Written evidence submitted by Sophia Manet

1. I am a private individual and a working girl of 5 years standing. I am an intelligent women who sells sex of her own free will, for many reasons including economic and the fact that I enjoy and am very good at what I do. I represent myself but I know that my views are in line with the vast majority of Independent working girls in the UK. I find the Nordic model of the criminalisation of clients to be based on flawed media and government portrayals which have no basis in reality.

Terms Of Reference: Whether criminal sanction in relation to prostitution should continue to fall more heavily on those who sell sex, rather than those who buy it.

2. The Nordic Model has been imposed in countries by politicians who have very little understanding or knowledge of prostitution. By what right therefore do they, and you have to impose your moral code on independent working girls and their clients.

3. Prostitution has existed since the beginning of time, and attempting to push it underground in this way simply will not work. Of course trafficking and exploitation exist, but as this happens in sex work, so does it happen in many other industries. Tackle the trafficking and exploitation in all areas, make it fair, don't target genuine independent workers minding their own businesses.

4. To say that criminalising clients for buying sex instead of criminalising the working girls offering sex protects working girls is both patronising and untrue. It will mean that the genuine polite clients will stay away for fear of arrest, leaving us with the dregs of society - potentially dangerous men. You will push sex workers underground and make it more dangerous for all working ladies not less. Sex workers will also become more stigmatised as a result

Terms Of Reference: What the implications are for prostitution-related offences of the Crown Prosecution Service's recognition of prostitution as violence against women.

5. The Terms of Reference are inherently biased. Prostitution in your view is portrayed as always being about sexual exploitation and violence against women and as harmful and degrading to the women involved, with a negative impact on society.

You fail to address the fact that many working girls engage in consensual (paid) sexual activity and are not involved in violence and exploitation. You lump the activities of all prostitutes with those who have suffered abuse and violence in real terms. Of course there are times when some working girls suffer exploitation/violence but most do not, why should we be put in the same category and be punished for this when all we are doing is earning an honest living.

6. A new law will make no difference whatsoever to those who do wish to harm us. Existing laws should already protest us. Should you criminalise clients you will punish many who treat us with dignity and courtesy and ultimately deprive us of our livelihood. Attitudes and behaviours will not change, it will certainly become easier for harm doers to exploit us, however these men never intended to be our clients in
the first place.

7. Clients, risking arrest, will be even less likely to provide intelligence to the police about potential wrongdoing/exploitation thus increasing the risk of exploitation for some girls. This is absolutely nonsensical.

8. How do you define sex? Or payment? It is not made clear how this enquiry intends to define what a sexual service or payment is. There is the grey area of sex exchanged for items other than money i.e. drugs, and those in long 'relationships' whereby a person receives financial recompense for sex. With these lack of definitions how then would you police criminalisation. Adverts for sex work cannot always be explicit, and it is often understood that payment of time will involve sexual activity, how can purchasing time be made illegal.

Terms Of Reference: What impact the Modern Slavery Act 2015 has had to date on trafficking for purposes of prostitution, what further action is planned, and how effectively the impact is being measured.

9. What you propose is legal interference with adults having consensual sex. Existing legislation covers such abuses as rape, kidnap, slavery, child abuse, trafficking etc. These laws need to be enforced. There is enough demand on government resources without outlawing consensual activity. Adding yet another law does not mean it is any more likely to be enforced than existing ones are. The failed attempt to add a criminalisation amendment into the Modern Slavery Act shows that there is no appetite for this proposed change.

10. Implementing and policing the Nordic Model would take time, resources, a huge amount of money, and would be ineffective. How would you prove an offence had been committed? How would you target clients? How on earth would you prove the act had taken place in exchange for money?

And whilst you are targeting all this Independent working girls, what about the pimped out, exploited girls run by the criminal gangs. This is what you should be targeting.

Terms Of Reference: Whether further measures are necessary, including legal reforms, to:
Assist those involved in prostitution to exit from it
Increase the extent to which exploiters are held to account
Discourage demand which drives commercial sexual

11. Why is the assumption made that all working girls would wish to exit? I am not a victim, I am not exploited, I am not degraded. I have not been abused, I have not been in care, I have not been raped. I am a sane, balanced individual, and I choose to be a working girl. If I want to exit, I will seek to do so. We should not all be lumped together like this.

12. How will all this former prostitutes earn their living? Since this bill would force many out of the profession. There will be a huge increase in those claiming benefits, a much bigger bill for the Treasury there. You would lose all the income in taxation from the
many legally registered working girls.

13. Sex workers should enjoy the same rights as any person, to partake in society and enjoy the benefits. Why should we be penalised for working, paying our taxes, and minding our own businesses, simply because we sell sex. Criminalisation will not reduce crime, or increase the safety of working girls. If it is put into practice it will take up huge resources from the police and taxpayers money, and will have no positive effects whatsoever.

Sophia M
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