

Press Release: "Setting the Record" Project ACUMEN

Date: 18th August 2010

UKNSWP welcomes ACPO's new report "Setting the Record" Project Acumen, as a valuable contribution to work on the issue of trafficking.

Project Acumen uses a variety of data sources to put a figure on the number of females trafficked into prostitution in the UK. UKNSWP supports an evidence based approach to assessing the extent of the sex industry in the UK, the numbers of migrant people within it and estimating the number of victims of trafficking. Some MP's from the previous government had made non evidenced claims about the numbers of victims of trafficking for sexual exploitation. For example one MP suggested that approximately 25,000 women and girls are trafficked into prostitution in the UK. UKNSWP's projects, which work with sex workers across the UK, have not found evidence to support such figures. However, today's report reduces this figure approximately tenfold to 2,600.

UKNSWP believes that the new statistic provides a more realistic and helpful estimate of the extent of trafficking into off street prostitution in the UK. Today's report attempts to provide a more nuanced picture of off street migrant sex work in the UK than has previously been supplied by police or government.

It recognises that some women make a choice to come to the UK and sell sex and are not exploited in the process, that some make this choice but do encounter exploitation although it falls short of the trafficking definition, and that some are exploited in a way that meets the trafficking definition. This recognition of diversity is very important in ensuring that the varying support and health service needs of migrants in the sex industry are recognised and provided for.

Notes to Editors:

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

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

(3) The UKNSWP recognises and supports, the rights of individual sex workers to self-determination, including the right to remain in sex work or leave sex work.

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