I am responding as an **INDIVIDUAL**.

**BRIEF INTRODUCTION RE MY PERSONAL INTEREST AND BACKGROUND.**

I have read MANY TRUE STORIES OF SEXUAL EXPLOITATION, biographies of those exploited. There are many of such books now available. eg "You Can't Have My Daughter" by Elizabeth McDonnell, "Trafficked" by Sophie Hayes, "Girl A" by (Anonymous Girl A)

I have also spent some time, approximately a year, as a volunteer in a drop-in for female prostitutes.

**MY COMMENTS**

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

1] I believe that there is much exploitation taking place in the world of prostitution.

2] I believe that prostitutes tend to be victims of abuse and/or addiction rather than intentional perpetrators of crime.

3] There appears to be evidence that criminalising the purchase of sexual services decreases the **FREQUENCY** of the purchase of sexual services and, therefore, effects a **DECREASE** in prostitution.

4] Trafficking appears to be intricately linked with prostitution.

5] I call for an increase in support services for people wishing to exit prostitution.

**FULLER COMMENTS.**

1] I believe that there is much exploitation taking place in the world of prostitution. Many of the people working as prostitutes are victims of abuse, of drugs or of alcohol or other substances and are working in this area as a result of coercion by their partners, pimps or [sometimes] even family members.

2] It seems to me that prostitutes tend to be victims rather than people wishing to commit a crime. I believe that it would be more helpful to the victims if it were more difficult for such exploitation to take place. I believe that if the law makes the purchasing of sexual services a crime, then there will be an accompanying lessening in the numbers of exploited victims as the legal penalties would be a deterrent to those exploiting these victims.

3] There appears to be evidence that criminalising the purchase of sexual services decreases the **FREQUENCY** of the purchase of sexual services and, therefore, effects a **DECREASE** in prostitution.
a] The study, *Challenging Men’s Demand for Prostitution in Scotland*, indicated that a number of sanctions, effectively enforced, could deter purchasers from buying sex. This included criminal penalties and/or public exposure. [p.27].

I believe that one effect of criminalising the purchase of sexual services would be to decrease the frequency of the purchase of sexual services and, therefore, a decrease in prostitution and, consequently of trafficking.

b] I would like to point out that official studies of the legislation, in Norway and in Sweden, which criminalises the purchase of sexual services has lowered the rate of trafficking and of prostitution in these countries.

In Sweden after the criminalisation of the purchase of sex, both indoor and outdoor prostitution were significantly reduced, gender equality was promoted as an important value, attitudes toward purchasing people for sex changed, demand was reduced and instances of human trafficking were reduced. Similarly, in Norway, one year after the criminalisation of the purchase of sex, prostitution on the whole both indoor and outdoor was halved.

In Sweden, since the introduction of the ban on the purchase of sex on January 1, 1999, street prostitution has been reduced by 50%. 10 years after the ban less than 7.8% of its active adult male population now buys sex, compared to 13.6% before the law was enacted, which is 51% overall reduction in demand (Swedish government report SOU 2010:49: “The Ban Against The Purchase of Sexual Services. An evaluation 1999-2008 Swedish Institute & Ministry of Justice) and [“Targeting the Sex Buyer The Swedish Example: Stopping Prostitution And Trafficking Where it All Begins. Kajsa Claude 2010 The Swedish Institute.”]

On January 1, 2009 Norway adopted legislation that explicitly criminalised the purchase of sex. After the law was put into effect there was a dramatic reduction in both indoor and outdoor prostitution. By the end of 2009 the number of people selling sex in Norway in traditional street prostitution areas fell by between 50 and 60 percent in relation to 2008 before the law was enacted. Indoor prostitution in the whole of Norway was reduced by 19% and advertisements for sexual services were reduced by 28% showing that the outdoor market did not move indoors. (2009 Report “New Conditions, New Opportunities?” Pro Sentret Oslo Kommune)


The Swedish Police Report, Trafficking in Women, gives evidence that traffickers involved in coerced prostitution avoid Sweden because the legal situation there makes it less profitable.

c] Moreover, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe passed a resolution in April 2014 which recommended “criminalising the purchase of sexual services, based on the Swedish model, as the most effective tool for preventing and combating trafficking in human beings”

The European Parliament also passed a resolution in February 2014 endorsing this approach as a way of “combating the trafficking of women and under-age females for sexual exploitation and improving gender equality”.

d] Other countries, too, are adopting or considering the adopting of this approach including Iceland, Northern Ireland, the Republic of Ireland, Canada and France.

4] Trafficking appears to be intricately linked with prostitution.

a] There appears to be a link between trafficking and prostitution. The National Crime Agency
statistics indicate that 38% of all potential victims referred to the National Referral Mechanism (NRM) from Scotland in 2014 were sexually exploited according to the NRM2014 End of Year Summary.

Moreover, the statistics for Europe indicate that 69% of trafficked victims in the EU are sexually exploited. [ cf. Eurostat Statistical Working Papers Trafficking in Human Beings 2015 ]

b) The Scottish Government has established a strategy for the protection of women and girls from violence

"Equally Safe is Scotland’s strategy to tackle all forms of violence against women and girls: domestic abuse, rape and sexual assault; sexual harassment and intimidation at work and in public; stalking; commercial sexual exploitation such as prostitution. The strategy recognises that women and girls are at risk of such abuse precisely because they are female and it aligns with the UN definition of violence against women that includes the girl child, reflecting that this risk is present throughout life."  [cf. Scottish Government, Equally Safe Scotland’s Strategy for Preventing and Eradicating Violence against Women and Girls, 2014, page 8 ]

c) Space International (Survivors of Prostitution-Abuse Calling for Enlightenment) has criticised the decriminalisation of prostitution and claims that the ‘sex trade’ ‘is a damaging, dehumanising and demeaning system of exploitation which should never be decriminalised. We support and endorse the Swedish Model, which decriminalises only the exploited person in a prostitution exchange.----It must be pointed out that this proposed policy is in direct contravention to at least three UN conventions that address women’s rights. The UN convention of 1949 articulates specifically that prostitution and trafficking and such slavery like practices ‘… are incompatible with the dignity and worth of the human person....’ Article 6 of CEDAW states that “State Parties shall take all appropriate measures, including legislation, to suppress all forms of traffic in women and exploitation of prostitution of women.” Article 9.5 in the Palermo Protocol calls on State Parties to take measures to discourage the demand that fosters the exploitation of persons that lead to trafficking. ----- most prostituted women did enter the sex trade from situations of desperation and/or destitution, most were physically and sexually abused as children, and most are forced by life circumstances into prostitution; and if they were not abusing addictive substances prior to prostitution, they were soon after.” [ cf Statement Opposing Amnesty International’s resolution to decriminalise Pimps and Johns ---by SPACE INTERNATIONAL. ]

5] I call for an increase in support services for people wishing to exit prostitution.

There is evidence that a large proportion of female prostitutes would like to exit prostitution: "With regards to exiting, the profiles of the women using these five projects shoed that most of the women were trying to exit prostitution or had tried in the past on one or more occasions (69%, 128/186 ). ---- The fact that the majority of women had attempted to exit also highlights the need for projects to support women towards exiting prostitution, rather than focusing solely on harm minimisation. " cf. study by Hester and Westmarland [ 2004 ] "Tackling Street Prostitution: towards an holistic approach " Home Office Research Study 279.

Moreover, the Council of Europe and the European Parliament have passed resolutions which recommend the provision of support for women attempting to exit prostitution. [ cf. European Parliament resolution of 26 February 2014 on sexual exploitation and prostitution and its impact on gender equality (2013/2103(INI)) Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly Resolution 1983 (2014), 8 April 2014 ].

I, therefore, call for an increase in such support services.

Deirdre O’Reilly