) may be high, particularly during early HIV infection, if they have recently been infected. Even when someone is in a dormant phase or taking anti-HIV medication, and their viral load is low or undetectable, there is still a slight risk. Viral load varies in blood and ejaculate, and someone with a low or undetectable blood viral load may have a higher viral load in their seminal fluid. However, with most clients, you are unlikely to have such information.
- Breaks or cuts around your cock, balls or arse from disease or trauma, such as sexual assault or first penetration. Rectal or other bleeding may also increase transmission risk.

- Catching another sexual infection at the same time. Studies have shown that catching another inflammatory condition such as gonorrhoea or chlamydia may increase the risk of HIV infection.

Sexual risk activities in which PEP is likely to be considered:

- If a sexual partner is known to have HIV, and one of the following sexual acts has occurred:
 - » Receptive anal intercourse (being fucked)
 - » Insertive anal intercourse (fucking someone – active role)
 - » Receptive vaginal intercourse (being fucked)
 - » Insertive vaginal intercourse (fucking a woman)
 - » Sucking someone and taking ejaculate (cum) in the mouth
 - » Splash of semen (cum) in the eye

- If the sexual partner is of unknown HIV status and from a group or area of high risk, and one of the following acts has occurred:
 - » Receptive anal intercourse (being fucked)
 - » Insertive anal intercourse (fucking someone – active role)
 - » Receptive vaginal intercourse (being fucked)
 - » Insertive vaginal intercourse (fucking a woman)
 - » Sucking someone and taking ejaculate (cum) in the mouth

If the sexual partner is of unknown HIV status, but not from a high-risk group or area, then PEP is only considered when receptive anal sex (being fucked) has occurred.

High-risk groups for the purpose of PEP assessments include men who have sex with men (MSM); intravenous drug users; and recipients of blood transfusion in the developing world. High-risk areas include areas of the globe

with a high prevalence of HIV. Emerging hot spots include parts of the United States, Latin America (especially Guyana and Belize), South East Asia, parts of the Caribbean, parts of Eastern Europe and sub-Saharan Africa.

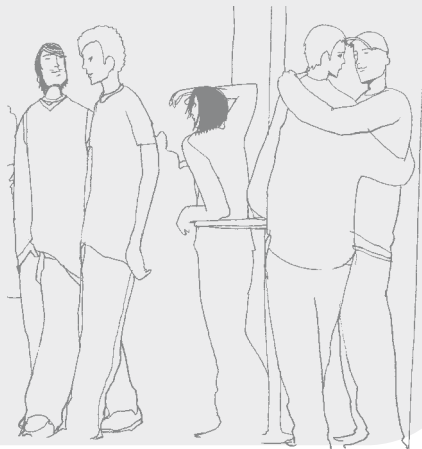
In order to decide whether PEP may be required, the level of risk is assessed. This is based on the chances of having been exposed to HIV following unprotected sex or condom failure. Assessment should consider:

- The person the unsafe sex happened with (to judge the likelihood of them having HIV)
- The sex involved, when it happened, was it oral, vaginal or anal sex, who was inside whom, did ejaculation occur?
- Having an HIV test. Before someone is given PEP, a baseline HIV test must be taken, to confirm negative HIV status. They will be tested again after the PEP treatment is completed and at three and six months thereafter. PEP is not given to anyone who refuses to test for HIV

The sooner PEP is started, the more likely it is to prevent infection. Most of the studies show that PEP has little effect after 72 hours, with the greatest effect if taken within 24 hours. Most PEP is prescribed as a three-drug combination. However, it is not guaranteed to work, even if taken properly, as the individual may have been exposed to a strain of HIV which is resistant to medication.

Studies show that the side effects of antiretroviral drugs are less well tolerated in HIV negative people than those with diagnosed HIV infection starting combination therapy. Other drugs can be given to help you manage side effects such as nausea, headaches and diarrhoea. Usually, you are seen weekly in PEP clinics whilst on treatment. PEP treatment is taken for at least four weeks of treatment following exposure to infection.

PEP may not be easy to get everywhere, but even if it is available, getting it out of hours, evenings and at weekends may be difficult. Yet this is when you are most likely to need it. Sex work projects should be able to tell you how to get PEP in your local area.



Anogenital health

Some male sex workers wash themselves too often and may use harsh chemicals. Repeatedly washing the genitals, but also the skin and hands, can cause damage to the natural protective properties of the skin and mucous membranes, and may lead to conditions such as dermatitis, which can increase the risk of infection. Frequent showers (e.g. in between clients) can cause skin to dry.

Try replacing highly perfumed products such as soaps and shower gels with pH-balanced products, which help maintain the natural flora of the skin. For guys, particularly those who are not circumcised and still have a foreskin, over-washing the head of the penis and under the skin can cause irritation and localised redness.

Using creams or sprays to increase sexual prowess or the strength and duration of erections is not advisable. Like the herbal or alternative forms of Viagra, such products are often unregulated, and the exact nature of their active ingredients may be unknown. Be cautious about using them. Cock-rings or bands may be safer alternatives to help keep erections for longer, rather than using pharmaceutical or chemical means. But make sure you know how to apply them safely; how long to use them for; and what to do if something goes wrong, such as swelling preventing removal of the ring. If this happens, seek emergency medical help.

To prevent problems with the plumbing of your cock (the urethra) and potential bladder infections, drink lots of clear liquid and pass urine after cumming (ejaculation). Certain natural fruit juices (such as cranberry juice) can prevent and treat bladder infections. >>>

Catheters can increase the risk of infection or urethral trauma if not used with care and adequately sterilised. This is the same with 'sounds' or 'probes', which are becoming increasingly popular (a long thin solid tube which can be made of metal, plastic or silicone, that is inserted down the urethra via the meatus of the penis; novelty ones are also available which light up to give a 'glow in the dark' erection). If not used with care, these can damage the tubing (urethral stricture), or increase the risk of developing non-specific urethritis (NSU) from

urethral irritation. Sharing such devices without properly cleaning in warm soapy water between insertions with different partners, increases the risk of transmission of STIs and HIV.

Some guys like to douche between clients, or use enemas to flush themselves out. However, this is not a good idea, as it leaves your arse at more risk of sexual infection or becoming irritated. It is best to wait until after you have finished working, or many hours before you see a client, to give your system a chance to recover.



Mental health issues

Many men who sell sex say they feel isolated. Stigma about sex work and prostitution can make it difficult to talk about work with friends, family or partners, and some sex workers have to keep their sex work hidden. This can lead to depression and low self-esteem, which can knock your confidence and make you more likely to take risks. Some clients are predatory and will 'home in' on your vulnerability and try to take advantage.

Sex workers feeling this way may turn to alcohol, drugs or gambling, all of which are addictive, as an escape and to manage feelings of depression or isolation. However, this can lead to financial difficulties, and they may end up selling sex to survive, not through positive

choice. It becomes a vicious cycle of selling sex to pay for the addiction, but having the addiction because they want to stop selling sex.

Generally, you need to be strong and confident to sell sex. If you are not entirely comfortable with selling sex, it may be OK in the short-term, but in the longer term, it can affect you psychologically. If you feel that your sex work is affecting your mood or your mental wellbeing, it's important to discuss your concerns, before they become a serious problem. Speak with a worker from your local sex work project. They can often help you to get counselling and therapy.



Housing and homelessness

You may find yourself homeless or living in insecure or temporary housing, and selling or exchanging sex to meet basic needs such as food, drink, a bed for the night, a lift somewhere, drugs, gifts or money. You may also be involved in other street-related activity, such as begging. Simply being visible and hanging around in particular areas means you may be targeted by predatory individuals.

If you have not made yourself 'intentionally homeless', you may fit into one of the priority need categories identified by the relevant homelessness legislation in your country. Your local council may have a duty to offer you suitable accommodation, provided you have a 'local connection' to the area. Councils should also consider applications from people who

might not have a local connection but who are fleeing violence or risk serious threat of violence. Priority need groups include 16 and 17 year olds, some care leavers, people with a severe physical disability and people with a diagnosed mental health issue such as psychosis or schizophrenia.

Even when housed, you may still find it difficult to pay rent and service charges, for example because of delays in receiving benefits, and you may continue to sell sex to fund this. Get advice – sex work projects can help you deal with these financial issues.

6 Migrant sex workers

Choosing to sell sex

The number of migrant men working in unskilled jobs has increased over the last 20 years, and in some cities (like London) migrants have become the largest group working in the sex industry.

You may have travelled from outside the UK, and ended up selling sex here. This may be an informed choice, and we know that many men from within the European Union (EU) move to different European cities to sell sex. If you are from the EU, it is easy to travel within the EU. Most EU citizens are legally entitled to work and stay in the UK and receive health and social services. However, certain restrictions apply to

those from Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia. Meanwhile, Norway and Switzerland are not EU members but their citizens are free to settle and work in the UK.

However, if you are from outside the EU, and are here on a student, marriage or tourist visa, there are restrictions on working, which can make it difficult to earn enough to survive. If you do not have a valid visa or your visa has expired, you are 'undocumented', and do not have rights to work or health and social benefits.



Immigration issues

If you are selling sex because your immigration status means you are not legally entitled to work, or you are undocumented, and you have no other choice, visit your local sex work project. They may be able to put you in touch with immigration lawyers or specialists who can advise you.

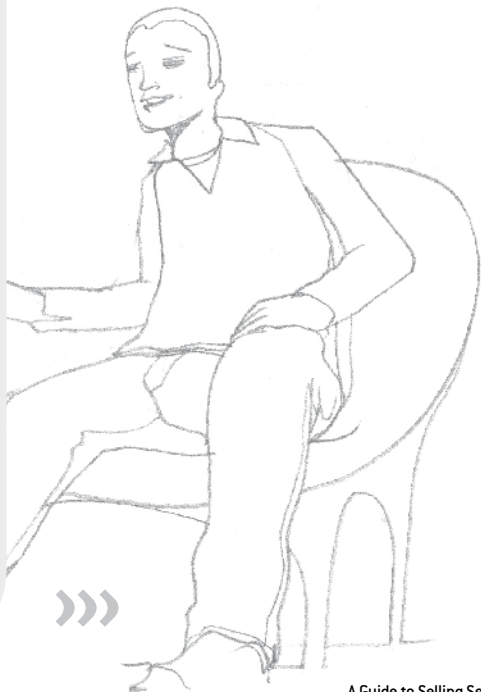
Many guys sell sex in order to buy a 'marriage' to help them gain residency in the UK. If you are thinking about doing this, take advice. It is easy to be exploited by con artists, who will take your money and then not follow through, or you may find yourself in difficult living conditions in order to satisfy the Home Office requirement of living together as husband and wife or civil partner. For further guidance, check the UK Lesbian and Gay Immigration Group website (www.uklgig.org.uk).

If you have been brought to the UK, perhaps with the promise of a new life, or have paid someone to arrange transport and entry to the UK and end up being forced to sell sex to pay back the debt, this is sexual exploitation and trafficking. This is illegal. If you can, ask a sex work project for help. Remember that if you cooperate with the police and immigration and report the people who have exploited you, you may be deported once proceedings are over.

Language skills

If you are from another country, English may not be your first language, and your spoken English may be poor. This can make it difficult to negotiate with clients, even if working in a brothel or for an escort agency. When you are with a client, you need to be able to say what you are and are not prepared to do sexually. It is important to develop your language skills quickly in order to stay safe at work.

If you are from the EU, your local council or adult education centre may run free or reduced price English classes. Check with your local sex work project; they will know what is available locally. If you are from outside the EU, English classes could be expensive. However, the IUSW (London) has an excellent language course for sex workers called X:TALK. For details see www.xtalkproject.net or phone 07914 703 372.

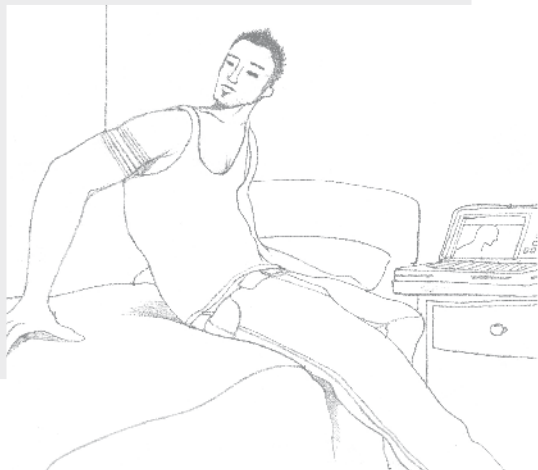


Students selling sex

Evidence suggests that students are turning to sex work to support themselves whilst at college or university. Sex workers can earn relatively large sums of money in a short amount of time, and can work flexible hours, leaving plenty of time to study and socialise. If you are studying and selling sex, you may see this as a short-term solution and an opportunity to avoid debt. However, some students graduating find it difficult to leave the sex industry because it can be lucrative compared to other jobs.

If you are working in the sex industry whilst studying, make sure you choose the right type of work. For example, if working in pornography, you will not have control over who sees the films or pictures and this could be a problem

in your future career. Conversely, developing customer service skills whilst working as an escort may give you marketable skills useful for future employment. Whether you choose to leave or stay in the sex industry, make sure it is a positive and informed choice.



7 Trans workers and gender variance

Specific issues for trans workers

If you are trans and considering selling sex, it is important to fully consider the legal, health and safety issues and how to reduce risk. Many trans people believe sex work is a viable alternative to conventional work. They may make money quickly, and use this to pay for laser surgery, private hormones and psychotherapy as these are not available on the NHS.

However, there are disadvantages to this approach. For example, choosing the right laser technician can be confusing, as there are several types of laser, some are not suitable for male hair growth, and prices can vary considerably.

Some people buy hormones over the internet without ever seeing a doctor, let alone a specialist in hormones (endocrinologist). This means that hormone levels are not checked or monitored, and taking hormones can produce nasty side effects. There is an array of products, and choosing is difficult. It means relying on biased sales pitches, friends' experiences and potential misinformation. Not all hormones sold on the internet or unregulated market are real. There are reports of fake, out-of-date or banned products. Find out as much as possible in advance, and cross-check your information. >>>

UK guidelines prevent clinicians from prescribing hormones to someone who smokes. Some clinics measure blood pressure before prescribing to ensure you have stopped smoking because of the risk of deep vein thrombosis (DVT). (The contraceptive pill is not given to women who smoke for the same reason.)

If you choose to use the NHS, which may mean a longer waiting time, you will be able to get your hormones on an NHS prescription, saving you upwards of £40 per month. The NHS also pays for sexual reassignment surgery (SRS), though not all trans workers choose SRS; some choose to have breast implants and keep their genitalia unmodified.

Transition process

You need to think about whether to continue with sex work whilst undergoing the transition process. Sex work is not considered a viable form of work by some gender identity clinics, and will not be seen as relevant for the 'real life' test. Voluntary work is, however, acceptable, so it is possible to do both. But hiding your sex work from those assessing you for SRS can lead to additional stress.

If transitioning whilst sex working, allow for not working after surgery (you will need at least a few weeks to heal). So put aside some money for this if you can. Get advice from trans or sex work support agencies about benefits such as incapacity benefit, housing benefit and council tax benefit.

SRS is not for everyone. Some people choose to have breast implants, whilst keeping their genitals (sometimes known as 'chicks with dicks') because they can get more custom and earn more.

Mental health issues

You are not automatically entitled to counselling or psychotherapy under the NHS. The psychiatrist assesses gender identity disorder (GID), and acts as a gatekeeper to the NHS transition, but not therapeutic intervention.

You can get a list of accredited specialist counsellors and psychotherapists, some of whom provide free services, from:

- **The Gender Trust**
www.gendertrust.org.uk
National helpline: 0845 231 0505
10am-10pm Monday to Friday
and 1-10pm weekends
- **SW5**
www.sw5.info
Tel: 0207 370 0406
10am-5pm Monday to Friday

Think about whether to tell clients about your trans status or genitalia. If you don't disclose your status, think about how clients might react if they find out. You run the risk of threats, harassment, violence or not being paid.

Do you pass convincingly and want to work as a woman, perhaps restricting your service, or do you advertise as a chick with a dick? Some people get by unnoticed by well-concealed genitalia, known as 'tucking', but this can depend on the size of your genitalia, and how practised you are at this technique. Voice or mannerisms can 'out' people. Voice and deportment classes can help. There are trans support groups, but they may not know about the specifics of sex work.



Sexual health

Safer sex information is generally the same whether you are trans, male or female. But, as a trans worker, you may need to know the issues which affect both men and women. It is a misconception that post-op trans women don't acquire HIV infection through vaginal sex without a condom. They do. So you still need to use condoms to protect against HIV and other sexually transmitted infections. Lubrication is particularly important for your new vagina, as it will not self-lubricate. You need to be thorough about dilating your new vagina, so that it is fully functioning and healthy.

There may also be issues about attending a sexual health clinic. Staff may be unsure about how to manage your care, and mistakenly direct you to the part of the clinic dealing with your birth gender.

Most trans sex workers are male to female. But there are also female to male transsexuals who provide sexual services. Because of the nature of the trans phallus, many decide to specialise in the fetish scene. Seek expert help from specialist projects experienced in trans sex work to familiarise yourself with particular acts including catheterisation, needles and breath play before undertaking such activities.

8 Exiting sex work

Choosing to exit

Most men make an informed choice to sell sex, but at some point, they may want to stop. This is natural. People often change jobs. You may want to try a new career; have completed your studies; have a new partner who doesn't like you working; or have achieved your financial goal.

Whatever the reason for wanting to stop, it may be difficult. Sex work has been described as being 'addictive'. While this is unlikely, making good money quickly is not easy to walk away from. Moving on can be a challenge, and you may need support. If you end up selling sex again, it does not mean you have 'failed'. Leaving sex work is not simple, and may take several attempts.

There are four main types of male sex workers, and for each, the challenges of exiting are different:

SURVIVORS

For some men, selling sex is about surviving from day to day. They may be undocumented migrants unable to work legally, or have an alcohol or drug problem, with addiction and prostitution going hand in hand. If this applies to you, it may be difficult to exit sex work. You may think you have no other choice. But there are always choices. You may need support to explore these. Developing a relationship with a key worker at a sex work project or drug support agency can help. They can help you work out your options, and make positive choices about the way forward.



PART-TIMERS

Many men sell sex on an occasional or part-time basis, for example to supplement income; because they are studying; or because it allows them to work when convenient. This may be short term to get through financial difficulty, pay off debt or support college studies. If this applies to you, it will probably be easy for you to exit sex work, as you are likely to have other options. However, if you need guidance, or your experience of selling sex has affected you, speak to staff at a sex work project. They are there to help.

INSIDERS

These are men for whom selling sex is a way of life. They often have social networks with other sex workers, through a brothel or agency; online chat-rooms; or sex work project drop-ins. If this applies to you, you most likely enjoy the work, and have positively decided to sell sex. You may have been selling for some years. However, you

may find it difficult to leave sex work. You may not be able to account for the gap in your CV for the years spent selling sex, and many employers will not accept 'sex worker' as suitable previous employment. If you don't have many formal qualifications or much work experience, trying to get paid work which matches your previous income can be difficult. A sex work project can help you explore the options.

LIBERATIONISTS

Liberationists are confident and professional sex workers. They are out and proud, and see sex work as a profession or service industry. If this applies to you, you may be vocal about your sex work, not afraid to speak to the media and involved in sex worker activism (see chapter 9). The transition away from sex work is likely to be gradual. You may get involved in research and study from your activist work. A number of sex worker activists become academics, or go on to work in sex work support projects.



Transferable skills

As a sex worker, you have many unique skills, which are developed and refined in the course of your work. These skills may include:

- Sales and marketing
- Advertising
- Communication and counselling
- Caring and people
- Interpersonal and social
- Financial
- Housekeeping
- Customer service
- Web design

All these skills are useful for other types of work. A sex work project can help you identify the key skills you have developed from your sex work, and how these may be applied to other careers.



How to move into other work

Deciding to leave sex work means you enter into a cycle of change with the following stages:

- **Pre-contemplation:** you are happy selling sex and don't see a reason to stop or change
- **Contemplation:** you are in two minds about stopping or changing
- **Decision:** you have decided to do something (stop selling sex) and are getting ready for change
- **Action:** you make the change, and stop selling sex
- **Maintenance:** the changes become integrated into your life as you move in a new direction
- **Lapse/relapse:** you return to selling sex

Leaving is a process. So, if you lapse/relapse it is not failure. When you are ready and with support, you can move back through the other

stages. A worker at a support service can support and guide you.

With support in the contemplation stage, you can identify your skills and interests. Support services can help provide work experience and voluntary opportunities.

Before you reach the decision and action stages, you may need voluntary experience to help fill the 'gaps' on your CV and get references for job applications.

You may need to think about how to reduce your expenditure, for example moving to a smaller house with cheaper rent, or selling your car and using public transport. You may need training or education to gain qualifications. Sex work support services can help with access to courses, and know how to get assistance with course fees and costs.

9 Sex worker support and activism

Peer support

Male sex work can be competitive and isolating. If you are working with other sex workers or models, try to make friends and develop good working relationships, as peer support can help with workplace safety and general wellbeing. Going for a drink with a few of the guys after a shift in the brothel, or a day on the film set, can foster stronger working relationships.

There are few formal sex worker support groups, although there is a German website, run by an independent escort who is a sex work activist, which has a secure online support forum. The language on the site and forum is mainly German (www.sexworker.at).

Within the UK, the online agency Absolute Male Escorts has a private escort message board, where escorts can share ideas. To access this, you need to sign up to a profile, which costs £1 per day (www.absolute-male-escorts.com/escort_membership.shtml).

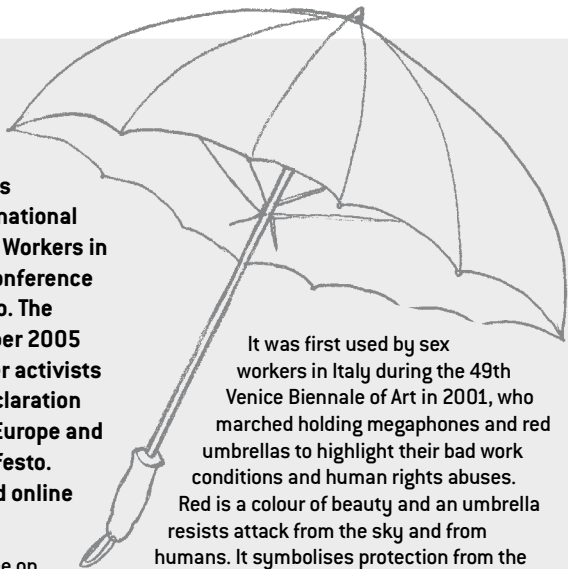
Some sex worker support projects have websites with sex worker support forums, such as SW5 (www.sw5.info). SohoBoyz is developing a secure escort forum (www.sohoboyz.org.uk).



Activism

Sex worker activism within Europe is growing. In 2002, a group of sex workers and allies came together to form the International Committee for the Rights of Sex Workers in Europe leading to a European conference and a declaration and manifesto. The conference in Brussels in October 2005 brought together 120 sex worker activists and 80 allies, launching the Declaration of the Rights of Sex Workers in Europe and the Sex Workers in Europe Manifesto. These documents can be viewed online at www.sexworkeurope.org

In 2005, the International Committee on the Rights of Sex Workers in Europe (ICRSE) adopted the red umbrella as a symbol of resistance to discrimination.



It was first used by sex workers in Italy during the 49th Venice Biennale of Art in 2001, who marched holding megaphones and red umbrellas to highlight their bad work conditions and human rights abuses.

Red is a colour of beauty and an umbrella resists attack from the sky and from humans. It symbolises protection from the abuse and discrimination faced by sex workers everywhere but it is also a symbol of their strength.

Trade unionism/IUSW

The International Union of Sex Workers (IUSW) campaigns for the human, civil and labour rights of those who work in the sex industry. It adopts the principle that everyone should have equal freedom to choose how they earn their living, and to choose what they do with their own body. The IUSW is based on sex workers' self-organisation, and works to improve working conditions in the sex industry; for the rights and recognition of workers; the right to change work and not to be forced to stay with the same employer; and the right to stay and not be deported.

The IUSW is part of the GMB, one of the UK's biggest unions with over 600,000 members. It campaigns for sex workers' rights locally,

nationally and internationally to decrease stigma and violence against sex workers; improve working conditions; and create a clear and fair sex industry.

The most important benefit of joining the IUSW GMB branch is that you become part of a huge organisation which recognises the legitimacy of working in the sex industry and is dedicated to campaigning for sex workers' rights and improving your working life; and offering practical assistance with both work and non-work matters.

EMPLOYMENT AND WORKING CONDITIONS

GMB staff can advise you about what you are entitled to expect at your place of work, including health and safety inspections, and can accompany you to a meeting with the person who employs you or runs the place where you work.



LEGAL ADVICE

As a union member, you are entitled to free legal advice from GMB solicitors. This may be helpful if you are arrested by the police; caught up in a raid; or assaulted by a client.

FINANCE AND TAX

Members receive low cost services from an accountant who specialises in workers paid in cash, and can negotiate with the Inland Revenue.

CONFIDENTIALITY

The IUSW understand that workers in the sex industry may need confidentiality, and takes this into account on the membership application form and payment options. You must live in the UK, but your nationality or immigration status do not matter. You do not need to provide proof of identity and can join using your professional name.

To join the IUSW, use the online application form at www.iusw.org or phone 07946 897 770.

10 Useful Contacts

For information about sex worker services/projects in your area, see the UK NSWP Directory of Services which you can download from www.uknswp.org. As well as the websites and phone numbers already given in this booklet, other useful resources are:

SCARLET MEN

www.scarletmen.org.au

The site for Australian male sex workers

SOROS

www.soros.org/initiatives/health/focus/sharp/links/sex_work

The Open Society Institute

SWEAT

www.sweat.org.za

Sex Worker Education and Advocacy Taskforce, based in Cape Town, South Africa

DESIREE ALLIANCE

www.desireealliance.org

Coalition of health professionals, social scientists, professional sex educators, sex professionals and support networks working to improve understanding of the sex industry and its human, social, and political impacts



UK Network of Sex Work Projects

info@uknswp.org.uk

www.uknswp.org



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