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Community Perceptions of Street Sex Work in Cardiff

The views expressed in this report are those of the authors, not necessarily the views of the Safer Capital Partnership or Cardiff Sex Worker Forum (nor do they reflect the policies of either organisation).

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Foreword

This research project was funded by the Safer Capital Partnership with the support of Cardiff Sex Worker Forum.

The Crime and Disorder Act 1998 and the Police Reform Act 2002 place a statutory requirement on the Cardiff County Council, South Wales Police Force and the local Health Board to act in partnership to tackle issues of crime and disorder.

Safer Capital, Cardiff's Community Safety Partnership (CSP), operates a multi-agency partnership approach to community safety and crime and disorder. Safer Capital is committed to achieving long-term reductions in crime, fear of crime and anti social behaviour. The partnership provides practical crime prevention, community safety advice and reassurance.

Safer Capital is made up of six statutory partners:

- Cardiff Council
- South Wales Police
- Cardiff and Vale University Health Board
- South Wales Police Authority
- South Wales Fire Authority
- South Wales Probation Trust

The Cardiff Sex Worker Forum (The Forum) is a multi-agency collaboration. The Forum is the first multi-agency collaboration to formally address the issues of sex work in Cardiff, the capital of Wales. Prior to the creation of The Forum, services for street sex workers had been delivered by individual agencies and the regulation of workers was the responsibility of South Wales Police. Today the Forum is working with Safer Capital towards the

development of an evidenced based strategy to address and meet the needs of both sex workers and the wider community.

The Forum is represented by the following agencies:

- Cardiff City Council
- Cardiff and Vale University Health Board
- Centre of Criminal Justice and Criminology, Swansea University
- Drug Intervention Project (DIP)
- Housing and Neighbourhood Renewal Outreach Services
- Inroads
- Safer Capital Substance Misuse Action Team
- Salvation Army
- South Wales Police
- South Wales Probation Services
- Safer Wales Street Life
- Terrence Higgins Trust, Cymru
- The Wallich

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Our thanks are also extended to the Safer Capital Partnership for funding the project. The decision to fund this research is especially worthy of mention given the current fiscal constraints on public bodies. Repeatedly, throughout the research many respondents expressed their support for the research which some took as an indication that public bodies were taking the issue of street sex work seriously for the first time.

A special thank you is also extended to Nici Evans, Chair of Cardiff Sex Worker Forum and Inspector Lyndon Jones from South Wales Police who supported the research bid and presented the proposal to the Safer Capital Partnership.

Lastly, we would like to express our gratitude to our fieldworker Paula Harry who is a member of the Centre for Criminal Justice and Criminology at Swansea University. Paula very kindly gave up some of her free time and shared her knowledge to assist with the implementation of the project.

Summary

This document reports on the findings of the research project '*Community Perceptions of Street Sex Work in Cardiff*' conducted between September and October 2010.

Street based sex work takes place within several suburbs of Cardiff. In particular, street sex work is a continuing feature within the neighbourhoods of Grangetown and Splott.

South Wales Police intelligence identified Grangetown and Splott as areas within which some community members have significant concerns about street based sex work. Community concerns regarding street sex work in these neighbourhoods have also been raised at local Partnerships and Community Together (PACT) meetings: street sex work has been identified as a PACT priority in both Grangetown and Splott for several years.

Hence, while it is recognised that street sex work takes place in several suburbs in and around the Cardiff area, the communities in this research project, namely Grangetown and Splott, were identified as the neighbourhoods within which street based sex work is potentially of most concern to members of the community.

This research project sought to engage members of the communities of Grangetown and Splott to ascertain community perceptions on the issue of street based sex work. While police intelligence and other existing data derived from PACT meetings clearly indicated that street sex work is a concern for 'some' members of the community, it was true to say that the views of the wider community within Grangetown and Splott remained unknown.

The purpose of the research was thus twofold:

First, to provide an opportunity for Grangetown and Splott residents to express their views and opinions on street sex work.

Second, to gain a better understanding of the perceptions of Grangetown and Splott residents on street sex work in their communities.

We also sought to assess:

- **The prevalence of sex work within those communities**
- **The impact of sex work on the quality of life of residents**
- **Indicators of empathy / lack of empathy / tolerance / intolerance towards sex work and sex workers in the community**
- **Community opinion generally with regard to the strategic direction policy should take**

Summary of findings

Prevalence of street sex work

It was a key aim of the research to establish the prevalence of street sex work. Approximately 90% of the respondents reported that they 'had seen' prostitutes on the streets of Grangetown / Splott, with 41.3% reporting that they saw sex workers 'daily'. 32.3% reported that they saw sex workers 'every week', 9.5% reported seeing sex workers 'monthly'. 7.5% reported that they saw sex workers 'hardly ever'. Moreover, while previous interviews with sex workers had identified that the majority of female street sex workers in Grangetown and Splott lived in around the Cardiff area (see Sagar and Jones, 2010), the researchers wanted to establish whether members of the community were aware of this. Previous research has illustrated that sex work can be a secret occupation in terms of family and friends (Sanders, 2004), and that in some cases sex workers are harassed by members of the community when they are not working (Pitcher et al, 2006). However, when respondents were asked about the local identity of sex workers that they had seen, approximately 67% of respondents reported that they 'did not' know if sex workers lived in their area'; approximately 20% reported that 'some' sex workers live in their area; and approximately 0.5% reported 'none' live in their area.

Thus although over 70% of respondents saw sex workers daily / weekly, approximately 68% of respondents either 'did not know' or believed that sex workers 'did not' live in their area.

The findings from 'Engagement Events' with sex workers, found that community harassment only took place while the women were 'working' (Sagar and Jones 2010). The authors therefore suggest that sex workers in Cardiff are more likely to be targeted for their profession (as sex workers) and not as community members who are 'known' to be sex workers. The authors

conclude that the anonymity of sex workers is of paramount importance if policy makers take steps towards developing strategies for community mediation / community conferencing.

Community perceptions on sex work and sex workers

Despite the national shift towards the eradication of sex work set out in the *Coordinated Prostitution Strategy* (Home Office, 2006) and rhetoric of the previous New Labour administration, a key finding of this research was that community perceptions of sex work appear not to be in line with that of previous policy makers. For example, 73% of respondents agreed with the statement *'prostitution will always take place'*. Importantly, although there were a minority of voices which demonstrated a zero tolerance to street sex work, the majority of the views in relation to the inevitability of sex work were connected to indicators of tolerance and pragmatic solutions which were centred around issues of sex worker safety as the following respondent quotation demonstrates:

"Prostitution has always and will probably continue to take place everywhere. If it was made legal (like in Amsterdam) then at least it could be safe for the girls." G2

In terms of attitudes towards sex workers, the research indicated an understanding amongst community members of the reasons why some women may need to sell sex. Indeed, 47% of respondents agreed with the statement, *'I understand why some people might need to sell sex'*. In qualitative responses these needs were identified as substance misuse issues or the need to provide for families.

The research also highlighted that approximately 42% of the respondents agreed that *'people should be allowed to buy and sell sex'* but over half of this group also expressed the view that this should take place away from residential areas.

Analysis suggests that despite the intentions of the previous New Labour government to eradicate prostitution, community members do not see this as a realistic option. Further that in the new era of 'Big Society', the views of the community in relation to street sex work should be listened to and considered by policy makers.

The impact of sex work on the quality of life of residents

In terms of the *'impact of street sex work on the quality of life'* of residents, 38% of respondents perceived street sex workers to be a nuisance. Approximately 16% indicated that prostitution affected their quality of life 'daily'; approximately 23% indicated that prostitution affected their quality of life 'often', However, approximately 28% indicated that it 'rarely' affected their quality of life and approximately 33% indicated that prostitution 'never' affected their quality of life.

Further analysis of the data indicated that out of 65 of respondents who had reported seeing sex workers daily, 62 also reported that prostitution affected their *quality of life daily*. Thus it would appear that there is a clear connection between 'seeing' sex workers daily and sex work impacting on a resident's quality of life.

Moreover, the impact was often quantified in terms of:

- The effect on local children
- Safety issues for both the sex workers and female members of the community

- Littering of condoms and needles
- Noise disturbance.

These issues are discussed in more detail with regard to community perceptions of responses to street prostitution in section 3.

Community views and opinions on policy development

Qualitative data analysis suggests that overwhelmingly respondents who had views and opinions regarding the direction policy should take at a *local level* believed that sex workers must be provided with a safe area to work – away from residential houses.

As illustrated by the respondent comments below, the rationale for this does differ, as does the ‘form’ of safe space. However, predominantly data analysis indicates that respondents wanted sex workers to work off street in brothels or for them to be provided with a space in industrial areas away from houses for sex workers to work safely.

“I think it should be in a more appropriate place. I think some [prostitutes] would like it safe...some would always work on the streets. The problem is that all the questions have been asked before. It’s time to do something about it. We should stop burying our heads in the sand and hoping things go away. The prostitutes who wish to have a safe place should have it and pay like any other business. For those that don’t then we must deal with them.” G65

“Having a safe place to work away from houses would be the perfect solution and I think they would definitely like it if they had a safe place to work.” G38

The authors conclude that:

- There is scope within the areas of Grangetown and Splott for consideration to be given to providing street sex workers with a safe place to work outside of residential areas.
- That local policy in Cardiff needs to be open to negotiation and consultation with sex workers and members of the wider community towards reducing the social disturbance in residential areas.
- That there is potential for enhancing community cohesion.
- Policy development should aim to keep sex workers and members of the wider community safe.
- Ongoing active consultation and community mediation / conferencing is recommended.

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1. Introduction

1.1 Background

The impact of street sex work on communities is a key concern for policy makers and law enforcers both at a national and local level.

At a national level, the Home Office 2004 consultation document *Paying the Price: A Consultation Paper on Prostitution*, stated that the purpose of the consultation was to mark the beginning of the development of 'a realistic and coherent strategy to deal with prostitution and its serious consequences for individuals and communities' (2004: 4).

In 2006 *A Coordinated Prostitution Strategy, and a Summary of Responses to Paying the Price*, set out the then New Labour Government's proposals for a coordinated response to prostitution in England and Wales. The document called for strong local partnerships to work to alleviate prostitution in their areas and suggested that local partnerships conduct a needs based assessment to understand the impact of sex work on the community.

The Home Office recommendations included:

- Consultation with communities
- Finding ways to prevent individuals entering into sex work
- Providing routes out of prostitution
- Delivering justice
- Linking policy development with crime and disorder and drug strategies

1.1.1 Community consultation

Despite New Labour's rally call to local partnerships to consult with and engage communities on many issues that are designated to be social problems, to date there has been surprisingly little community consultation on a whole variety of issues including sex work.

Indeed, empirical understandings of the relationship between street markets and communities remains an emerging landscape (see for example: Hubbard, 1999; O'Neill and Campbell, 2004; Hester and Westmarland, 2004; Pitcher et. al. 2006). O'Neill and Campbell's research in 2004 and Pitcher et. al.'s research in 2006 are two of a limited number of innovative projects which engaged sex workers and the wider community with the aim of providing base line evidence towards more effective policy making. Where community engagement has taken place, it seems that researchers share some optimism that relations between sex workers and residents can be improved. Furthermore, that communities and sex workers should be included within the policy making process towards improving community safety for both sex workers and the wider community. Moreover, the researchers recommended alternatives to increased enforcement; in particular, they encouraged discussions on providing sex workers with a safe place to work outside of residential areas.

Still, non-punitive approaches are particularly difficult to realise within the current political and policy climate which challenges the 'inevitability' of sex work and which aims to eradicate sex work from the community. Many academics who have been researching the issue of street sex work in urban areas for many years have denounced the Home Office approach as overly simplistic (for example, Scoular and O'Neill, 2007). Further, it has been suggested that the current regulatory framework in England and Wales underestimates complexity of street sex work and its inherent place in society (Scoular and O'Neil, 2007).

1.1.2 Impact on Community

In Cardiff, street sex work remains a long standing issue in the specific geographical locations of Grangetown and Splott. In terms of research, the last substantial piece of research in Cardiff, conducted by Dr Tracey Sagar in 1998-2002 identified street sex work as a social concern in Grangetown. Residents spoke of kerb crawlers circling the area constantly. They also spoke of young mothers having to pick up condom and needles – and of young children actually ‘picking up’ dirty condoms and needles. Some residents perceived sex workers to be quite threatening and pimps even more so. Generally, complaints from the community revolved around deterioration of quality of life for residents, noise disturbance, used condoms littering the streets and discarded needles (Sagar, 2002). The residents interviewed in Sagar’s research undoubtedly believed that street sex work had a negative impact on the community and that it represented a public nuisance. The concerns of residents in Grangetown in 1998- 2002 are typical of those commonly raised by residents who live in areas where sex work takes place (see for example: O’Neill and Campbell, 2004). The situation in Grangetown led to residents taking direct action via the Street Watch programme (Sagar, 2005). However, Sagar’s research found that residential action in partnership with the police led to the displacement of sex workers and did little to resolve the underlying problems of street sex work.

More recently, research by Debbie Jones (2008-present) has identified street sex work in the areas of Grangetown and Splott to be a continuing social issue that is raised by some members of the community through traditional reporting channels to Police and at Partnerships and Communities Together (PACT) meetings. However, despite this research, the views of the wider community have not been sought till this point.

1.1.3 The Cardiff Sex Worker Forum

This research project is part of a larger research agenda currently being undertaken by the Cardiff Sex Worker Forum in partnership with Safer

Capital. The Cardiff Sex Worker Forum aims to establish a sound evidential base to steer effective policy development in the Cardiff area in the context of street sex work.

The Cardiff Sex Worker Forum adopts an all inclusive approach to policy development. Research in Cardiff for and on behalf of the Cardiff Sex Worker Forum has already been carried out which engaged sex workers in the Cardiff area.

1.1.4 Engagement with sex workers

Member organisations of the Cardiff Sex Worker Forum have worked in partnership to carry out research with the aim of ascertaining the service provision needs of sex workers and to better understand the daily struggles of sex workers. Importantly, the report '*Reaching Out to Female Street Sex Workers in Cardiff: Findings from Engagement Events*' (Sagar and Jones, 2010) identified extreme levels of violence against street sex workers working in the areas of Grangetown and Splott. Furthermore, the report revealed that sex workers were not only open to violence from clients but that they are also susceptible to harassment and violence from members of the community. This substantiates other research which continues to identify street sex workers as a vulnerable, stigmatised and marginalised community group (see for example, O'Neill and Campbell, 2004; Pitcher et. al., 2006). The conclusions drawn by Sagar and Jones (2010) also went some way to support the findings of research carried out by Matts and Hall in 2007 with twelve street sex workers in Cardiff and which also drew attention to the violence and exploitation experienced by some street sex workers.

Street sex workers can also be vulnerable to exploitation from drug dealers and pimps. In Cardiff, Sagar and Jones reported that 12 out of 17 sex workers were taking A class drugs at the time of interview, with another 5 sex workers receiving or awaiting treatment for drug misuse (at 4.2). Further, although 'Engagement Event' data did not suggest that sex workers in the Cardiff area

were 'coerced' or 'pimped', qualitative data derived from this study indicates that some members of the community believe that sex work brings 'pimps' and 'drug dealers' into the local areas of Grangetown and Splott. As Pitcher et. al. point out, where there is a prevalence of violence, drug use and risky behaviour amongst sex workers within a community, this in turn gives rise to concerns regarding public space which becomes increasingly prone to risk and exploitation. They also rightly emphasise that there is a need to ensure that the issues on the ground are fully understood in order to develop more appropriate responses to address both the needs of sex workers and the concerns and needs of the wider community (2006: 2).

In Cardiff, partner organisations who are members of the Cardiff Sex Worker Forum are seeking to gain a better understanding the problems on the ground. The aim of The Forum is to develop local strategies which take into account the perspectives of stakeholder agencies, sex workers and members of the wider community.

Overall, the objective of The Forum is to develop a strategy that can exist within the current regulatory framework provided by the Policing and Crime Act 2009 – a strategy which provides needs based services for sex workers and which assists those sex workers who would like to end working on the streets to be able to do so.

Also however, and very importantly, The Forum aims to improve the safety of those sex workers who continue to sell sex. Within such a strategy it is of course vital that the needs and concerns of the wider community are considered and wherever possible acted upon.

Thus, this research represents the next step towards enhancing the Cardiff Sex Worker Forum's understanding of the relationship between sex workers (some of whom live and work within the community; see, Sagar and Jones 2010) and members of the wider community.

This research identifies the impact of street sex work on the wider community and reports on the views and opinions of the community generally with regard to sex work, sex workers and the direction policy should take to in developing responses to street sex work.

1.2. Aims and Objectives

The research was carried out in the communities of Grangetown and Splott. The findings of the research provide the first empirically based understandings of the community's views on street sex work in Wales.

This research had two broad aims:

- 1. To provide an understanding of the wider communities views on street sex work.**

- 2. To examine whether there would be the will for and possibility of future community involvement in addressing the issue as stipulated in current central policy.**

Objectives of the research:

In the past two years, the partners of the Cardiff Sex Worker Forum have made substantial progress in developing a multi-agency strategy which moves beyond the traditional model of enforcement which has been shown to place sex workers at risk of harm, whilst perpetuating the 'revolving door' cycle.

The views of the community will assist the strategic direction of this strategy and very importantly engagement with the community will also go some way to 'reassuring the public' that they have a voice and their concerns are important to the strategic direction of sex work policy in their area.

As already noted, findings from recently held engagement events on behalf of the Cardiff Sex Worker Forum with female street sex workers suggest that many sex workers may live in the communities within which they work (Sagar and Jones, 2010). Listening to the concerns of the whole community which may or may not include sex workers makes for 'social inclusion' within the policy making process and this may be a gateway for opening up dialogue with the wider community towards 'community conferencing' (as stipulated in the *Coordinated Prostitution Strategy*, Home Office, 2006) and 'community mediation' sessions at a later date.

Thus the findings of this report will assist local policy development and practise in relation to:

- **The regulation of street sex work.**
- **Improving the safety of sex workers.**
- **Meeting the needs of the community.**
- **Community mediation / community conferencing.**
- **The enhancement of community cohesion and social inclusion.**

2. The Research

2.1. Engaging the Community

Hester and Westmarland's 2004 research study on behalf of the Home Office identified the potential benefits of engaging with the community on sex work related issues. The study highlighted community engagement in Bournemouth, Nottingham and Stoke-on-Trent as examples where members of the community were asked for their opinions regarding the impact of criminal justice interventions. Nevertheless, such examples can be said to amount to 'impact assessments' rather than community 'engagement and consultation' towards strategy development.

This was to a certain extent recognised in *Paying the Price* (Home Office, 2004) which called for a co-ordinated multi-agency response to tackle street prostitution which includes where possible the 'participation' of sex workers or advocates of sex workers and the community. This approach was further advocated in the Home Office *Coordinated Prostitution Strategy* (2006) which encourages community engagement to identify the issues of most concern to local people.

Engagement with the community to discover community perceptions and priorities regarding street sex work will provide new knowledge for policy development in the context of sex work in Cardiff. Importantly, it is also anticipated that the research project will act as a catalyst to draw members of the community into an ongoing 'active consultation' process (see, Ballintyne and Fraser, 2000); and into community mediation / conferencing which may make for more effective sex worker policy development. Indeed, Hester and Westmarland's 2004 research study recommended that further research was needed on 'the full effect and sustainability of community mediation as an approach in reducing the nuisance to communities resulting from prostitution (p. xiii). However, at the time of writing they believed that 'community

mediation is more likely to create a sustained reduction of nuisance and disorder to communities and should be encouraged as a key approach' (xiii).

2.2. Definitional issues

'Sex Workers or 'Prostitutes'?

'The Policing and Crime Act 2010 uses the terms 'prostitute' and 'prostitution'. However, many academics, agencies and organisations (including the Cardiff Sex Worker Forum) believe that the terms 'prostitute' and 'prostitution' are stigmatising of sex workers and sex work. To continue to refer to women in policy development and practice as 'prostitutes' is to continue the historic tradition of labelling women who sell sex – the most notable example would be the label of 'common prostitute' within the Street Offences Act 1959 which has only recently been removed by the Policing and Crime Act 2010. This report refers to 'sex workers' and 'sex work'.

However, the terms 'sex worker' and 'sex work' were found to be problematic when engaging with members of the community. Our pilot study indicated that 'prostitute' and 'prostitution' were terms commonly used by members of the general public. Therefore, in order to facilitate the community's understanding of the nature and objectives of this research project and to ensure that our research questions were accessible to the general public, our research questionnaire refers to 'prostitute' and 'prostitution'.

'Community'

Defining 'community' is problematic (see for example Jones and Stewart, 2006). As Sagar and Croxall (forthcoming) point out, Government policies consistently refer to the community in matters of crime prevention (*community safety*), and in regard to diasporic groups (such as the Muslim community)

and also in the context of the moral majority (we must reassure the community). Despite such variants and shifts in language there does appear to be academic consensus that where 'community consultation' takes place (in the context of policy development) then that consultation has to be truly representative (see for example, Crawford 1998; Lacey and Zedner 1995; Lund 1999; Sagar, 2005).

For the purposes of this research the 'community' is a geographical area – selected on the basis of police intelligence. However, within the geographically selected area there are no constraints. The 'community' is fully inclusive of gender, age and ethnicity for example.

2.3. The case studies

As already noted, street sex work has been a feature of the communities of Grangetown and Splott for many years. The existence of street based sex work in Grangetown for example led to some community residents forming a Street Watch organisation in partnership with the police in the 1990s. Sagar's research in 1998-2002 revealed how the Street Watch programme simply led to displacement into adjacent urban areas (Sagar, 2005). Furthermore, it reported on hostility between members of Street Watch and sex workers and of incidents which bordered on vigilantism. Although Street Watch has disbanded for several years now in the Grangetown area, concerns regarding street sex work have continued to be raised at Partnership and Community Together meetings (PACT). For example, in Grangetown, street sex work was a PACT priority for three consecutive years. In recent months 'prostitution' has been moved from 'priority' status to 'project' status. This is in recognition of the fact that street sex work is an 'ongoing' issue and cannot be addressed by partners within the usual 6-8 weeks required by the PACT format.

Importantly, however, the PACT meetings that the Sagar and Jones observed over an 8 month period from October 2007 to May 2008 were attended by very few residents: between 11-15 at any one time (data on file with Sagar and Jones). Furthermore, to date very little research to date has been carried out in Splott. However, observations of Splott PACT meetings by Jones in 2008 / 2009 did highlight that, as with Grangetown, sex work was considered a 'problem' by some of the residents who attended the meetings. In this respect Grangetown and Splott had similar characteristics. However, it is fair to say that on closer enquiry it appeared that at the time of the observations the issue of sex work was raised by no more than three people (two of whom were husband and wife). Moreover, the complaints focused on one individual who was thought to be selling sex from their home. Thus complaints centered on issues of nuisance such as noise disturbance in relation to 'off street' sex work.

Therefore, given the inclusive aims of the Cardiff Sex Worker Forum; to improve services for sex workers and also enhance social inclusion and community cohesion, it was believed to be necessary to ascertain the views and opinions of the wider community within the most 'problematic' areas – 'problematic' being defined by police intelligence and community PACT priorities.

2.4. Neighbourhood characteristics

The results from the 2001 National Population Census were used to investigate the case study areas of Grangetown and Splott (the next census is due to take place in 2011). According to Census figures, almost a third of all residents in the communities of Grangetown and Splott are semi / unskilled workers or on state benefit / unemployed / lowest grade workers with approximately a third of residents living in rented or local authority / Housing

Association of private rented accommodation. The communities are predominantly Christian.

Further, the report 'Deprivation in Cardiff' which was published in 2002 indicated that both the communities of Grangetown and Splott ranked highly in the ratings for 'social deprivation' in Cardiff. By way of illustration (1 being worst ranking),

Grangetown was ranked:

8th for multiple deprivation
8th for income deprivation
4th for employment deprivation
4th for health deprivation
8th for education deprivation
13th for housing deprivation
9th for child poverty deprivation

Splott was ranked:

4th for multiple deprivation
5th for income deprivation
6th for employment deprivation
5th for health deprivation
4th for education deprivation
2nd for housing deprivation
4th for child poverty deprivation

Routes into street sex work are recognised as varied and complex (see for example, (Phoenix, 1999; Hester and Westmarland, 2004). However, there is consensus amongst researchers that poverty is a pervasive problem for those who work the streets. Consequentially, street sex work very often takes place in areas of social deprivation.

2.5. Respondent demographics

Length of residency in Grangetown and Splott

Approximately 45% of respondents had lived at their current address for 10 years plus.

Approximately 11% of respondents had lived at their current address between 7 and 10 years.

Approximately 20% of respondents had lived at their current address between 3 and 7 years.

Therefore, over half of our respondents were 'long term' residents with approximately 30% living in the area for under 7 years.

Gender

Approximately 59% of our respondents were female.

Approximately 41% of our respondents were male.

Thus although we had approximately 20% more female responses this is not dramatically significant.

The age range of our respondents

Respondent age groups were generally evenly represented. It appears therefore that the data within this research project represents the wide-ranging age demographics of residents living within the targeted areas.

Approximately 7% of respondents were aged between 18-25

Approximately 23% of respondents were aged between 26-35

Approximately 20% of respondents were aged between 36-45

Approximately 19% of respondents were aged between 46-55

Approximately 18% of respondents were aged between 56-65

Approximately 12% of respondents were aged 66 and over

Ethnicity

Respondents were asked to self identify their Ethnicity. 21 different categories were identified, reflecting 'ethnic' diversity in areas. However, self identification data enabled us to conclude that:

Approximately 50% of respondents identified themselves as White (including: White British, White Welsh, White English, White European, White Canadian for example).

Approximately 6% of respondents identified themselves as 'Mixed Race'.

Approximately 14% of respondents came from diverse ethnic groups (including: Chinese, African, Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Asian, Arab, and Caribbean).

Approximately 13% of respondents identified themselves as Welsh (therefore ethnicity is unknown).

Approximately 17% of respondents identified themselves as British (therefore ethnicity is unknown).

Religion

Demographic data analysis showed that:

Approximately 44% of respondents identified themselves as Christian

Approximately 37% of respondents stated they had no religion

Approximately 14% of respondents identified themselves as Muslim

Approximately 5% of respondents identified themselves from various other religions (including: Buddhist, Hindu, Jehovah's Witness).

2.6. Methodological framework

The overall design of the research was based on a mixed methodological framework incorporating quantitative and qualitative research methods. The research was conducted between August and September 2010.

2.6.1. Ethics

As with all forms of social enquiry, careful consideration was given to any ethical issues which the research may give rise to. This included the use of language around appropriate terminology and definitions, as discussed in 2.2. Also, to the conduct of the research as a process.

The research proposal passed the rigours of the Ethical Standards Committee of the Centre for Criminal Justice and Criminology at Swansea University and all those involved in the project abided by Swansea University's ethical practices and procedures and by the ethical guidance offered by the British Society of Criminology.

Although the geographical locations of the field work have been identified, the anonymity of individual respondents has been respected.

As already noted (1.2) data obtained via the 'Engagement Events' which were carried out by the Cardiff Sex Work Forum between 2009 and 2010 indicated that some sex workers lived within the case study locations (Sagar and Jones, 2010). Thus, it was evident that sex workers would be invited to take part in this research. However, given that details surrounding the occupations of members of the community generally were not sought in this research and, moreover, the stigmatisation of sex workers and consequently the secrecy that can exist around their occupation (Shaver, 2005; Sanders, 2006), a decision was made not to ask participants to disclose whether or not they currently or previously identified themselves as sex workers. Furthermore, it

was important to the 'inclusiveness' of the research design that sex workers were provided with the opportunity to discuss their views and opinions as 'community members'.

2.6.2. Widening participation

The populations of Grangetown and Splott are diverse in terms of ethnicity. Aiming to ensure, as far as possible, that each community member had the opportunity to participate fully in the research project assistance was sought from Communities First.

To further the inclusive process of the research, and to 'pave the way' for possible future research or community mediation at a later stage, postal questionnaires were followed up with personal contact from field workers.

Members of the community were provided with the opportunity to fill in a request slip for a researcher to contact them; then to make an appointment to discuss issues raised by the questionnaire. All residents who formally requested contact were spoken to by the researchers either in person or by telephone.

All residents in the target area were notified when researchers would be in their area. Each residential address within the target area was thus invited to fill in a questionnaire and to discuss the questionnaire and their views and opinions further with the researchers. This enabled members of the community to add to their survey responses, complete a questionnaire on the doorstep, or discuss any concerns they did not want to put in writing with the researchers. Residents within the case study area were also provided with a telephone number to contact the research team and an email address.

Where field workers did not receive a reply on the doorstep they posted a compliment slip through the door reiterating how members of the community could contact them if they wished.

Although a date has yet to be set, the participants were informed that the findings of the research would be shared with them at a future PACT meeting where they would have the opportunity to discuss the findings and recommendations.

2.6.3 Research design

The design of the project was based around five key phases.

Phase 1

- A quantitative methodology relying on postal questionnaires to all occupiers of locations identified through Police Intelligence as areas where street sex work has been identified as a serious social concern.
- In total the number of addresses identified for the postal questionnaire came to 612. This covered residences within both Grangetown and Splott which had been formally identified by South Wales Police. The individual postal addresses were identified through the post office and did not include business premises.
- An explanatory letter accompanied the questionnaire and a stamped addressed envelope was also included. This has been shown to increase response rates.
- As recommended in social science enquiry the draft questionnaire was revised several times, with opinion sought from experts in quantitative research methods, thus ensuring self-critique and external scrutiny (Sarantakos, 2005). The questionnaire was piloted with local community participants in the case study area. During the pilot several issues were highlighted.

- First, the use of language. The term 'sex worker' and 'sex work' was not easily understood by members of the community.
- The questionnaire had to be simplified and brief.
- The issue of sex worker '**safety**' was a serious concern for some members of the community.

Accordingly, the questionnaire was redrafted. A series of closed questions with tick boxes was supplemented with open ended responses to provide respondents with the opportunity and option to provide qualitative and/or quantitative responses.

Phase 2

- This stage of the research relied on face to face data collection. As postal return rates for research questionnaires are known to be quite low, 'face to face' contact would strengthen the research as it has the potential to result in higher participant numbers.
- The researchers also believed that this process would widen the research agenda into one which would better facilitate community '*engagement*' and '*consultation*'.
- This phase still relied on the use of the questionnaire as a research tool but prompts were also designed to steer field worker and community member discussions with regard to the overarching objectives of the research.
- Respondents who requested contact with the researchers were also spoken to during this phase. Responses were recorded contemporaneously by the field workers.

Phase 3

The quantitative data was analysed using SPSS, a quantitative software computer package, with the qualitative responses being analysed separately in order to explore the main issues raised by respondents and identify common themes. The findings of this enquiry, however, are present cumulatively in the following chapter.

The data was categorised into the following key themes:

1. Prevalence of street sex work
2. Perceptions of sex work and sex workers
3. Impact of sex work on the quality of life of residents
4. Safety of sex workers
5. Developing responses to street sex work

Phase 4

The penultimate phase of this project was report writing.

Phase 5

The research will be concluded with presentations of the findings to community members through the PACT process. The dates for these presentations have yet to be agreed. Arrangements will be made with South Wales Police as to how best to advertise the presentations within the local communities.

2.6.4. Target Population and Sample

As already noted, it is recognised that street sex work takes place in several suburbs in and around the Cardiff area. However, the target population for this project was identified formally to the researchers by South Wales Police.

There was no specific criteria for identifying why these locations were more suitable than others for sampling purposes, other than they were identified as the neighbourhoods within which street based sex work was potentially of most concern to members of the community.

Various sampling methods of the target population were considered by the researchers. However, given that one of the aims of the project was to ascertain the views and opinions of the wider community, the researchers first of all considered targeting the whole population of Grangetown and Splott. Moreover, the researchers understood that it was highly unlikely that the entire targeted population would take part in the research. Therefore, they accepted that the sample who did respond, would be characterised as a self selecting sample in that it was individual choice whether or not to reply to the questionnaire and/or to take up the opportunity of face-to-face contact.

In total **612** residential premises were identified as a target population. Questionnaires were sent to all addresses and follow up visits made by the field workers. Out of 612 residential addresses **205** people took part in the research either through completion of a postal questionnaire or through face-to-face methods.

2.6.5. Limits to the research

Arguably all social science research has limitations. This project is no different. Although it has investigated the views of a number of members of the community where sex work is a highly contested matter, it does not offer any findings on the wider community of Cardiff's views on this issue outside of those areas identified by the Police as being particularly 'problematic'. However, although the research is very localised, it is nevertheless in line with Home Office guidance for consulting with communities where street sex work 'exists' (see, Home Office, 2006).

3. Findings and Analysis

205 respondents took part in this research. The findings and analysis are divided into the following key themes:

- **Prevalence of street sex work**
- **Perceptions of sex work and sex workers**
- **Impact of sex work on the quality of life of residents**
- **Safety of sex workers**
- **Developing responses to street sex work**

3.1. Prevalence of street sex work

A key aim of the research was to ascertain the community's perceptions on the prevalence of street sex work. While existing data from both South Wales Police and Safer Wales Streetlife clearly indicated that sex work took place in the suburbs of Grangetown and Splott, it was important to the research to identify the prevalence of street sex work from the perspectives of the community. We considered that community responses on 'seeing' street sex workers and the frequency of 'seeing' street sex workers may present valuable data in terms of analysing the impact of sex work on the quality of life of residents (see section 3.3 for further analysis).

When asked whether the respondents had 'seen prostitutes on the streets of Grangetown / Splott':

*Approximately 10% reported that **they had 'not seen'** prostitutes on the streets of Grangetown / Splott.*

*Approximately 90% reported that **they 'had seen'** prostitutes on the streets of Grangetown / Splott.*

*Of those respondents who '**had seen'** prostitutes on the streets in their neighbourhood:*

41.3% reported that they saw sex workers 'daily'

32.3% reported that they saw sex workers 'every week'

9.5% reported seeing sex workers 'monthly'

7.5% reported that they saw sex workers 'hardly ever'

Given the findings of the Engagement Events (Sagar and Jones, 2010) with sex workers which suggested that sex workers lived in the area within which they worked, and moreover that they may be susceptible to harassment and even violence from some members of the community we wanted to know if sex workers were 'known' to the respondents as fellow community residents.

When asked 'do you know if the prostitutes that you see live in Grangetown / Splott?'

Approximately 67% of respondents reported that they 'did not' know if sex workers lived in their area

Approximately 20% reported that 'some' sex workers live in their area

Approximately 0.5% reported 'none' live in their area

Thus although over 70% of respondents saw sex workers daily / weekly, approximately 68% of respondents either 'did not know' or believed that sex workers 'did not' live in their area.

When this data is triangulated with the 'Engagement Event' (Sagar and Jones, 2010) data where the majority of the 17 sex workers interviewed did live locally, it raises some interesting issues.

First of all, it is accepted by many academics and researchers that sex work is a 'secret' occupation (see for example, Sanders, 2004). However, while sex workers may keep their occupation secret from family members for example, it is perhaps more difficult to keep such an occupation secret from neighbours and fellow community members when sex work is carried out in the neighbourhood within which they also live. Indeed, Pitcher et.al.'s (2006) research found that sex workers could be harassed by members of the community while carrying out simple everyday tasks such as taking children to school.

The findings here however, further our understanding of previous data derived from Engagement Events with sex workers where it was found that community harassment only took place while the women were 'working' (Sagar and Jones 2010). Thus, arguably, they were targeted for their profession (as sex workers) and not as community members who are 'known' to be sex workers.

However, the qualitative data from our survey did indicate that where women are thought to be sex workers and where they are believed to be working out of their place of residence i.e. 'off street', then this can lead to conflict between sex workers and residents.

For example two residents stated:

"Sometimes the prostitutes will be arguing and drinking, making noise in their house all night...it's bad behaviour and it shows loss of dignity...it promotes lazyness and encourages bad ways of getting money." G 65

“...many of us, in fact the majority of people that live here are disgusted as the lady at number [...] is a known prostitute and we do not want our kids growing up around her...she has drug dealers and clients going to her flat...she also uses crack and I do not want to live around this as I have children.” K180

Generally however, it does appear that sex workers are not ‘known’ to the majority of community residents. Perhaps it is also true to say that the data reflects the changing composition of ‘community’ which is undoubtedly less cohesive today (as depicted in the rhetoric of governments which advocate ‘community restoration’ for example) and where ‘strangers’ can actually be neighbours.

3.1.2. Summary of Analysis

In terms of bringing community and sex workers together towards enhancing community cohesion and the social inclusion of sex workers (an overarching aim of Home Office policy and of the Cardiff Sex Worker Forum), the findings in this section of the report are important when considering the potential for community mediation and community conferencing.

- The majority of respondents did not know if sex workers lived in their area.

Research suggests that where sex workers are known to the community there is a risk of increased conflict between some members of the community (for example, whilst working and where suspected of selling sex off street). The stigmatization that sex work attracts has also led other academics and researchers to declare that sex workers are often designated ‘Others’ and ‘community outsiders’ (for example, O’Neill, 2007).

Therefore, in terms of reducing the ‘risk’ of victimisation and further social exclusion and reducing community conflict any steps towards community

mediation and / or community conferencing are carried out with an understanding of the risks to sex workers as outlined in this report.

3.2. Perceptions of sex work and sex workers

Although we did not ask our community what influences have shaped their perceptions on sex work, in understanding community perceptions on buying and selling sex it is probably true to say that individuals are always likely to be influenced by a variety of factors including: family, peers and religion for example.

Also, perceptions may be shaped by how sex work issues are presented within national and local media. The influence of the media is maybe particularly relevant given the recent coverage of actors, professionals, sports personalities who are reported on as having purchased sex (see as example, Daily Telegraph, 2009; Daily Mail, 2010). While the authors do not seek to speculate on whether such media coverage has or can influence an individual's perspectives on sex work in a particular direction, clearly at the time of writing this report the general public are very aware that sex is being sold and purchased.

Perceptions on sex work and sex workers may also be swayed by events in recent years which have once again highlighted the vulnerability of sex workers. The murders of sex workers in Ipswich and Bradford are significant examples – both of which received considerable media attention (BBC, 2010; Times Online, 2010). Indeed, the safety of women was brought to our attention as a residential concern in our pilot study and thus the 'safety of sex workers' was incorporated into our questionnaire (the findings and analysis of this issue can be found in section 3.4).

In order to ascertain respondent perceptions on sex work and sex workers we asked our respondents to indicate (by ticking a box) if they agreed with a selection of statements about 'prostitutes' and 'prostitution' generally. At this

point in the report it is important to note that the researchers were very careful not to 'pigeon hole' or 'lead' our respondents views on prostitution. Tick box statements were designed to assist with data collection, however each respondent was provided with the opportunity to express their personal views and opinions.

The findings are presented below.

3.2.1. Sex work

*Approximately 30% agreed with the statement that 'people should **not be** allowed to buy and sell sex'.*

*Approximately 18% of the respondents agreed with the statement that 'people **should be** allowed' to buy and sell sex'.*

*Approximately 24% of respondents agreed with the statement I think '**people should be allowed to buy and sell sex but not near my house**'.*

Almost 30% did not voice an opinion either way.

As illustrated above, these particularly thought provoking questions gave rise to a split in opinion – reflecting perhaps society's mixed views on issues of morality. Indeed, more detailed analysis of the data indicated that responses to these questions were quite evenly spread in terms of the demographic age groups of our respondents.

However, there was no general consensus amongst members of the community that selling sex should be illegal per se – less than one third of respondents believed that people 'should not' be allowed to buy and sell sex.

For those respondents who provided the researchers with further qualitative data on this issue, responses from members of the community who did not

believe that *'people should not be allowed to buy and sell sex'* appeared to be based on personal moral values for example:

"I think it's a disgrace. I think it should be stopped." G16

"Prostitutes should not be allowed on the streets, dirty things." H4

"It is sick that people do this...it is disgusting to see them....." F31

"There is absolutely no reason to be a prostitute, they are lazy people who are looking for a quick and easy way to make money....they are disgusting people who I have no time for, and they lower the value of areas...because of what they do I hate them." I16

However, the majority of our qualitative respondents, had alternative opinions on the buying and selling of sex generally. The quotations below typically illustrate the views of many respondents on this issue:

"I think prostitution should be legalised. I think as long as no one gets hurt they are fine." G91

"People should be able to buy and sell sex but not near any residential area. People should be allowed to buy and sell sex as long as both parties are agreeable...buying and selling sex should be legal and privately carried out away from streets." G75

Managing or steering moral values is not easy and representing those differing values in policy is very difficult. The law since the 1950s has taken the position that sex in exchange for money is no concern of the law, unless it takes place within the public view – because it is sight of sex work that is injurious to society (see, Wolfenden, 1957; Street Offences Act 1959). To a certain extent this approach is borne out by our data where the majority of respondents believed that people should be allowed to buy and sell sex but

where 24% of those respondents did not want prostitution to take place close to residential properties. This issue is analysed further in section 3.3. of the report where we consider community concerns regarding the impact of sex work on children living in the community.

3.2.2. The inevitability of sex work

We asked the community if they agreed with the statement '***I think prostitution will always take place***'.

73% of respondents believed that 'prostitution will always take place'.

Analysis firmly indicates that this opinion is not held by any particular respondent age group.

However, given that quantitative demographic data collection indicated that over half of our respondents had lived in areas where street sex work has taken place for seven years or more it could be suggested that they would perhaps be more inclined to perceive sex work to be inevitable as opposed to others who live in areas where sex work does not take place. Nevertheless, to discount the perceptions of respondents as unduly biased would be to discount the opinions of residents who (given their unique experiences) are 'experts on sex work' (O'Neill and Campbell, 2004). Furthermore in terms of policy development, the findings represent the respondent opinion of two communities within which street sex work is a contested issue and thus, the target of responses that are steered by a central approach.

Predominantly, qualitative data on the issue of inevitability is linked to statements about 'safety' and 'what should be done' with regard to resolving the issue or towards more effective policy development.

For example:

“Prostitution has always and will probably continue to take place everywhere. If it was made legal (like in Amsterdam) then at least it could be safe for the girls.” G2.

This issue is therefore incorporated into our discussions in the remaining sections of this report which consider the impact of sex work on the quality of life of the community, the safety of sex workers and the development of policy responses.

3.2.3. Sex workers

Given the stigma attached to sex work we also aimed to collate data that might assist with policy development towards enhancing community cohesion and providing for social inclusion of sex workers. Therefore, it was important to the research to understand community perceptions on sex workers as well as sex work.

We asked respondents to tick the statements that they agreed with about people who worked as ‘prostitutes’.

Approximately 13% agreed with the statement ‘I do not understand why some people might need to sell sex’.

Approximately 47% agreed with the statement ‘I understand why some people might need to sell sex’.

Therefore, almost half of all respondents believed that they had some understanding of why people might sell sex. While we did not ask respondents to outline the details of their understanding (in asking the question we were trying to identify indicators of empathy towards sex workers), O’Neill and Campbell’s more detailed study in Walsall which took

place over a 10 month period did offer a firm indication that members of the community are aware that sex work can be entered into due to a variety of reasons such as lack of available jobs, supporting a family and supporting a drug habit for example (see, O'Neill and Campbell, 2004).

However, where our quantitative data was supported by qualitative data it became clear that respondents linked the causes of sex work to well recognised connected issues such as drug use and poverty. For example:

"It's not nice to be approached or to see them loitering and putting their lives at risk, but I think that so many have families to support , or it could be drugs" E26

"Prostitution is the act of a desperate person who needs help and support". E27

Although, again, lone voices did comment:

"It's degrading." B22

"It's sick that people do this." F31

Also, importantly, although 47% of respondents indicated that they understood why some people might need to sell sex:

Approximately 38% agreed with the statement 'I think prostitutes are a nuisance'.

Analysis indicated that out of the 96 people who agreed with the statement '*I understand why some people might need to sell sex*', 29 also agreed with the statement '*I think prostitutes are a nuisance*'. Thus also although indicators of understanding were evident in the data, for almost a third of respondents who perhaps understand the reasons why some people might need to sell sex, it is also a nuisance for them. The issue of nuisance is discussed in the following

section in relation to the connected wider issue of the impact of sex work on the quality of life of residents.

3.2.4. Summary of analysis

Messages from the Home Office suggest that prostitution cannot be tolerated in the community (Home Office, 2004 and 2006).

According to the *Coordinated Prostitution Strategy* (2006) prostitution is not inevitable – the strategy’s overarching aim is to challenge the ‘inevitability of prostitution’. However, sex work or ‘prostitution’ is and always has been an inherent part of society (see for example: Brooks-Gordon, 2006).

The Home Office *Coordinated Prostitution Strategy* (2006) aims to eliminate street sex work from communities.

However, our quantitative findings presented thus far in this report would suggest:

- **The majority of our respondents believe sex work is inevitable**
- **Less than one third of respondents believe that people should not be allowed to buy and sell sex**
- **Approximately 42% of our respondents believe that people should be allowed to buy and sell sex**
- **Over half of those respondents who believe that people should be allowed to buy and sell sex would like it to take place away from residential areas.**

3.3. Impact of sex work on the quality of life of residents

As noted in section 3.2, sex work was perceived to be a 'nuisance' by 38% of our respondents.

However when residents were asked:

Does street prostitution affect your quality of life?

Approximately 16% indicated that prostitution affected their quality of life 'daily'

Approximately 23% indicated that prostitution affected their quality of life 'often'

Approximately 28% indicated that it 'rarely' affected their quality of life

Approx 33% indicated that prostitution 'never' affected their quality of life

Data analysis indicated that out of 65 of respondents who had reported seeing sex workers daily, approximately 62 also reported that prostitution affected their quality of life daily. Thus it would appear that there is a clear connection between 'seeing' sex workers daily and sex work impacting on a resident's quality of life.

Those respondents who indicated that prostitution affected their quality of life 'daily', 'often' and 'rarely' were invited to provide further explanation on this issue. The qualitative data presented in this section of the report facilitates a better understanding of 'how' sex work is impacting on the quality of life of some residents in Grangetown and Splott today and also 'why' sex work can be perceived by some to be 'a nuisance'.

3.3.1. Concerns over safety

Generally, respondent's comments centered on: noise disturbance, cars slowing down, doors slamming, language abuse and discarded needles and condoms. Given this, it can be stated that community concerns (at least in Grangetown) have not really altered since Sagar's research carried out in 1998-2002. However, some issues were more prominent in our qualitative responses particularly, residents being approached by kerb crawlers and sex workers; also community concerns regarding the dangers to young children – in the context of them coming into contact with condoms and needles. These issues are highlighted within the respondent's comments below.

"I worry about coming home. I never come over the bridge. I worry about men stopping me." DD21

"My own lovely daughter has been asked if she wanted sex at the bus stop." DD25

"They attract unwanted attention to other female women who might walk down the same street." F30

"I sometimes feel intimidated and suspect others feel the same." E24

"Prostitution is the act of a desperate person who needs help and support...it would be better to offer support to them so they don't feel like they have to work the streets. I'm a female and it can make me nervous walking home alone if cars are slowing down looking for prostitutes. The prostitutes are never any trouble really." E27

Some members of the community are obviously very worried about their own safety. Clearly, members of the community should not feel unsafe or threatened, or at risk in anyway. However, interestingly, cross tabulation data analysis also indicates that residents may be worried about their own safety but they can also be worried about the safety of the women they see selling

sex. For example respondent E24 demonstrated significant levels of tolerance and empathy for sex workers by indicating that he was worried about the safety of sex workers and that he understood why some people might need to sell sex.

Furthermore, both F30 and E24 also believed that people should be allowed to buy and sell sex but not near residential areas and both indicated that they would be happy if sex workers had a safe place to work.

3.3.2. Impact on children

Almost a third of all our respondents who provided qualitative data made comments about the affect of street sex work on children in the community.

Qualitative data analysis clearly shows that several members of the community are very worried about children and discarded used condoms and needles as illustrated by the comments of respondents below:

“It should be stopped in residential areas. They leave condoms in our bin area also on street and in park where children play.” G102

“[I have found] condoms and needles near the bins. This is a safety issue for my grandchildren.” C77

“...used needles and condoms lie around where children play.” D21

“[When taking your young child for a walk] we often see condoms littered around the area.” B22

It difficult to estimate the actual risk of contracting Hepatitis B, Hepatitis C and HIV from a needle stick injury; there is little information readily accessible to the general public. However, Miller (2007) did estimate that the risk through

occupational exposure of contracting Hepatitis B is 6-30%, Hepatitis C, 1.8% and HIV, 0.3%. Further, in seeking to further understand and identify 'risk' to community in this context, the authors sought the expert opinion of Mr. Peter Clark (National Director of Terrence Higgins Trust, Cymru). According to Mr. Clark, the risk is reduced much further where there is non-occupational exposure. Mr. Clark also believed that the risk of members of the community contracting HIV from condoms and needles was 'minimal' (data on file with authors).

However, it is not the intention of this report to minimise or ignore the potential negative impact of experiencing and seeing discarded needles and used condoms. The authors appreciate that this can be very distressing and our qualitative data also indicated that, at times, residents end up cleaning the streets of offensive litter themselves. Some respondents also made it clear that they did not want children '**seeing**' street prostitutes:

"It's not nice if you are taking your young child for a walk and have to witness prostitutes looking for work. B22

"It is also upsetting for children to see these women degrading themselves – they often begin work before dark." D18

"It's very damaging for children to witness these things." G74

"I think it is a nuisance because children see them." G18

"This is the oldest profession in the world. You can't stop them but this isn't the way – because you can't explain it to your kids." C1

"It's embarrassing when children ask questions." C16

Cross tabulation analysis clearly indicated that there was no link between those respondents who believed '*that people should not be allowed to buy and sell sex*' who fell within the 26-35 age group (who are more likely to be

bringing up young families) and those people who are concerned about the impact of sex work on children.

Clearly, members of the community can perceive that people should be allowed to buy and sell sex but they can nevertheless be very concerned about the impact that this may have on children.

Further cross tabulation analysis suggested that there was however, a link between respondents who were concerned about the impact sex work had on children and who also wanted sex work to take place out of the residential area.

3.3.3. Connected issues

Although street sex work can give rise to serious concerns amongst some community members, over 60% of our respondents indicated that street sex work 'never' impacted on their quality of life or 'rarely' impacted on their quality of life:

"It's their life they can do what they want." C22

"I am aware of it but it doesn't bother me. I moved into the area knowing about the prostitutes." DD22

However, it is clear from the comments below that while some residents perceive that sex work does not have a 'significant' impact on their quality of life they may nevertheless worry about connected issues. For example:

"It has never affected my quality of life but I would worry if I was followed by a punter by mistake, and it does seem to be linked to drugs which worries me because they leave needles and that is a safety issue for me and my grandchildren." C7

However it is also interesting to note that respondent C7 for example also believed that:

“Safety for [prostitutes] has to come first...” C7

Further that there needed to be:

“Safe areas for them to work.” C7

Likewise, respondent G111 stated:

“When the winter comes I catch the bus home in the nights and you see the kerb crawlers and it is quite worrying, but I don’t bother them and they don’t bother me.” G111

The respondent also added that:

“They should have their own brothel.” G111

3.3.4. Summary of analysis

The Home Office *Coordinated Prostitution Strategy* (2006) does recognise the issue of ‘safety’, for both members of the community and also for sex workers. It also recognises the problem of discarded condoms and needles and the impact this can have on communities.

It could be suggested therefore that if the Home Office strategy to eliminate street based sex work within the community is successful, then the kind of fears expressed above by our respondents in this section of the report would of course cease. However, for our respondents, the majority believe that ‘prostitution’ is ‘inevitable’ (see section 3.2.2.); the Home Office approach may indeed seem idealistic.

According to our data:

Approximately 60% of respondents indicated that 'prostitution' rarely or never affected their quality of life.

Approximately 40% of respondents indicated that 'prostitution' affected their quality of life daily or often.

Almost a third of all qualitative respondents concerns were raised about the impact of sex work on children; many of those concerns centered on children 'seeing' sex workers.

However, concerns over personal safety and the safety of children cannot, for the purposes of this research project (which aims to better understand community perceptions of street based sex work generally) be disconnected from identifiable levels of tolerance and community views regarding the safety of street sex workers, together with potential solutions and opinions as to what direction policy. These connected issues are further analysed and discussed in the remaining sections of this report.

3.4. Safety of Sex Workers

Both quantitative and qualitative data collated from our research demonstrated significant levels of concern and empathy with regard to the safety of sex workers.

Approximately 57% agreed with the statement 'I worry about their safety'.

Approximately 60% agreed with the statement 'I would be happy if prostitutes had a safe place to work away from houses'.

Approximately 55% agreed with the statement 'I think prostitutes would like it if they had a safe place to work'.

Qualitative data analysis identified only 5 negative comments about sex worker safety. For example:

"I don't worry about their safety they have pimps or dealers looking out for them." D11

"I don't care about their safety – it's disgusting!" D32

"It is their choice, so their safety is their responsibility." E10

However, almost 50 respondents were concerned about sex worker safety. Comments from respondents included:

"Safety for them has to come first." C7

"I feel sorry for them; they need brothels. I think one of them will be dead by next year...I wish I could go and help them but I'm too afraid." F23

"I worry about their safety – what if I found one dead? There should be a place for them to go." G18

"It worries me and I feel sorry for them. They are so young." DD22

"I don't judge them. They might be desperate. They should have safety; they are humans." G38

As already noted, the murders of sex workers in Ipswich and Bradford in recent years may have well brought to the community's attention the fact that sex work is unsafe and that sex workers are at risk of violence. Nevertheless, at this moment in time, in Grangetown and Splott it is clear that the 'safety' of sex workers is a significant community concern.

For the majority of respondents who are worried about the safety of sex workers – they are right to be worried. Interviews with sex workers which took place in 2009 and 2010 for and on behalf of the Cardiff Sex Worker Forum revealed that the safety of sex workers in the Cardiff area is problematic. Several women spoke of extremely violent attacks including: rape at knife point; being punched repeatedly in the face and having teeth knocked out; having a rock smashed into the head; being threatened with a knife when a client wanted his money back or refused to pay (see, Sagar and Jones, 2010).

Another key finding is the capacity of the majority of respondents (55%) to highlight the association between sex work and safety issues by indicating that they believed that sex workers would be happy if they had a safe place to work’.

In our analysis generally, we identified a significant concern for sex workers and also empathy with sex workers. This is important; not only with regard to the potential for future community mediation and conferencing but also it is a positive indicator of the potential to enhance the social inclusion of sex workers within the community and to reduce community conflict.

Our intimations are further strengthened by the fact that our qualitative analysis confirms that positive **tolerant responses more than doubled less tolerant responses** to sex workers.

The quotations from two respondents below illustrate very well the many tolerant comments we collated:

“I think prostitutes need a safe well lit place to work for their protection.” J1

“Licensed premises should by provided and prostitutes should not work on streets...The term ‘oldest profession’ is true there will always be a market for sex. Safe, clean, licensed places / houses /clubs would protect the women from violence and the men too.” J3

Although some respondents were clearly less tolerant of street sex work than others, we identified only a handful of zero-tolerant comments. For example:

“Prostitution is wrong...I’d like prostitution to be stopped in the area and for the police to clamp down on the crime such, as drugs that go hand in hand with it.” K197

3.4.1. Summary of analysis

Achieving safety for sex workers is a key aim of the Cardiff Sex Worker Forum, in partnership with Safer Wales. It would also appear from our data analysis that the safety of sex workers is a key issue for the community.

According to our data:

- The ‘safety’ of sex workers is a concern of 57% (the majority) of respondents.
- The majority of our respondents (60%) would like it if sex workers had a safe place to work
- The majority of respondents (55%) think that sex workers would like it if they had a safe place to work
- Tolerant comments towards sex workers more than doubled less tolerant or intolerant comments

Cross tabulation data analysis also indicates that there are clear connections between those respondents who want sex workers to have a safe place to work and who also have firm views and opinions about the direction policy

should take in their area. This is discussed in more detail in the following section of the report.

3.5. Developing responses to street sex work

As has been made clear throughout this report, it was important to the research project to engage with the communities of Grangetown and Splott to identify and ascertain a better understand community perceptions of street sex work. However, within that engagement process we also aimed to provide the residents within the targeted areas of Grangetown and Splott with a voice – to have the opportunity to make their views and opinions known with regard to the direction policy development should take in their neighbourhoods.

This research engaged with over 600 residents in the communities of Grangetown and Splott. 205 of those residents made known their perceptions of street sex work and over half of our respondents had views on the direction that policy should take with regard to street sex work.

Qualitative data analysis suggests that overwhelmingly respondents who had views and opinions regarding the direction policy should take at *a local level* believed that sex workers must be provided with a safe area to work – away from residential houses.

As illustrated by the selection of respondent comments below, the rationale for this does differ, as does the ‘form’ of safe space. However, predominantly data analysis indicates that respondents wanted sex workers to work off street in brothels or for them to be provided with a space in industrial areas away from houses for sex workers to work safely.

3.5.1. Suggested alternatives to enforcement

“I think it should be in a more appropriate place. I think some [prostitutes] would like it safe...some would always work on the streets. The problem is that all the questions have been asked before. It’s time to do something about it. We should stop burying our heads in the sand and hoping things go away. The prostitutes who wish to have a safe place should have it and pay like any other business. For those that don’t then we must deal with them.” G 65

“Having a safe place to work away from houses would be the perfect solution and I think they would definitely like it if they had a safe place to work.” G38

“They need a safe area and safe housing.” A13

“It should be done in licensed premises and not on streets.” C16

“Legalised brothels and keep under control. It’s their choice.” DD24

“Displacement is a problem. The Police move them from one area to another. It should be regulated so kids are not involved...like Holland in controlled red light districts. If you can’t beat it, then control it.” G9

“I wish someone could get a policy right, a safe environment so it’s not affecting others.” D11

Furthermore, as illustrated by the comment below and as noted previously in this report, although a member of the community may find prostitution to be a nuisance or perceive that it impacts negatively upon their quality of life, or have very real fears and worries about sex work and sex workers, they can nevertheless hold firm opinions about how those problems could be alleviated. For example:

“It’s a personal preference but I don’t like to find condoms and needles. There should be brothels or a controlled environment with health checks.” F9

“I think we should have it in a certain area similar to Amsterdam, but on a much smaller scale. Kerb crawlers worry me because of my children. Condoms and needles are found on our estate often. It creates an area for drugs and crime. I’ve had a prostitute try to rob my house late at night which terrified my kids. But I understand prostitutes have a commodity to sell. I also won’t knock them for it. It is the oldest profession probably in the world. I just wish it was more monitored with safe areas for them to work from and that it didn’t have a day to day effect on me and others.” F19

“It should be done in a controlled environment and not on the streets. They ought to have a safe house away from residential areas – there are children here. I understand what their reasons are for this lifestyle but it is just not appropriate in a residential area – we have seen it for too many years now and people are becoming angry and bitter.” F20

“I think prostitution should be legalised and appropriate care given to prostitutes – with health checks like in Holland. I think too many boys and girls are not taken care of on the streets. Guidance and safety is up-most. Seeing young girls on the corners that look ill – on drugs or beaten up – I worry over their safety. But I am also concerned about the type of people it attracts, especially those who like ‘young children’. It is a nuisance for neighbouring properties. Prostitution will always happen. I believe we should do something to provide a safe and healthy place to work and believe that rape cases would be less [for prostitutes] if it was more open and less embarrassing for those seeking it.” G57

As the above illustrations indicate quite clearly, street sex work may be perceived by 38% of the community as a nuisance however, many respondents within that 38% category believed that the problems as they perceived them could be addressed by providing sex workers with a safe place to work. Again as illustrated above, some respondents went even further to talk about how monitoring and regulation could improve the ‘health’ of sex workers and perhaps even reduce rape incidents amongst the sex worker population.

Many academics agree that providing sex workers with a safe place to work with health care facilities would improve the safety and well-being of the sex worker population and have a beneficial impact in terms of improving community safety for the wider community (see, Bellis et. al. 2007; Goodyear and Cusick, 2007).

However, our respondents also had views and opinions regarding the direction policy should take at a *national level*:

“Brothels or other ways should be legalised, regulated and licenced and taxed as income. This would protect these women and men from abuse or any other danger.” G75

“Legalise it because of safety but in certain areas – like in Amsterdam.” F39

“I think the sex trade should be regulated and not criminalised. I think that the root cause of prostitution is the root cause of negative public feelings to one of the oldest trades in history.” G1

“Prostitution has always and will probably continue to take place everywhere. If it was made legal (like in Amsterdam) then at least it could be safe for the girls.” G2

“I think prostitution should be legalised. I think as long as no one gets hurt they are fine.” G91

Although we did identify some respondents whose opinions on policy development are incorporated within Home Office policy (2006). For example:

“Prostitutes are vulnerable and need safe schemes to reduce harm and to find ways out of prostitution”. H12

“Education should be provided regarding health and protection.” G75

3.5.2. Punitive responses and displacement issues

We are careful to note that a very small minority (8) of our respondents did desire a very different and more punitive response. For example:

“More police patrols; more arrests – more enforcement of the actual law.” E9

Furthermore, it is clear that for those respondents who are very upset and angry about the impact street sex work is having on their quality of life there are also clear links with past policy implementation and issues of displacement. One respondent stated:

“They use my lane for prostitution, drug taking and selling. Thanks to the wisdom of Cardiff Council by putting in lane gates elsewhere but not in ours a load [of prostitutes have] come into our lane...I often see prostitution taking place either in a car or out of one. I see them peeing, taking drugs or buying drugs...I’m also for ever jet washing my lane of condoms more than my car. For all this I have the lovely but arrogant Cardiff Council to thank”.

(reference removed at the request of the respondent)

3.5.3. Trafficking

Lastly, given the current political and policy awareness that surrounds the issue of Trafficking both in England and in Wales, we believe that it also noteworthy that only three respondents mentioned ‘Trafficking’ in their qualitative comments. In the case of all three respondents the issue was clearly subsumed within the context of sex work generally. For example:

“In the last six moths I have seen them occasionally. I think the trafficking of women is generally the problem. The law criminalises the wrong person the girls.” J9

“Need to deal with the root causes first...it’s a vicious circle that needs to be dealt with – drugs and trafficking.” E21

It is very important to state that our respondents were not asked specifically for their views on trafficking, nor were they asked if they knew that trafficking was taking place in the area. However, neither were they specifically asked to identify incidents of drug use for example. Given this, we are very mindful of reaching un-substantiated conclusions in this report. We note this simply in the belief that the lack of respondent comments on 'Trafficking' or 'Trafficked victims' within our research project might prove useful to other interested parties or policy makers at some future date.

3.5.4. Summary of analysis

Over 100 respondents (approximately 50% of our respondents) had views and opinions on developing responses to street sex work.

According to our data:

- Predominantly, respondents proposed solutions to remove street sex work from residential areas.
- Qualitative comments illustrated how respondents connect the issue of safety of sex workers with removing sex work from residential areas.
- Qualitative comments also illustrated how respondents can perceive that sex work is a nuisance for example, whilst believing that removing sex work out of residential areas could alleviate such nuisance.
- Respondents predominantly suggested alternatives to enforcement.

It is important to note that the UK Network of Sex Worker Projects which is the umbrella organisation representing the views of over 60 Sex Work projects in

the United Kingdom advocates alternatives to 'enforcement' (see generally: <http://www.uknswp.org/>).

4. Final analysis

Overall, the findings of our qualitative data analysis clearly documented in this report, do not sit easily alongside the current Home Office approach which rejects legalisation, decriminalisation and the need to provide sex workers with a safe place to work.

Within the last two decades multi-agency work (directed via the Crime and Disorder Act 1998) has sought to draw communities into consultation with regard to tackling crime and disorder in their areas. However, it has also been recognised that in many instances policy decisions that are steered from the centre can result in communities having policies forced upon them (Hughes, 2007).

Further, community based research into consultation procedures has resulted in some commentators asserting that community consultation can simply be a 'rubber stamping' exercise (Gilling, 2000). Generally it is accepted amongst most academics and researchers that consultation needs to be much more representative and it needs to include the views and opinions of the wider community. Regrettably, also, in the context of police / community engagement in the suburbs of Grangetown and Splott, given the negligible numbers of residents who attend PACT meetings – it cannot be stated that the decisions of PACT reflect the 'will' of the wider community and thus that they are meeting the 'needs' of the wider community.

Today, community consultation is a key aim of Neighbourhood Policing and it is recommended embedded within general policing practice. Furthermore, given the drive towards 'New Localism', which is identifiable within New Labour's 'stakeholder' society and also within the new Prime Minister David Cameron's 'Big Society', sends out strong messages to the community that policy making at the local level is the best and indeed the only way forward (see Sagar and Croxall, forthcoming).

We strongly suggest that the 'voice' of the community as depicted within this report is taken into account when developing strategies for sex work and sex workers in the Cardiff area.

Finally, we end our report with a comment from one of our respondents, whose view may mirror that of some professionals, front line workers and other stakeholder agencies working in the Cardiff area:

“Current policies don't work. Police move girls on and sometimes arrest some. [They are] short term fixes. Many girls seem to have drug problems that are not addressed. A total rethink is required.”
G17

5. Recommendations

This report has provided clear base line data to facilitate a better understanding of community perceptions of street based sex work in the communities of Grangetown and Splott.

The research was seen by many respondents to be a positive step towards a realistic long term strategy which will aim to alleviate the problems that some community members experience in relation to street sex work.

Our recommendations seek to address the needs and concerns of the communities of Grangetown and Splott as they are identified by our respondents.

We hope that the development of strategic responses to street based sex work in the Cardiff area will be informed by the recommendations below which this research suggests would have the support of the community.

5.1. Short-term recommendations:

Offensive litter

Safer Wales Street Life should discuss with sex workers the impact of discarded needles and condoms on members of the community; particularly there is a need to outline the worries of the community with regard to fears for children's safety.

Safer Wales Street Life is currently working with the Inroads project to develop a mobile needle exchange service for sex workers in the Cardiff area. This collaboration is welcomed and will go some way to reducing the problem of discarded needles in residential areas. However, given the issues raised

in this report we would recommend that the 'impact on community' would be better reduced by mobile needle exchange services are available on a *daily basis* rather than a regular or weekly basis.

Information should be made available to residents about the limited risks of Hepatitis B, Hepatitis C and HIV from used needles.

Partners should discuss with the Local Authority the issue of used needles and condoms and consider providing the community with a contact number to prioritise 'clean up'.

Noise disturbance

Safer Wales Street Life should discuss with sex workers the impact of noise disturbance associated with sex work on the community.

Safety of sex workers

Local strategic partnerships and the Cardiff Sex Worker Forum should continue to develop and coordinate the 'Ugly Mugs' initiative and to maintain safe accommodation for sex workers.

Strategic partnerships and the Cardiff Sex Worker Forum should continue to develop and coordinate practical measures to keep sex workers safe. For example, the continued distribution of rape alarms and self defence lessons for sex workers.

The reporting of violence against sex workers must be encouraged.

The authors are encouraged by the inclusion of women 'fleeing from' prostitution or trafficking within the Welsh Assembly Government's violence against women's strategy, *The Right to be Safe*. However, we would emphasise that the findings of this research project together with the *Reaching Out to Sex Workers* report (Sagar and Jones, 2010) provides a firm evidential foundation in support of the need to focus more closely on women who are selling sex and who face the risk of violence on a daily basis.

Safety of residents

Partner organisations should consider providing safety training for members of the community, particularly for female residents in Grangetown and Splott. This may help to reduce fears associated with street sex work.

Active consultation

Keep the community informed of what is happening. For example, provide feedback to the community as soon as possible of any steps taken to reduce offensive litter / steps being taken keep sex workers safe.

Strategic policy development

Continue to work with the community to identify local solutions

Policy makers should consider the potential benefits to the community and to sex workers in providing sex workers with a safe place to work away from residential areas.

5.2. Mid-term recommendations:

Community mediation

Build upon active consultation with the community and consider a progressive approach towards community mediation / conferencing.

Strategy development

Pilot the implementation of a 'safe area' for sex workers outside of residential areas.

5.3. Long-term recommendations:

Community conferencing

Hold regular community conference sessions.

Policy Development:

Meet the needs of both community and sex workers and implement a strategic response which aims to keep sex workers safe and to remove sex work from residential areas.

5.4. Further research

The issue of drug use amongst sex workers was highlighted by a number of community members. In 2010 Sagar and Jones reported on that in Cardiff, street sex workers are users of class A drugs. However, the research did not go far enough to provide an explicit understanding of substance misuse. We would recommend further local research in Cardiff in collaboration with stakeholder agencies including Safer Wales Street Life and the Drug Intervention Project to produce an 'accurate picture' of use amongst Cardiff

based sex workers which we believe would facilitate effective policy development in this area.

This project has reported on the concerns held by many of our respondents regarding issues of sex worker safety. The violence experienced by street based sex workers was also identified by Sagar and Jones in 2010. However, some respondents of this research identified the issue and role of 'pimps' in exploiting women. In this respect, we recommend that the issue of violence against sex workers is explored in further detail to enable policy makers at the local level to better understand the relationship between street sex workers and the men who are associated with them.

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