

i Executive summary

This is a study into the extent and dynamics of the adult sex market in Teesside, covering the four local authority areas of Middlesbrough, Stockton, Redcar and Cleveland and Hartlepool. It presents a snapshot of information between 2012 and 2013. This work was commissioned by Northern Rock Foundation under its Safety and Justice Programme. Sexual exploitation is a priority in this programme and the Foundation wished to better understand how related issues manifested themselves in this area. This first study focuses exclusively on adults; a second report will be published in 2014 looking at the sexual exploitation of children across Teesside.

The study makes a series of key findings:

- Prostitution takes place across all four local authority areas, with the highest numbers in Middlesbrough and Stockton. There are local differences including on street sex markets in Middlesbrough and Stockton and off street markets in all areas.
- There is both male and female prostitution in all local authority areas: there are more women involved in survival sex than in commercial prostitution (n=268 and 221 respectively); there are more men involved in commercial prostitution compared to survival sex (n=107 and 35 respectively).
- There are different age profiles of women involved: younger women tend to be involved in commercial prostitution (most within the 18 to 25 age bracket); and older women tend to be involved in survival sex (most within the 26 to 35 age range). There are no significant differences in male age patterns.
- Most survival sex is linked to substance abuse. Patterns of abuse (i.e. decline or increase usage) across Teesside are mostly unchanged since 2006 (there may be a small increase in usage).
- The most prominent themes associated with prostitution are: substance misuse; the experience of violence (in many cases this is severe violence); poor accommodation or homelessness; poor health; removal of children into care; and debt.
- Many of those involved in survival sex were first sexually exploited when they were under 16 years of age.
- It is difficult to exit prostitution, with the influencing factors being: addictions; lack of money earning potential and debt; regular punters; partners/pimps; and poor accommodation (often with partners/pimps).
- The strongest service need for women involved in prostitution is suitable accommodation, followed by drug treatment, counselling and employment and training.

- There is a core of knowledge around Middlesbrough and Stockton about working with people involved in prostitution, although there are some inconsistencies with coverage and access of training. There are training gaps in Redcar and Cleveland and Hartlepool.
- Independent Sexual Violence Advisors (ISVAs) in Teesside have worked with only small numbers of women involved in prostitution. In the last six years, they have provided support to 10 women; five on these in the last year and these were women who had exited. In comparison to the incidence and themes presented in this report, these numbers are very low in relation to need.

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2.3 Stockton findings

2.3.1 Sex markets in Stockton

Sex markets have changed location in Stockton but their size was felt to have remained the same. In the early to mid 2000s, on-street prostitution used to take place in the industrial Bon Lee Trading Estate. Towards the end of the decade, it moved to the residential areas. It was thought that the reason the on-street area moved from the Trading Estate was related to the bridge widening works which took place in 2008. It took around 12 months to complete and during that time there was no access road from the A19 or A66 to the Industrial Estate. It was easier to come off the A66 to the residential areas, which is where the on-street area moved to.

However, as stated, agencies felt that the number of people involved has remained the same. For example, one interviewee said *“there’s been high numbers involved, both then and now”*. Another interviewee said *“since 2004, there has always been street sex work, now it is in the [name of location], people are using the bus stop. It is less visual now but the volume is the same. People are still there on the roads but they do a lot of business on the phone, with their regulars”*. Several agencies reported women using the bus stop, which was reported to provide a place to sit in shelter and somewhere they cannot be moved on from; they also make prosecuting kerb crawlers more difficult.

As illustrations of magnitude Cleveland Police maintain lists of women involved in prostitution and kerb crawlers. The list (on their internal Iris database) of women who have been cautioned or arrested for Loitering or Street Prostitution has the names of 190 women (the list has been kept since 2003). They also maintain a list for Kerb Crawlers; since 2008, the list contains the names of 210 men. Most of these are from Teesside but do include men from Durham and Darlington. During the recent investigation into the death of three women who were involved in prostitution in 1998, 2000 and 2002, the Police have interviewed 250 women who were involved in prostitution past and present. The Probation Service in Stockton estimates that there are around 100 women involved in prostitution on their client list in the last year.

Unlike Middlesbrough, the Stockton Police Area Command has no dedicated Officers or additional resources to tackle the issue of prostitution. All prostitution-related activities are enforced by their Licensing Unit which consists of one sergeant and an inspector.

There has been a multi-agency partnership approach to the issue which started in 2011 in response to DAAT-commissioned research into substance misuse and pressure from Elected Members. This was stimulated by a number of complaints from residents: at one point the Police received 120 calls a week in complaints about women involved in prostitution but it was reported that the majority of these came from two residents.

This partnership consists of DAAT, housing, Police, Prison, Probation and the voluntary sector. They pursue a model that:

- *Targets kerb crawlers and active sex workers through police patrols and after caution and possible arrest, a referral into substance misuse services will be generated;*
- *Agrees information sharing on an identified group of sex workers;*
- *Implements an Integrated Offender Management (IOM) approach thus treating the women as victims as well as offenders and provide supportive measures (Massam and Evans, 2012: pg four).*

Their initial objectives were to target the top 12 most prolific women involved in prostitution in Stockton. They did this through assertive outreach, running a weekly drop-in, information sharing and regular multi-agency meetings. Their cooperative actions were successful and they helped six of the top 12 women who were involved in prostitution exit (exiting is classed as not being involved in prostitution for three to four months). Arrests also went down from 80 to 10 over a period of three months.

Stockton has a key charity, A Way Out, which supports women involved in prostitution. They operate a very successful weekly drop-in and also carry out assertive outreach to women involved in prostitution in Stockton (see box 2.1). Good partnership working between this organisation, Probation and others has been a key factor in helping women exit prostitution.