Written evidence submitted by Martin Seager

I am a consultant clinical psychologist who worked in the NHS for 30 years and is still very active in mental health work and campaigning including working with the Samaritans. These views are my own. I have worked with people from all walks of life and I have frequently encountered issues relating to human sexual needs, sexual health and complicated life choices. I am submitting some brief but powerful points for your consideration – I know you have a lot of material to read and so I will keep my submission brief and hopefully place quality of argument over quantity:

1. Prostitution is not known as the oldest profession in the world for no reason. If it was the first profession it will probably also be the last and no group of legislators can ever change the basic human needs which this profession reflects. This means that regulation and support rather than criminalisation is the only sensible and practical path to follow.

2. Not all prostitutes are female and not all those running the sex industry are male. It is important to separate these issues out from gender prejudices relating to male oppression and female victimhood.

3. Sex-trafficking is a crime against humanity but trafficking is not prostitution and the two should not be confused by prejudice.

4. Many disadvantaged, emotionally vulnerable or disabled people would be unable to fulfil their human sexual needs without the availability of sexual services. To criminalise such people would be a mark of a backward and psychologically illiterate society.

5. Many prostitutes freely chose to be so as the best way for them of making a living and their right and freedom to do this is bound up with the right of their clients to use and pay for their services.

6. Most prostitution consists of an agreed contract between consenting adults and this is a fundamental human right and a fundamental human freedom.

7. The belief that prostitution is automatically an abuse by one human being of another is flawed and prejudicial.

8. Laws already exist to cover criminal activities that might occur in the context of prostitution.

Many thanks for considering these points.

Martin Seager, B.A. (Oxon.), M.Phil, C.Psychol, A.F.B.Ps.S, Aff.M.T.S.P,

Consultant Clinical Psychologist / Adult Psychotherapist.