“I think this situation is going to get worse and worse”: New ideologies and the implications of the Prostitution (Public Places) (Scotland) Act 2007 - what does the future hold for street based sex workers in Aberdeen?
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Chapter One: Setting the scene - street based sex workers in the City of Aberdeen and the arrival of the Prostitution (Public Places) (Scotland) Act 2007

Aberdeen was home to a local authority supported prostitution ‘Management Zone’\(^2\) for a period of six years after its establishment in 2001. The zone was located close to the Harbour area\(^3\) of the city where sex work has historically been located (McKeganey, 2006; 153). This area is currently not highly populated with residents, however a forthcoming redevelopment initiative may alter this. The arrangement was such that workers were permitted to work in this designated space without fear of arrest (McKeganey, 2006; 154) after the hours of 17.00 (or 21.00 in Clarence and Church Streets) to coincide with business closures, the aim being that the presence of working women would not disrupt the operation of ‘legitimate’ business.

The official enforcement of the Prostitution (Public Places) (Scotland) Act 2007 criminalised a person for the offence of kerb-crawling in Scotland (Sanders, 2008; 140), and directly affected women in Aberdeen as their zone was subsequently terminated on the 15th October 2007. The zone was unique in that it was the only remaining one of its kind in Scotland (McKeganey, 2006; 154). Due to its legally unofficial status, it was possible to disband the zone immediately to coincide with the arrival of the new legislation. Little notice was provided to women (Gangoli and Westmarland, 2006; 29). The eradication of this zone, the changing nature of women’s working practices and the nature in which the State Apparatus\(^4\) has dealt with the changes brought about by the new legislation forms the purpose of this thesis and these new developments are the platform of this study.

The passing of the Prostitution (Public Places) (Scotland) Act on 28th February 2007 followed the publication of the consultation document entitled *Being Outside: Constructing a Response to Street Prostitution in Scotland*, stage one of which was passed to the Scottish Executive in 2004, after the formation of a working group to discuss effective ways of dealing with prostitution in 2003.
The aim of the first stage of this consultation was to address street based sex work, with further reports on other sectors of the sex market to be focused upon in subsequent stages. The group spoke with women themselves, support agencies, police, communities and local authorities (Scottish Executive, 2004;10) in order to obtain opinions and suggestions for ways in which street prostitution could be addressed in Scotland. The focus on street sex work appears primarily due to its high visibility and envisaged negative impact in communities and also due to concerns about the safety and welfare of women who engage in street sex work (Scottish Executive, 2004;10), many of whom suffer the effects of poverty and drug misuse (Scottish Executive, 2004;5). The report states that ‘concern is rising regarding the incidence of street prostitution’ (Scottish Executive, 2004;11) as a result of the consequences of redevelopment of previously disused spaces (Scottish Executive, 2004;11), and newcomers expressing reluctance to share ‘their back yard’ with sex workers.

The formal passing of the Act in February 2007 came somewhat as a surprise following the recommendations made by the group that the law be altered in order to forgo criminalising women on a moralistic basis. Furthermore, it was suggested that the use of incarceration for women should be minimised (Scottish Executive, 2004;12). Despite these suggestions, legislation was passed which continued to criminalise women with their clients also now the focus of attention. Little in terms of rights or resources have been offered to women (Scoular and O’Neill, 2007;765). This step suggests that policy makers have not decided to listen to the voices of sex workers, amongst other contributors. The importance of listening to the voices of women is characteristic of the methodology and theoretical context both fostered and adopted within the design and implementation of this research and is considered as essential in the development of constructing realistic options for women’s futures.

The preliminary impact of this legislation was the immediate removal of a permitted working arena for women. Chapter two discusses policy pertaining to the social control of sex work, and critically discusses positive and negative impacts of Management Zones. The thesis will proceed to discuss theoretical
issues pertaining to sex work and the involvement of women as gendered actors, and the importance of the operations of the police with regards to women’s ability to work safely. Chapter four details the design of the study conducted in Aberdeen in April 2008. Chapters five and six analyse interviews conducted with sex workers, support workers and a police officer, and blends analysis with a critical discussion of the points raised. The dissertation concludes with findings from the research, together with suggestions for future strategies pertaining to street based sex work in Aberdeen.
Chapter Two: The street based sex market and a new direction: policy, practice and usefulness of prostitution ‘Management Zones’

Kerb-crawling has been illegal in England and Wales since the introduction of the 1985 Sexual Offences Act (Mackay & Schaap, 2000;3, Self,2003;277). The Prostitution (Public Places) (Scotland) Act 2007 criminalises a person for the offence of kerb-crawling in Scotland (Sanders, 2008;140), fostering a common consensus with the legislation north of the UK border. This chapter is concerned with prostitution policy in Scotland, England and Wales, and articulates the positive and negative aspects of zones.

The social control of street sex work in Scotland today

Previously, street prostitution was dealt with under Scottish law by section 46 of the 1982 Civil Government (Scotland) Act, which declares ‘any person loitering, soliciting or importuning in a public place for the purposes of prostitution’ to be guilty of an offence, for which a penalty of not more than £50 is dealt out to individuals upon conviction (Pitcher et al, 2005;4). Sections 4 and 7 of the Antisocial behaviour etc (Scotland) Act can be used to target those deemed to be causing a detrimental effect upon community life (Sagar, 2007;154), including sex workers. If one breaches their ASBO, they run the risk of six months incarceration and/or a fine and on indictment five years imprisonment and/or a fine (Pitcher et al, 2005;4). Imprisonment further exacerbates existing social problems as women often lose their tenancies upon incarceration (Scottish Executive, 2004;66). The usefulness of this legislation and other monetary based penalties must be questioned as many women return to the street in order to pay the fine (Sagar, 2007;156, Bellis et al, 2007;604). The legislation has been designed to communicate that the state will not tolerate the existence of street sex (Sanders, 2008;140). The Act was accompanied by a marketing campaign warning kerb-crawlers of their status of criminals and their impending arrest should they be caught attempting to buy sex. This tactic of social control is reminiscent of tactics employed in cities such as Wolverhampton (Sanders, 2008;153).
A key suggestion made by the Scottish Executive’s working group was to decriminalise soliciting. Instead, a more general offence was suggested, in which offensive behaviour and conduct arising from a transaction in the sale of sex should be punishable by law (Van Doorninck & Campbell, 2006;84). Indeed, the usefulness of the continuing criminalisation on what is widely recognised to be a stigmatised and marginalised group within society (Van Doorninck & Campbell, 2006; 65, Sanders, 2008;19,Hester & Westmarland,2004;129) does not fit with the ideology perpetuated by the media and policy makers which claims that all women involved in street prostitution are ‘victims of abuse’(Sanders,2008;5), and Self argues that UK laws currently foster an atmosphere in which the vulnerability of sex working women to violence is amplified (Self,2003;281). On this note it is worth considering the mantra of New Labour which proclaims that its aims to be ‘tough on crime, tough on the causes of crime’ (Pease, 2002;cited in Sagar,2007;155). Those hopeful that addressing the causes of crime (in this case, soliciting) would mean tackling poverty, social exclusion and drug addiction may be disappointed with the current UK wide practice of criminalising working women.

Criminalisation means that it is inevitably harder for women to exit sex work and obtain employment which is legitimated by society (Brooks-Gordon, 2006;65) due to their status of ‘criminal’ (Sanders,2005;98). At the time of writing, prostitution continues to be classified as a ‘crime of indecency’ and must be disclosed to potential employers (Mackay & Schaap, 2000;3). Thus, one wonders how a woman would realistically be obtain employment. Exiting prostitution constitutes a slow process (Sagar, 2007;163) and includes a complex medley of issues which must be addressed. Regretfully, criminalisation has been found to restrict sex worker’s access to services which help them to address their issues (Sagar, 2007;153). For example, a woman may make the logical decision to avoid visiting her local drop-in service for assistance with housing to avoid breaching her ASBO, if the drop-in is located in an area she is restricted from entering.
**UK policy and ideology - transitional times**

The sale of sex is not illegal in Britain (Brooks-Gordon, 2006;29), and is regarded as a private transaction between consenting adults (Pitcher et al, 2006;3). However, many of the activities which facilitate and complete the legal transaction are illegal (Kantola & Squires, 2004;78, Phoenix, 1999; 19), such as soliciting and loitering for the purposes of prostitution (Mackay & Schaap, 2000;3). The present legislation thus makes the sale of sex problematic on the street, as women rely upon their physical presence to attract clients (Sanders, 2005;19). The 2004 Paying the Price consultation paper initiated by New Labour indicated that all options for dealing with problems connected with street prostitution would be considered, from rethinking current legislation to the establishment of Management Zones (Bellis et al, 2007;613). The final outcome of the national consultation rejected the implementation of zones (Bellis et al, 2007;613), with the most significant alteration being the identification of the perceived ‘problem’ posed by men who buy sex (Sanders, 2008;3), with the strategy being to ‘tackle demand’ for sex work by criminalising these men, together with reducing supply by providing courts with penalties especially for street workers (Bellis et al, 2007;614).

**Management Zones: the state assisted commodification of the female body or a pragmatic solution?**

Initially established as part of a harm reduction approach, (Bellis et al, 2007;604), zones are often regarded as a pragmatic option (Brooks-Gordon, 2006;67). A zone is a space allocated where sex workers, bound by a set of specific regulations dictated by local authorities and other key stakeholders can work without fear of arrest (Bellis et al, 2007;605). Zones are associated with the work discourse, which argues that women should be entitled to use their bodies in whichever way they see fit and that society has an obligation to allow them to work in safe surroundings (McKeganey, 2006;162), and distinguishes between voluntary and involuntary participation in sex work (Brooks-Gordon, 2006;67).
Zones can be argued to offer a range of benefits to sex working women, as they can be designed to contain healthcare and other services (Bellis et al, 2007;608). The provision of an onsite health care service may prove to be beneficial as women may be reluctant to discuss issues pertaining to their involvement in sex work with a conventional general practitioner (Bellis et al, 2007; 607), arising from the stigma attached to the work. A team of understanding healthcare workers based the working arena may provide a useful access point for women to have health related issues addressed. Considering that the women constitute a ‘hard to reach’ group who are at risk of sexual and other health related problems (McKeganey,2006;162), the provision of an accessible and convenient service has a number of obvious advantages pertaining to healthcare and harm reduction.

Zones can facilitate the exiting of sex work. A high percentage of women indicated they would utilise services which would assist them in exiting (Bellis et al, 2007;608). Well designed zones may help women to address their issues and consider alternative forms of employment, and can provide important places where they can access a warm area in which food and drinks are provided, enabling them to take breaks in between working in an environment where they are not judged in relation to their work or possible drug use (Brooks-Gordon, 2006;67). A consultation exercise in Liverpool invited the public, sex workers, businesses and residents to offer their views on the potential viability of a zone in the City (Bellis et al, 2007;605). The findings indicated significant support (more than 70%) (Bellis et al, 2007;609) from all areas for utilising a zone (Bellis et al, 2007;614). Despite the potential benefits which zones could offer, and the successful models located in Germany and the Netherlands, the final strategy document produced by the UK government in January 2006 (Brooks-Gordon,2006;62), solidified a zero tolerance approach and out-rightly rejected their facilitation (Sanders,2008;147).

Interestingly, the group put forth by the Scottish Executive suggested the consideration of accommodating zones in cities and highlighted a range of
benefits such as the facilitation of CCTV\textsuperscript{8} and police patrols in the area which would assist in protecting workers (Scottish Executive, 2004;68). The group is to be credited in that they offer a balanced view and also point out the disadvantages of providing zones, for example the difficulty that can be found in finding a location for a zone to operate (Scottish Executive, 2004;69). Sex workers have indicated a preference for the provision of zones (McKeganey, 2006; 159). The residents of Balsall Heath in Birmingham exhibited strong intolerance to the presence of sex workers in what they perceived to be their area, with one resident claiming that ‘Balsall Heath is for Balsall Heathers’ (Phoenix, 1999;24). However, it is worth pointing out that other members of the public are often not as punitive as some sections of the media assert so long as they are well informed (Roberts and Hough, 2005; cited in Brooks-Gordon, 2006;71). In the Netherlands, residents of the city of Den Haag actually protested against the intended closure of a Management Zone (Van Doorninck and Campbell, 2006;73), or Tippelzones as they are known in this jurisdiction, leading Pitcher et al to suggest that sex workers and residents can co-exist (Pitcher et al, 2005;33).

Despite some benefits, it is important to emphasise that zones do not provide a completely problem free solution to issues which sex workers face during the course of their work. Violence committed by clients, for example is by no means eradicated by the existence of a zone. Lister’s recent 2007 study found that women were subject to particularly violent attacks while the Non-Harassment zone in Edinburgh was established, although attacks rose after the disbandment of the space (Lister,2007; 19). Women have argued that the provision of a zone would “make the girls feel much safer” (McKeganey, 2006;159). Although The Netherlands considers sex work as ‘an accepted part of life’ (Kilvington et al, 2001;81), an attitude reflected in its tolerance of street sex work, women continue to face stigmatising attitudes (Kilvington et al, 2001; 81). It could be suggested that one of the intents of the state’s stance is to foster a more accepting attitude towards the work within society via a process of ‘normalisation’ (Kilvington et al, 2001;78), promoting the view of sex work as a legitimate form of income generation (Kilvington et al, 2001;81).
however it appears that even with this promoted attitude embodied by legislation, women continue to encounter social stigma.

It is also worth considering that zones allow for the containment and surveillance of sex workers by the state who can conveniently hide behind a harm reduction mantra. The positioning of zones in areas which are separate from residential areas and other locations where ‘respectable’ people frequent as opposed to the first unofficial zones which were located in areas which were more integrated into society (Brooks-Gordon, 2006;70) could be argued to serve as an apparatus for the formal separation of sex working women from ‘everyone else’, thus contributing to the perception of ‘othering’ the women and further solidifying a deviant identity. The Non-Harassment zone in Edinburgh operated from 1985 before being terminated in December 2001 (Policek,2002;2). This zone was located in a busy residential area and operated relatively smoothly until affluent parties moved into the area in response to urban gentrification (Policek,2002;3). Further issues arise regarding the existence of sex work, with there being the question posed by many feminists as to whether it should be an acceptable form of income generation at all in modern societies (Bellis et al, 2007; 616), with some arguing that zones embody ‘state controlled rape or sexual abuse’ (Van Doorninck and Campbell, 200;71), and provide an official platform for male violence against women (McKeganey, 2006;162). Zones could be suggested to provide a convenient platform which men can use to legitimately take advantage and exploit a woman’s precarious economic and social situation. Women who sell sex on the street often have less social capital and access to life chances, often living their lives on the margins of society (Van Doorninck and Campbell, 2006; 74), with a tendency to suffer from high levels of drug use, violence and homelessness (Church et al, 2001; 603). Further discussion pertaining to theoretical perspectives and implication of policy will follow in the next chapter.
Chapter Three: The existence and management of street sex work - a theoretical focus

This chapter discusses policy alterations from a theoretical perspective, and their effects upon street based sex workers in Scotland.

**Formal mechanisms of social control: the policing of street prostitution**

The activities of the police are supported by the presence of legislation which serves to preserve and uphold ideologies which are held sacred (Sanders, 2005; 94). Thus, the police are located at the core of a state’s functioning (Reiner, 1985; 2). Sanders suggests that the moral conceptions of officers influences the probability of law enforcement against workers (Sanders, 2005; 96), due to the absence of guidelines pertaining to the policing of the issue (Sanders, 2005;96). These conceptions of morality could be argued to be directly related to wider scale ideas about appropriate gendered behaviour. This argument could explain the inconsistency which characterises the policing of street based sex work (Sharpe, 1998; cited in Brooks-Gordon, 2006;139). Heavy handed policing tactics impacts upon the degree of safety to which women can work (Sanders,2005;113). An aggressive strategy means there is less time for one to conduct a ‘risk assessment’10, and must quickly enter a vehicle to avoid detection (Barnard, 1993; cited in Sanders, 2004;1713). By the time there exists a chance to assess the client once inside, it may be too late to avoid an attack (Sanders, 2004;1713). However, one could challenge those who argue the benefits of these tactics, questioning their realistic merits on whether employing intuition based on subjective factors such as appearance (Sharpe, 1997; 40) is sufficient to accurately predict the likelihood of an attack overall.

The ideologies of law and order and ‘zero tolerance’ have been warmly embraced by the current New Labour government (Hubbard, 2006; 12). Despite political will to eradicate street prostitution, barriers block exiting- a greater police presence inevitably equates with a greater chance of arrest with the ‘spoiled identity’ wielded by the application of a criminal record restricting
opportunities for legitimate employment (Sanders, 2005; 98). Thus, ‘crime shuffling’ (Pease, 2003; 956) may result with women having little redress but to turn to illegal forms of income generating strategies such as shoplifting. It is plausible to argue then current systems of fining (Sagar, 2005; 100) and positioning obstacles which make the sale of sex difficult acts dually to maintain rather than reduce criminal behaviour (Reiner, 1979; cited in Carrabine et al, 1997; 77), and also directs blame upon individual women for their situation as opposed to focussing upon gendered inequalities which are perpetuated in social policy (for example, an inadequate benefits system) which can contribute to women’s involvement in sex work.

**Sex work, power and Patriarchy**

The abolitionist view argues that female prostitution represents a society in which men have the power to exercise dominance over women, typically drawing upon the concept of Patriarchy11 (Scrambler and Scrambler, 1997; xii). It is assumed that when a man purchases sex, he also obtains mastery over an objectified female body (O’Connell Davidson, 2003; 55). For some radical feminists, male purchasers of sex are viewed as indistinguishable from those who commit acts of rape and incest (Barry, 1995; Jeffreys, 1997; cited in O’Connell Davidson, 2003; 56). Crimes such as rape could be viewed as men’s performance of ‘doing gender’. Messerschmidt suggests that men draw upon social resources fostered in wider culture in order to make sense of their criminal actions (Messerschmidt, 2000; cited in Carrabine et al, 2004; 154). This may explain the prevalence of violence committed against sex workers. Pheterson argues that women who engage in prostitution “serve as models of sexual unchastity...as sexual solicitors, they are assumed to invite violence” (Pheterson, 1988; 225).

**The criminalisation of street sex work: what’s the real agenda?**

The specific targeting of sex work may be utilised to promote alternative agendas, some of which can be seen to further marginalise some groups of
women. Widespread anxiety was experienced in Sweden due to a perception that migrant women would utilise Sweden’s new inclusion into the European Union to ‘invade’ the country, with Kulick arguing that this fear was a contributing factor to the 1999 legislation which criminalised those who sought to purchase sex (Kulick, 2003;199). Foucault articulates the point succinctly:

“Sexuality is not the most intractable element in power relations, but rather one of those most endowed with the greatest instrumentality; useful for the greatest number of manoeuvres and capable of serving as a point of support, as a linchpin, for the most varied strategies” (Foucault, 1978; 103, emphasis added).

The introduction of the harm reduction perspective and Management Zones - hidden mechanisms of social control, or empowerment for working women?

By 1997, a harm reduction service was established in most major UK cities where street sex work existed (Phoenix, 1999;33) in response to the arrival of the HIV/AIDS pandemic in Western countries and the assumption that sex workers were likely ‘vectors of infection’ (Phoenix, 1999;31). Although the provision of harm reduction offers benefits to women, Overs argues that the primary function of these strategies were not for the protection of workers, but rather for the protection of the public, and that their construction reinforces the message to society that sex workers pose a risk to public health (Overs, 1994;114). Overs also powerfully argues that a further aim of these organisations are the fostering of “pragmatic moves to protect the clients” (Overs, 1994;114, emphasis added).

The Routes Out of Prostitution Intervention Team, introduced in Glasgow in 2000, is a service provider for sex working women and claims to assist them in ‘exiting’ prostitution. Upon closer inspection of their information pack, the criterion for referral stipulates that:
• ‘The woman should have a desire to stop prostitution’
• ‘The woman is not using illicit drugs’
• ‘The woman must agree to be referred to the Intervention team’
• ‘The woman is committed to working with the Intervention team’

(Routes Out of Prostitution Intervention Team: guidelines for referral)

Assistance, then, is offered - conditionally. The latent function of the harm reduction strategy here could be viewed as a subtle method of social control. Acceptance into the program relies upon the woman conforming to prescribed ‘rules’, however many women who wish to remain working then find themselves excluded despite possibly having social needs which require to be addressed (Sloan and Wahib, 2000; cited in Pitcher, 2006; 238). The underlying message transmitted is one which requires the willingness of women to leave sex work in exchange for assistance. This in turn can be interpreted to label those who do not want to exit as ‘moral deviants’ (Pitcher, 2006; 239). Considering that the phenomenon of street sex work tends to co-exist with problematic drug usage (Harding and Hamilton, 2008; 3), many women will be refused access to the service. The project adopts an abolitionist perspective and considers all workers as victims, however sex workers are not a homogenous group and have many differing reasons for entering (McKeganey and Barnard, 1996, O’Neill, 1997; cited in Pitcher, 2006; 237). This victimisation theme may deter some workers from approaching such bodies for assistance.

Sex work has always been subject to some degree of segregation via spatial control (Matthews, 2005; 884). Zones can provide a convenient platform from which to ‘widen the net’; a host of agencies can monitor and control women who are conveniently contained within one targeted area. The suggested provision of CCTV cameras in zones in order to improve safety for workers (Sanders, 2005; 84) could also be utilised as a tool of social control, producing obedient and docile bodies (Foucault, cited in Hudson, 1997; 457), as women (and clients) are aware that their actions could be monitored by agents of the
State Apparatus at any time (Hudson, 1997;458). It could also be suggested that the establishment of a zone serves to separate women from ‘normal society’ (Matthews, 2005;887) and thus helps contribute to the application of their negative label as deviants. Hudson notes that control of populations considered to be deviant are firstly diagnosed, labelled and then segregated (Hudson, 1997;459). Zones render street based sex workers invisible (to an extent, and especially from the vantage point of the affluent), but also makes them easily accessible to the male client (Matthews, 2005;884). We could argue then that the provision of a zone allows safe and easy access for men to wield their consumer power over vulnerable and disadvantaged women. A designated ‘red light’ area may communicate a message to men that women exist for the maintenance of their physical ‘needs’ (Hoigard and Finstad, 1992; cited in Brooks-Gordon,2006;142). This reconfirms ideas relating to masculinity, power and dominance over women. The controlled boundaries that mark zones also have the potential to link the work with themes relating to sex work and its enactment as an area of contamination. The provision of a specific space for activities designated as deviant also may increase the attraction for some men to sex workers due to the attached connotations of the deviant label of purchasing sex. Simply put, some men may be aroused by the highlighted message transmitted by the maintenance of a physical boundary which reaffirms that they are actively partaking in an activity which is morally and politically condemned (Sanders,2005;114). Matthews argues that there is “nothing natural, accidental or inevitable about the creation of these informal zones. Their existence has a social and political logic and their location is a product of identifiable forces” (Matthews,2005;884,emphasis added).

The regulatory (and repressive?) function of the legal system

Legislation encompasses symbolic messages which are generated to society. Their latent function can be to transmit messages regarding what is and is not permissible conduct. Prostitution is interesting because it taps into widespread anxieties such as purity, ‘unclean women’ and recently the lust of men and the exploitation of women (Carrabine et al, 2004;159). Morality is often used as a
convenient cloak to mask struggles between powerful and disadvantaged groups whose interests clash (Ben-Yehuda, 1986; 496). Economic interests often have an impact upon whether or not sex workers are tolerated in a particular area. In Aberdeen, property developers are hoping to regenerate the harbour area where the women have conveniently lost their right to work. The construction of a social ‘problem’, and those who are labelled deviant are both subject to a variety of social forces such as group interests, conflicts and value judgements (Waller, 1936; cited in Sharpe, 1998;1). We must question then, if recent policy changes have alternate purposes which are masked behind a concern for the welfare of street working women. The ASBO, for example, not only serves to remove the woman from society via the process of incarceration, but also banishes her from the area where she works and even may live. Thus, the dangerous message perpetuated here by law makers is that these women are ‘not wanted’. Lowman has described the effects of this ‘rhetoric of disposal’, the result of engrained attitudes pertaining to sex workers which resulted in a series of violent crimes and murders against them Canada. He argues that the social acceptability of violence against sex workers via policies which foster a dangerous working atmosphere for women legitimates violence (Lowman, 2000; cited in Kinnell, 2006;148). It could be suggested that the function of current policies is to deter women from working on the streets for fear of violence and social exclusion, and the violence they find if they do work is their deserved punishment for their violation of the law and in that, the transgression of acceptable boundaries (Eriksson, 1962;308). Consider the following paragraphs contained within Paying the Price:

‘…..Those who choose to be involved (in street sex work) should understand what it is like to live in an area in which kerb-crawlers habitually harass young women…..’(Home Office, 2004; 12, emphasis added)

The heavy moralistic undertones embedded within statements such as ‘should understand’ correlates responsibility firmly with the sex worker who fails to exit.
The inescapable issue of gender relations

It is difficult to discuss and gain an understanding pertaining to the dynamics and context of sex work without considering concepts of gender norms. Cohen argues that moral panics are caused by threats to hegemonic ideals (Cohen, 1972;197). This idea can assist us in understanding the way in which sex work is dealt with by society, and, more precisely, about ideologies relating women’s behaviour. For some, street prostitution symbolises degeneracy and loose morals. The obvious sight of a female sex working offends sacred ideas relating to feminine values which have been socially constructed over time (Lee Bartsky, 1997;95). As conceptions of gender are applied from birth, we often take the ramifications of these ideas for granted, and see them as normal and natural (Connell, 2002;3). People are thus identified when they behave in ways which do not conform to their gender ‘label’. Street based sex workers provides an excellent example of this - these women are visible targets for the likes of moral entrepreneurs and politicians who have their own agendas due to their deviation from gender roles. In relation to sex work, we could argue that the provision of the latest Act is to control the behaviour of both men and women, and the legislation was passed without widespread public outcry as for most people, sex is something that should never be sold (McKeganey and Barnard, 1996;1), and that women who engage in sex work are perceived as ‘bad girls’ who contravene the feminine norm (O’Neill, 1997; cited in Scrambler and Scrambler, 1997;4). This perception of immorality thus justifies the punishments currently dealt out to sex workers. The sight of a woman earning money on the street in order to challenge her unequal position in the legitimate job market could also be interpreted as a threat to existing social arrangements (Hutter and Williams, 1981;11). These values relate to the interests of men, and the exchange of sex for money has been argued to pose a threat to a woman’s subordinate role in which a heterosexual relationship with one man is the norm (Hubbard, 1998;66).

Gender serves to help us understand why there is a market for sex at all. Despite the stigma attached to women and men who engage in sexual acts for
money, the female body as a saleable commodity is actively encouraged. Popular culture consistently portrays women as objects for the consumption by men (Renzetti and Curran, 1999;131), and sexual imagery and femininity are blended to sell a variety of items including shampoo (Renzetti and Curran, 1999;136). Indeed, the reflection hypothesis viewpoint is used to articulate that popular media presents society with a mirror image of it’s embraced behaviours, perceptions and norms (Renzetti and Curran, 1999;126). With sex work in mind, popular programmes such as *Band of Gold* constantly present sex workers as desperate criminals, always dependant upon illegal drugs and who also defile the purity of urban space (Hubbard,1998;58). These messages help to reinforce the good girl/bad girl dichotomy, with sex workers placed as fallen women.

It is not possible to explain the nature of any form of sex work utilising one conception alone. By exploring the nature of social relationships and structures pertaining to gender, we can better understand the true nature of the sex market. The omission of a consideration of issues such as wider attitudes regarding gender and how this contributes to the prevalence and nature of sex work is a fundamental flaw of both *Being Outside* and *Paying the Price*.

The next chapter details the research methodology utilised in this study during the process of planning, conducting and writing up the research. Difficulties encountered whilst carrying out the research in reality are acknowledged.
Chapter Four: In the field-research methodology

This chapter describes the research design and process. The study received ethical approval from the University of Stirling on 12th December 2006 (See Appendix A). Access was facilitated over a period of seven months, cumulating in ten digitally recorded, semi-structured interviews which were conducted over a twelve day period of fieldwork. Three street based sex workers were interviewed, six interviews took place with project workers, and one interview was secured with a police officer. All respondents were given the opportunity to view the interview schedules before permitting an interview. Participants were mailed a copy of a summary of the main findings in September 2008.

Stigma management: The importance of the usage of language.

When conducting research into a socially stigmatised activity such as sex work, sensitive use of language is of great importance. The words chosen automatically reflect different approaches to the way one perceives sex work (Gangoli and Westmarland, 2006;1), and certain value judgements are made about the author of academic works (Gangoli and Westmarland, 2006;1). I was conscious of these implications when making initial contact with the gatekeeper, and was concerned about what judgements they might infer about myself by the language I used in respect to my gaining access to their organisation and the women. Prior to designing my promotional leaflet, the usage of appropriate language was discussed with my advisor, Dr. Malloch. It was elected to use the term ‘sex work’, due to its less stigmatising connotations than that which embodies the term prostitute (O’Neill, in Scrambler and Scrambler, 1997;11). The term also reflects the preferences of women themselves (Kurtz et al, 2004, cited in Bellis et al, 2007;605).

The leaflet was crafted in such a way that ensured the women knew that my intentions were ethical and that I would prove to be someone who would not be difficult to talk to. Thus, ‘plain English’ language was used and a commitment to listening to people’s voices was articulated. Women were invited to contact
me, and were informed of a visit to the drop-in in advance of the study. The final draft of the leaflet was ethically approved by Dr. Malloch and the gatekeeper before being distributed.

**Getting involved : obtaining access to women and support workers**

The assistance of gatekeepers proves an effective tool for accessing sex workers (Sanders, 2006; 454), and those in specific targeted health and welfare services have proven to be the most popular route of access (Sanders, 2006; 203). It is very rare to facilitate interview access without their assistance (Sanders, 2006; 454). The gatekeeper was initially approached in August 2007, as it was imagined that as much time as possible needed to be allocated to negotiating access. The scope and aims of the study and commitment to ethics were emphasised in mailed correspondence. A meeting was arranged with the project manager in October 2007. This meeting was critical as it allowed for further elaboration on the issues as they presently stood, and ways in which the study could assist. It was requested that a Disclosure Scotland form and two references be provided. A second meeting took place in February 2008. This facilitated contact with other project workers, who also expressed interest in being interviewed. It was decided that I visit women at the drop-in service which takes place on four evenings per week. This occurred in March 2008. The opportunity was utilised for distributing information leaflets, interview schedules and refreshments.

Five women expressed an interest in the study at the drop-in. Meeting them helped to educate me on the present nature of the street sex market. It also enabled the women to meet and engage with me prior to agreeing to an interview, and helped to facilitate a degree of trust. Sanders outlines the importance of gaining trust (Sanders, 2006; 455), and Sharpe points out that the best sorts of introductions were fostered when she was able to introduce herself to women in person (Sharpe, 1998; 17). This embodies a limitation of this study, as time allocated and personal finance only allowed one visit to the drop-in to be performed once prior to fieldwork taking place. Only meeting a
small number of women in advance perhaps contributed to the small number which partook in the study. I was fortunate in that the gatekeeper assisted in promoting the study in advance of my fieldwork visit. They distributed the information I had created and also featured an advertisement in their monthly newsletter which is distributed to women (See Appendix E)

Interviews are widely used when engaging in sex work research (Sanders, 2006; 205). The qualitative research design was influenced by a feminist methodology; O’Neill’s research with sex workers was based upon an ideology which centred around women, and emphasising the importance of hearing the voices of women (O’Neill, 1996; 130). It was decided that this was of crucial importance to the study, as I hoped to discover what the effects were of the eradication of the zone from the perspective of the people who directly experienced the ramifications of the legislation. It was equally desired to additionally obtain the perspectives of police and project workers. Thus, it was decided to use the method of the semi structured interview when speaking with all research participants, as this form of interview allows participants a greater degree of flexibility in their responses (Robson, 2002; 270). A semi-structured technique allows the researcher a degree of control over the interview, however questions can be altered or omitted depending on the situation (Robson, 2002; 270). If more time had been allowed however, I would have utilised the unstructured interview for sex workers, as this is viewed as a favourable option for recognising and promoting central involvement (O’Neill, 1996, cited in Rickard, 2001; 114), and a greater timescale would have allowed for the consideration of a life history approach in order to capture the richness of women’s experiences (Rickard, 2001; 114). Women were assured they were free to leave at any point and that interviews would run no longer than one hour.

Influenced by the writings of feminist sociologist Janet Finch, it was desired to give something back and help to create a sociology for the women which assisted in transmitting their experiences to a wider audience (Finch, 1984; 86) as opposed to simply taking the data and retreating to the ivory towers of
academia, with the only final advantage to the study was my earning an MSc qualification. In recognition of this, a summary of my findings will be mailed to policy makers in the Scottish Parliament.

**Accessing the police**

Contact was made with an officer who works with the women. I was invited to mail my interview schedule and consent form for inspection. The interview was permitted provided I could guarantee confidentiality and anonymity. The interview took place within the police station in April 2008. Sanders and Sharpe remind the novice researcher that negotiating access to successfully execute fieldwork takes considerable time and effort (Sanders, 2006; 206, Sharpe, 1998; 19) and this proved to be the case both with respects to accessing the police and the gatekeeper.

**Ethical considerations**

Homan stipulates that “ethics is the science of morality: those who engage in it determine values for the regulation of human behaviour” (Homan, 1991; 1). My personal and professional duty to the participants was therefore to follow stringent ethical practice. Therefore, all participants have been allocated a pseudonym. A fictitious name has been used as opposed to referring respondents as ‘Participant A’, as it is important that the people’s humanity is not compromised. Any information which may lead to identification has been omitted from the final draft, as any promise of confidentiality can prove fruitless should information be left in the study which leave clues that can lead to an individual’s identification (Palys, 1997; 98). All recordings were erased immediately after transcription. Participants were required to sign an informed consent form (see Appendix B). Respondents were provided opportunities to withdraw their data at any point between the date of interview and the submission of the dissertation. In order to assist in empowering the women and allowing their voices to be heard, I offered the opportunity to look over my analysis of their words before submission. This was to ensure that all
identifying information had been omitted from the final draft. In addition to securing informed consent, it was important that participants were allowed freedom to choose to participate in the research, without the presence of any pressure to take part. This was why information was provided well in advance to interviews taking place. The option was provided within the form to allow me to use the information for a future study. All participants other than the police agreed to this request.

Precautions must be taken to protect participants from physical or mental stress (Palys, 1997; 96). In anticipation of this, women were warned gently before I proceeded with any ‘difficult’ questions and it was stressed to them that they should feel under no pressure to answer any line of enquiry they were not comfortable with. The opportunity was provided for the women to debrief with a project worker directly after the interview had taken place. This raised issues of confidentiality but I decided that it would be more ethical to offer the option of speaking with a trained staff member should any negative emotions arise.

The interviews with the women took place in a private room in the drop-in centre, and were digitally recorded for ease of transcription with the women afforded the option to have the device switched off at any time. Lee suggests that respondents are more likely to feel comfortable when talking about sensitive issues when the setting is in a non-censorious atmosphere (Lee, 1993; 97). Thus, the drop-in was deemed the best possible location for the conduction of a private interview, as it is designed to represent a location where women can relax, make use of facilities and talk with other women who share similar situations (Campbell, 2004; cited in Pitcher, 2006; 235).

Women were offered a small token of appreciation for their taking part in the form of shopping vouchers to the value of twenty pounds. This method has been recognised by other researchers as a tool for researching hard to access social groups (Cloke et al, 2005; Fountain et al, 2003; cited in Harding and Hamilton, 2008; 6). The gatekeeper insisted on the usage of vouchers for a
popular chemist rather than cash. This request was respected, as it was acknowledged that, in exchange for providing access, gatekeepers often impose explicit conditions on the way research is performed (Lee, 1993; 125). It was decided that a voucher would be less patronising to the women as opposed to a particular shop - it was desired that the women would be given as much choice as possible over what to spend the reimbursement on. O’Neill argues that the offering of any type of payment is a type of exploitation (O’Neill, 1996; 132). Conversely, Maher argues that not offering the women a financial incentive for taking part in an interview would be “highly exploitive” (Maher, 2000; 215). The researcher is aware that it is impossible to completely balance out power relations (Sanders, 2006; 211) - and acknowledges the purposes for which this study is being conducted, however I am keen to readdress the balance to as great an extent as is within my power, which is one of the reasons why the information found in the study is to be circulated to policy makers in the hope that the findings encourage new ways of thinking. It is a personal belief that some kind of token of appreciation should be offered when one expects an individual to divulge personal information in an interview setting. It was stressed to participants that they were under no obligation to answer any question they were uncomfortable with without any risk of the vouchers being withheld. Indeed, vouchers were handed over before commencement of interview, in the hope of alleviating any pressure the participant felt over answering anything that they may have been uncomfortable with.

**Researcher reflection**

Many researchers who engage in sex work research have proved reluctant to reporting the methodological demands of topic (Sanders, 2006; 451). Hart rightly comments that ‘the process (of research design and execution) is just as important as the results’ (Hart, 1998; cited in Sanders, 2006; 451). As is to be expected, I had to spend a significant amount of time considering the time frame allowed for the completion of the MSc liaising with the gatekeeper, who proved rather suspicious in our first meeting, informing me that, despite their interest in the study, they ‘didn’t have much free time for researchers’. It was
imperative that I ‘proved my worth’ to them and fortunately, a second visit to the project was well received.

I feared that some participants may only partake in interviews in order to receive a voucher. It was observed on a number of occasions the project staff promoted the study to women by emphasising the voucher during my preliminary visit to the drop-in. This, I felt, was an unavoidable consequence of offering a voucher, as it was impossible to decipher if I was unwittingly pressuring women to participate so they could obtain a voucher.

Finally, attention should be drawn to the frequently ignored yet highly relevant fact that fieldwork involving this topic is both physically and emotionally draining (Shaver, 2005; 302) on part of the researcher, as well as the respondents. The conduction of interviews and the subsequent transcription process was frequently peppered with painful issues. Indeed emotional and mental fatigue proved a constant threat whilst out on the field (Sharpe, 1998; 19). Furthermore, it was difficult to maintain what Gurney (1991) refers to as ‘professional detachment’ (Neff Gurney, 1991; 364) whilst at the same time cultivating a deep involvement with women who often unveiled highly personal and sensitive information to me. I felt maintaining a professional boundary was crucial as I was only in the field for a short amount of time, and could not offer the women personal support.

This chapter has provided an examination of the approach and methods utilised in the study. It has outlined some of the key dilemmas involved in undertaking a study of such a sensitive issue and the ways in which they were considered and addressed. Chapters five and six analyse the data collected during interviews. Women’s voices have been allocated a separate chapter in acknowledgement of the particular importance of listening to what they had to say, and for ease of reading. Rather than simply drawing up conclusions, the section has been written using actual quotes in order to clearly communicate respondent’s opinions, which have been blended with the researcher’s interpretations of comments.
Chapter Five: Data analysis: Voices on the ground - Pauline, Vicky and Claire, working women in Aberdeen

In this section of the data analysis I outline opinions and experiences of three women whose working practices have been affected by the termination of the Management Zone\textsuperscript{15}.

*Dodging cops: the adoption of new working practices*

Responses indicated that working practices have altered considerably owing to increased police presence in the area since the zone was lost;

BL\textsuperscript{16} : “You are still working at the moment. Where?”

Pauline: “Up at Mearns Street”

Mearns Street is not part of the area where the zone was previously. Pauline revealed her reason for her migration to this area formed part of a strategic plan to evade police attention.

Pauline: “It’s away fae the zone. Because there’s mair police going up to the zone where you were allowed to stand, you get caught quicker up there....down this end they don’t see you as much so you can make your money and get away.....just one, twenty or thirty pounds, enough to get you through the night. You just get it and get away”.

Vicky’s tactic was to constantly move to avoid attracting the attention of the police. Like Pauline, she also chose to work away from the location of the zone to avoid detection.

Vicky: “Sometimes (women work at) Mearns Street, I just kept walking but if you see the police you just gotta run”
Claire continues to work in the area where the zone was previously located.

Women stated they needed to work for a longer time period as a result of intensified policing. They complained that this made it harder to make the required amount of money due to a reduction in the amount of clients and increased competition amongst workers.

Women have also been observed leaping into the path of cars and asking the occupants for business;

**Pauline:** “Ye get lassies running in front of cars, saying stop, and it draws attention to us and that particular spot and the rest of us don’t like that”.

This is problematic as it causes unrest amongst women who are already in a precarious working environment as the stopping of cars by others may anger members of the public who may complain to the police. Some women have lowered their rates in order to attract clients in a competitive environment. This tactic annoys other sex workers and creates an unpleasant working environment which may lead to assaults.

**Claire:** “A lassie got battered the other day for it (providing cheaper rates) cos she was getting all the punters”

The women expressed their frustration regarding having to work for long hours due to lack of business;

**Pauline:** “Aye, the other night I was out here at eight o clock and I never got home till half eleven and it was pouring o rain and I was soaking right through. All for twenty quid.”

**Vicky:** “I’ve stood out for eleven o’ clock till six in the morning, just to make forty quid, and that’s been more common since we lost the zone”
Claire: “Sometimes ye can be standing for hours”.

Sex working women in Glasgow were of the opinion that risk of attack intensified later in the night, with ‘the dodgy ones’ (McKeganey and Barnard, 1996; 77) showing up past midnight. As a result, women preferred to work earlier in the evening. Unfortunately, increased surveillance has resulted in Aberdonian women staying out later to try and meet their financial target. The reduction in custom may be connected not to a reduction in men’s willingness to purchase sex per se, but as a result of increased indoor working practices, with men electing to purchase sex indoors to avoid prosecution.

Just ‘regular’ guys? : changing dynamics and the altering behaviour of some clients

Some men attempt to obtain unprotected intercourse in exchange for higher payment. Thus, it could be argued that the removal of the zone has bolstered the propensity to exploit women’s situation by coercing them into engaging in unsafe sex. Claire claimed that some women were offering the service as a result of financial need. Claire always turns down men who request unprotected anal intercourse, and claims that these men simply move on until they find a woman who is willing to provide the service;

Claire: “Well you do get some, that’ll stop and ask how much is it to do sex without a condom, some of the lassies do dae it.”

BL: Why do you think this is?

Claire: “….they are finding it hard enough getting picked up……”.

Pauline: “Aye. There offer more to get it without (a condom). They say I’ll gie ye thirty quid for sex without a condom”.
Pauline drew attention to a further issue, that some women may be unaware of the realities of sexually transmitted diseases owing to the idea fostered amongst some women that anal intercourse constituted less ‘risky’ behaviour than vaginal penetration;

Pauline: “You get women who think there is less chance of getting a disease if it’s in the back (rectum) ye ken”.

A ‘code of ethics’ amongst sex workers was identified, in which condom usage was promoted and the lack of their use was frowned upon. All three women interviewed maintained that they always used condoms and that there was a shared consensus amongst most regarding a fixed price for services, however;

Pauline: “They’ll no tell you but they are doing it for as little as a tenner for a blow job ken, and that’s lowering their own standards, because the police are making it so hard”.

Vicky: “Some girls have been charging a tenner for everything”

Statements indicate that clients have realised that they can now exploit the situation;

Vicky: “The men think that because the zone is gone they can get it cheaper now.”

Finally, it must be reported that the three women reported that not all punters treated them in an unsavoury manner, with Vicky regarding some of them as ‘gentlemen’\(^\text{17}\). However, the removal of the zone appears to have altered the behaviour of some men who continue to purchase sex in the city.

‘What is she meant to do?’: Sex worker’s perceptions of the effectiveness of the prostitution liaison officer
The women projected a somewhat fatalistic view over the liaison officer. Pauline and Claire considered their presence served no purpose and they did not have any knowledge about the officer or their job remit.

**Claire:** “I’m not even sure what they are meant to be doing! It’s a bit pointless really.

Pauline had never met the officer and expressed no desire to do so, saying;

**Pauline:** “Well it wouldn’t change anything, would it? I wouldn’t approach her anyway”

Vicky had spoken with the officer once. She reported that she was treated respectfully. None of the women had been approached by the officer prior to the termination of the zone. Claire was present at a drop-in session when the officer visited unannounced in order to meet with the women, although this meeting was scuppered as the support worker who was on shift refused entry as women who were inside at the time were ‘quite scared of the police’. More unease was directed towards the police in general as opposed to the liaison officer, however it could be argued that wariness of the police in general impacted upon any willingness to forge any kind of relationship with an officer whose role it is to work with women.

*From protectors to persecutors: street based sex worker’s views of the police.*

Women argued that the police did not encompass a homogenous group - different officers treated the women in varying ways with some offering respectful treatment and others subjecting them to abuse. Clearly, the policing of the area is not systematic but rather, is more grounded within the ideologies of the particular officers who are working on a particular evening. However, the ideology fostered by the implementation of the Act and thus the further press for the removal of women from the streets may have impacted upon some
officer’s behaviour, with women reporting more degrading treatment from some officers which was less likely to be experienced before the zone was lost.

**Pauline:** “Some of them (the police) are okay and others speak to ye like shit and talk to ye like you’re scum ye ken.”

Others utilise their position of power to silence the women’s voices, which does not assist in the fostering of a useful relationship between women and police in which effective reporting of crimes can be made. The comment below also highlights the attitude embraced by some officers which fit comfortably with policy makers ideology that women do not belong in the area and are to be excluded;

**Pauline:** “And they say speak when you’re spoken to and some of them call us tarts and scum and say we shouldn’t be here”

**Vicky:** “They are nastier now, bad attitudes, all that man. More people getting charged. I got charged a couple of times.”

It would also appear that police target particular women, indicating a lack of consistency in law enforcement. Claire thought that the police had a vendetta against her;

**Claire:** “The other day they drove past four lassies and let them work but they stopped me”

**Vicky:** “They pick on people”

**Claire:** “They just charge ye all the time. They used to ask us how we are (when the zone existed) and now they just talk to us like shit”

Women’s main priority was to evade the attention of police. All three women’s primary concern, above fear or violence or intimidation, was being arrested
and charged. They argued that their chances of being charged had increased, as there were more police in the area. It was also asserted that their increased presence was ‘scaring off the punters’. Men who do stop often require the women to enter the car as quickly as possible, in order to dodge the police’s attention. This renders the woman unable to conduct a ‘risk assessment’ before entering the vehicle. All three women in the study expressed a preference to employ their perceived ‘powers’ on intuition when negotiating a transaction.

**Vicky:** “Now they are scared to stop and when they do they want you to jump in quickly. They shout hurry up and get in the car!”

Vicky continued to conduct risk assessments up until she ceased working, as the one occasion where she did failed to she was raped by a ‘client’. However, some would not be so careful due to financial need.

**Vicky:** “Some women, all they think of is pound signs and just jump in”.

**Pauline:** “We wouldnae have to jump intae any car” (Referring to the provision of a zone.)

Claire elects to enter a car as quickly as possibly when a client stops.

**Claire:** “I just tend tae jump in….so I don’t get lifted”

Hopes and dreams for the future and moving on - what next for Aberdeen’s sex workers?

All women expressed a desire to exit, but foresaw their options as limited. Vicky finally exited after being admitted onto a methadone programme which allowed her to leave as she no longer needed money to purchase drugs. She was required to wait four and a half years to be admitted to the programme, however once this happened she moved on and is working with support networks in order to facilitate access to a college course. Vicky’s story
indicates that drug usage must be addressed before women are able to deal with other issues that pervade their lives. Pauline and Claire currently see no other options which would suit their needs aside from sex work. Pauline’s income of Jobseekers Allowance does not finance her drug addiction and her criminal record, ironically obtained for soliciting, she hypothesises, will prohibit her from securing legitimate employment. She currently occupies a waiting list to secure a methadone prescription which will address her heroin use.

Pauline: “I’m actually looking for another line o’ work. But for now I’ve got no option but to dae this tae feed ma habit….the doctor says I have to wait eighteen months to get on a script…”

Pauline had not been offered any form of training or any other provision to help her secure an alternative form of income. She expressed a desire to accept if this was offered.

Claire is unhappy and hopes to become a hairdresser, but stated that her route to employment has been blocked on numerous occasions as “when they (potential employers) look at your record and see you have been charged with soliciting, they don’t want to know”. Claire pays her own rent and receives no governmental assistance unlike Pauline. Claire reported that she had received no offers of help with regards to education or training opportunities from the agency who feature in this study or any other organisations.

The second component of the data analysis section discovers the opinions and current working practices of the local police station’s prostitution liaison officer, and the changes for support workers since the establishment of the new legislation.
Chapter Six: Data analysis: Working with (and against?) the women-agency support workers and the police

The support workers interviewed had worked in the agency from between six months and nine years. With the exception of one worker, all had been involved in the project aimed at street based sex workers prior to the termination of the Management Zone.

*Attitudes pertaining to the provision of a Management Zone for sex work in Aberdeen*

The zone’s removal brought about a great sense of unease with regards to the project’s ability to continue to remain accessible to women and the working environment becoming more risky. Workers stated that they were now finding it more difficult to make contact with women owing to migration. There was a strong desire to monitor the women in order to keep up with their activities and how they were working.

**Frieda:** “I would say (need for service provision) it has intensified. Because it takes more of an effort now to get people to engage……”

Indeed, there appears to be a re-focus on the agency having to work harder and seek out women as opposed to previously, when women flocked to the agency’s outreach service vehicle and the drop-in.18

**Frieda:** “People would be looking for us. Now we are looking for them”

This indicates that priorities have altered from a certain degree of attention being paid to the collection of harm reduction paraphernalia to having to focus more upon making money. This may explain the lack of contact with the service as opposed to previously. The effect of this is that women may not possess safer sex materials such as condoms for usage with clients.
Chloe argued that a zone was needed due to her opinion that the eradication of prostitution in general would never be realised and thus a safe working space was required.

**Chloe:** “I think it’s crazy (the removal of the zone)....the thinking behind this (the Act) is that we are somehow going to get rid of prostitution and I don’t believe that is going to happen and I think we would be better off adopting a more practical approach”.

**Eve:** “I think people just need to accept that it happens ....it’s been aboot forever, there’s always going to be a market for it, it’s a basic human need”.

These views reflect that which can be found in the academic literature, in that it has become commonly accepted that sex is, for men, ‘....doubtless a necessity’ (Bonger, 1916;323, cited in Sharpe, 1998;109), and that for many, men ‘need’ sex and thus women provide it (Sharpe, 1998; 109). However, these views fail to recognise the many issues which are inherently problematic in the provision of prostitution, such as issues pertaining to gender inequality. Shrage argues that rather than men’s sexual urges being the result of a biological need, the consensus is borne from cultural rationalisation which operates in men’s interests and assists in the legitimisation of gendered domination within our society (Shrage,1989;354). Workers distinguished between violent men and ‘normal’ clients, with one group being inherently immoral and the other just ‘regular guys’ who needed to fulfil their perceived biological ‘needs’. Following this, one could suggest that support workers are unwittingly supporting the continuing oppression of women by subscribing to this nature narrative and fostering the opinion that demand will always be present, rather than focussing upon the reasons behind male’s desire to purchase sex which are influenced by a cultural context rather than a biological requirement.

*Ramifications of the termination of the Management Zone: displacement and altered working practises*
Currently, the situation in Aberdeen appears to mirror that which occurred in Birmingham, whereby the increased surveillance of women led to displacement to other parts of the city as opposed to facilitating an atmosphere in which women would exit sex work (Hubbard, 1997; 137). Great concern was voiced over women’s displacement. Women can now be found working in locations which are populated by members of the public, such as the Union Street area, home to many shops, restaurants and cafes.

BL: Where are the women working now?

Kate: “Well, it is a wider area, definitely. Union Street, Market Street, all that area.”

Due to the lack of a specified location for the purchase of sex, women must be proactive and approach potential clients in new locations as opposed to previously where clients accessed them. The result of this inevitably raises the possibility of people being approached who are not interested purchasing sex. It was hypothesised by one worker that this could fuel negative stigma and hostility against the women by members of the public.

Frieda: “It’s likely to cause a stigma. Because it’s actually bothering people who want to be left alone. It’s actually directly impacting upon people’s lives”.

Eve: “A male staff member was approached on his way to work at eight thirty in the morning”

The new legislation has not altered the women’s requirement to make money. Intensified policing makes it harder for clients to approach women and thus may encourage some workers to approach those who are not interested in purchasing sex on the off chance that they may be a potential punter. This could result in more complaints to the police and further intensifying action to stop women from working.
Some women have migrated to a small community town named Torry. Reports from support workers suggest that the community nature of this area and the fact that women are now working within more public locations combines to amplify their presence within the public arena and thus is prompting more complaints from disgruntled citizens.

**BL:** “Have members of the public or the media noticed this migration?”

**Kate:** “There have been reports in the media, aha. There are certainly plenty of reports going through to the police, complaints”

A new endeavour employed by women is to engage with technology, utilising internet websites in order to provide a home service. This submits a degree of power to the client who will now possess knowledge of a woman’s home address....

**Maggie:** “The guys know where they live, anything could happen in the house”.

A woman working home alone may be more at risk of violence as there is no one to call upon for help should a client become aggressive (Kinnell, 2006;146). This argument gains currency as attacks are more likely to occur outwith the usual soliciting area (Kinnell, 2006;149). In addition to the potential for violence, the knowledge of a home address coupled with the fact that advertising the sale of sex from an indoor location is illegal (Kinnell, 2006;144) means that a client could effectively ‘blackmail’ a sex worker into providing services free of charge, or without the provision of safer sex barriers such as condoms.

Women may also choose to use mobile telephones, giving their numbers to clients who can contact them in order to arrange an indoor liaison.

**Maggie:** “I have heard women say they are using mobile phones.”
Some women are finding themselves homeless as evictions have taken place as a result of housing associations discovering women are working from their flats.

**Kate:** “Housing associations are getting to hear about women working in their flats. People are reporting it....I’ve heard of a couple of women who have lost tenancies because they are taking punters home......Neighbours have been complaining”.

Some women are also working in more isolated, desolate areas to avoid police. This tactic inevitably raises serious safety issues for women who may have no one to call upon for help should a client, or indeed a member of the public become aggressive;

**Eve:** I’ve heard of people working in Torry Battery, that’s far away and really out of the way, ....a horrible place to be, no lights or nothing.”

As well as working in alternative areas, women also labour for longer durations. There is a requirement to work late, and at sporadic times. They also innovate and adapt to the situation by working in the early hours of the morning as clients are able to drive through the area safe in the knowledge that, if stopped, they can claim they are on their way to an early shift at work. This means that sex workers must adapt in order to protect clients as well as themselves from criminal sanction.

The extension of working hours means that there is more scope for violent attacks and abuse to take place. Also, there was evidence put forth that as a result of less choice of clients, women are having to engage in business with ‘anyone’....

**Chloe:** “They can’t be as selective with clients, I think people are more likely to take risks now”

**Maggie:** “They are having to work later to make the same money”
The workers hypothesised that some women may now be engaging in ‘crime shuffling’ (Pease, 2003; 956), whereby women refocus their efforts in engaging in other deviant activities such as shoplifting in order to generate an income. Workers identified the ramifications inherent in participating in activities such as shoplifting, which, upon being caught and charged, impede upon a woman’s options to leave and seek alternative work either now or in the future as a result of the application of a criminal record. Maggie identified the potential psychological impact that the unsavoury application of a criminal record can have upon a woman’s sense of Self and being able to move on from sex work.

**Maggie:** “Shoplifting and stuff….that’s gonna set them up for getting charged, court fines, jail….they will never be able to put that part of their life behind them”.

The choice to begin a career in shoplifting could be seen as their only intelligent option as many street based sex workers do not have the social capital, for example education and work experience, needed to find regular paid employment (Rickard, 2001; 124).

**Identified issues pertaining to the realistic opportunities offered for exiting street work**

Support workers spoke of the problems inherent in the desire expressed by policy makers to remove women from the streets, without any intelligent plan of what they would now do in order to financially support themselves.

**Eve:** “I don’t think anything like that (alternative income generation) has been thought through by the policy makers…..If they want rid of this, they should be putting more money into services like we offer to try and get women off the street, but they are not doing anything.”
Maggie identified the problems that many women on the streets have with regards to drug usage and a medley of other disabling issues which would prohibit their access to regular employment anyway.

**Maggie:** “Some of them couldn’t even think about going into employment before their drug use is stabilised….and then there’s the mental health problems, the housing, all of that. But nothing has really been set in place to really address all of that before they went ahead with the Bill”.

**Frieda:** “99 per cent of the women we see have problems with drug use”

Reference was also made to other difficulties experienced by women who are involved in the street based market such as self esteem and problems arising from abuse. Support workers suggested that it was essential to properly deal with these issues before expecting women to participate in ‘non-deviant’ employment. Projects which do deal with employability were regarded as ‘good’, but simply insufficient to address the wide range of difficulties which permeate the lives of many women.

**Chloe:** “There are good projects out there….but there’s the problem with criminal records, and self esteem, the self confidence to go out and do everything they need to get a job, then whether the job is going to pay enough….but actually if a woman’s been abused for years, they are going to need a lot of support and counselling, but I think people want short term solutions and I don’t think that’s realistic”.

A further key issue which arose was the amount of time a woman was made to wait until she was offered a methadone prescription which would facilitate the withdrawal from the intravenous injection of heroin, which is the main drug used by street workers in Aberdeen (Scottish Executive, 2004;16). Considering that the vast majority of women who work on the street are addicted to illicit drugs, this is inherently problematic. With specific reference to Aberdeen, increased numbers of women working have been observed since 1995, the
growth attributed to a rise in drug misuse (Scottish Executive, 2004;16). Furthermore, research suggests that drug misuse serves to retain women in sex work and blocks exiting avenues (Pitcher,2006;243). Thus, the lack of an efficient drug rehabilitation service constitutes a significant barrier to women’s ability to leave sex work.

Maggie: “We have one woman who just got on a script.....she’s been waiting three or four years”

I was fortunate enough to speak with this woman, who had managed to exit sex work but only as a result of having finally secured access to methadone. Thus, this indicates that an effective drug withdrawal provision must be implemented in order to assist women who wish to leave street based sex work.

Policing

Support workers expressed discontent with regards to the provision of a police liaison officer whose remit is to liaise with street based sex workers. Lack of communication between the police and the agency were voiced as problematic, and the police’s primary remit as law enforcers (May et al, 2000; cited in Pitcher, 2006; 239) was viewed as a barrier to the reporting of crimes committed against women. Workers reported that women were receiving mixed messages in relation to the new legislation, with them being provided with different facts by different officers, leaving them confused about what they were and were not permitted to do. This fragmented communication was reflected in the fluctuating reports offered by various support workers, however, Kate works on the drop-in service directly with women on a more regular basis than the other workers interviewed so her contribution is likely to be more representative of the situation as it occurred. Key issues identified pertain to a lack of trust between women and the police, and also a lack of communication between the women, the agency and police officers. A poor relationship between the liaison officer and the agency was reported and
viewed as problematic by support workers. One identified reason for this is the conflicting ideologies of police and agency workers.

**BL:** Please could you tell me if you know, was any notice given to the women or your agency before the zone went?

**Maggie:** “I think it was about three months….women were coming to the drop-in and telling us, but they were getting really mixed messages about when they could expect to be charged”.

**Chloe:** “There was supposed to be communication between police and the women, to talk about the implications for them and how it could happen, but it seemed like it suddenly just happened…..there were no targeted instructions for the women”

The sporadic messages offered to the women would do nothing to alleviate any anxiety they may have felt with regards to the forced alteration to their working practices. The consensus was that the agency was not consulted by the police in relation to the removal of the zone, or indeed about any other ‘clean up’ operations the police are about to embark upon;

**Chloe:** “Occasionally we have been told but usually not…..the whole thing with losing the zone has not been great regarding communication with us”.

This is problematic because women are currently more willing to approach the agency than the police and so the agency would have been useful as an important gateway of providing essential information pertaining to the implications of the new Act for women. A further issue raised was the assertion that the police had failed to consult the agency’s ‘Dodgy Punter’ book since the removal of the zone. The book serves as a tool in which women can record and thus communicate acts of violence committed against them anonymously;
Kate: “It would be good if they looked at it because not all the women approach them”

Regular meetings between the police and the staff and women who frequent the drop-in occurred on a monthly basis, however this provision has ceased to operate since the zone was removed. The lack of meetings was perceived to be the fault of the police.

Kate: “We had regular monthly meetings but that kinda halted for a wee while”.

Unfortunately, women tended to avoid the drop-in when they knew the police would be present. This reflects a poor relationship between the women and police which then has repercussions for the reporting of crime. The officer’s ‘master status’ of law enforcer was attributed as a problem for establishing trust between the police and workers.

Kate: “We were inviting women to the drop-in to speak to the officer, raise the issues, but no body came in, even when we moved the slot later and later. I think that’s pretty significant”.

Kate: “(The person is) a police officer. The liaison role is not his/her only role. They are about intelligence gathering, so its putting people off”.

Eve: “They are not going to ask for help from someone if they think they might get lifted......they don’t feel like the police are on their side”.

Maggie: “At the end of the day, she’s a cop. She is gonnae lift them”

Eve reported that some women are being charged several times in one night. In the drop-in, workers reported overwhelmingly that women were ‘moaning’ about the police more frequently than they did when the zone existed. This indicates the lack of enthusiasm women currently have for any contact with the
police to discuss issues which affect them. What is obviously problematic about attending a consultation session with a police officer is that the women are effectively making themselves known to the police as a sex worker, which sets them up for surveillance when they are working and thus they run the risk of being charged with soliciting.

**Frieda:** “Clearly if women are going to be charged then they are going to try and keep out of the way of police”

In Aberdeen, the police are currently charging women who solicit on the street. At present, the provision of the ASBO is not currently being used against the women. Whether this alters is a subject for study at a later date. The forthcoming redevelopment of the Harbour area may give rise to the increasing usage of ASBO’s in order to exclude women from the area, which is one of the purposes they serve (Brooks-Gordon, 2006; 30).

**Maggie:** “It’s more about charging at the moment”

**Contraception / safer sex practices**

Support workers could not confirm to what extent, if any, had safer sex practices increased or decreased since the removal of the zone, however they claimed that due to fear of detection, women were now more likely to enter a car swiftly with a potential client without taking time to conduct a ‘risk assessment’. Chloe hypothesised that some workers may be effectively coerced into engaging in unprotected sex in an effort to make money quicker;

**Chloe:** “Maybe sex without condoms to make sure they get enough money”.

Sharpe and Morgan-Thomas found that there are clients who are willing to offer higher prices in exchange for unprotected intercourse (Sharpe, 1998;129, Morgan-Thomas, 1990;105), with Sharpe further noticing in her study that women were often asked for anal sex (Sharpe, 1998; 124). The cocktail of
‘bareback’ intercourse performed anally is particularly problematic because embodied within this practise is a greater chance of a seropositive male passing the HIV virus (or other sexually transmitted infections) onto a female rectally. It is worth bearing in mind the problems inherent pertaining to desperation experienced by the women and the fact that some men will capitalise upon this in order to obtain unprotected intercourse. Women may also be appearing to adhere to a certain code of ethics by maintaining condom use, however desperation to make money under more difficult circumstances due to intensified policing may persuade some to take risks, certainly it was articulated that there are less clients around since legislation criminalising their involvement came into force. This reduction in clients may result in women being effectively forced into engaging in risky behaviour due to increased competition for clients;

Kate: “There’s a lot less opportunity to make money now.”

Kate: “Well there’s always pressure to not use condoms…but women will always tell us that they use them….but I’m guessing that it happens but I can’t know it for a fact and the thing is people will never admit to it”

In addition, the 2007/2008 project report sourced from the agency reveals that 52% of women anonymously reported failure to use any form of contraception (Project Report, 2008), indicating further the pressure women appear to be under to engage in unprotected intercourse.

The future for sex workers: redevelopment

The forthcoming development of prestigious new accommodation was indicated as a magnet for a those who would not tolerate the existence of the women. This impending arrival was hypothesised to present a threat to the current toleration of women by members of the public cited by workers in the Harbour area.
Jennifer: “I wonder what will change when the new accommodation comes, when all the residents come”

Maggie: “As soon as those flats go up. I can definitely see them getting a hard time, we are gonna get our yuppies and all of that......the impact is yet to come”.

Data analysis: the police

The following section details the findings uncovered as a result of an interview with a liaison officer who patrols areas where women have found to be working. Although the zone was removed in October 2007, it transpired that the legislation was not actively enforced until January 2008, with the police offering both clients and women a ‘period of grace’ to exit the area before enforcement began. The officer stressed that information pamphlets were distributed to women and clients detailing the impact the forthcoming legislation would have upon their activities.

The officer’s remit is to facilitate a point of contact between women and the police, with a stated emphasis on establishing relationships with women. The aim is to obtain the trust of the women, resulting in opportunities for them to confidently report crimes to police. The officer claimed that she personally did not charge or warn women who were found to be soliciting, as this was deemed to be counter-productive, voicing the opinion that it was futile to expect women to speak with her whilst having the threat of being charged looming.

Her remit also involves liaising with other organisations who have contact with street based workers, including the support project featured within this study. The officer stressed the important of passing on information concerning reports of ‘dodgy punters’ to the project in order for women to be aware of dangerous men who were frequenting the area. The importance on ‘intelligence gathering’ facilitated by a positive relationship between projects and the police was deemed by the officer as ‘pertinent’ in ensuring the safety of women.
Relationship between women and the police

The officer reported that the majority of women continue to speak to police despite the removal of the zone the resulting punitive policing approach which has arisen from the change. This conflicts with reports from women and workers, this may be due to the officer not reaching all women.

Officer: “….the majority of the girls speak to us, if not all of the girls”

It was also claimed that women were quite happy to sit inside the police car and discuss working matters with police officers before the removal of the zone, however since it actively began to be enforced in January 2008, the relationship had altered, with an acknowledgement that the directly conflicting aims of upholding the law and also maintaining some sort of relationship with women was problematic, however, she maintained that women were still willing to speak to her although the police’s job is effectively to make sure they do not occupy the Harbour area. An indication of the officer’s personal ideology surfaced when she pointed out that women should not be occupying the area anymore;

Officer: “Now that there’s no zone, things are different.....they will chat to us, and they know they shouldn’t be down here now”.

One issue raised by the respondent was problems pertaining to women contacting the police and reporting incidents or talking about issues which concerned them whilst working. The officer attributed the women’s involvement in street based sex work to be overwhelmingly the result of an addiction to illicit drugs, and also cited this as an explanatory factor of why it proved difficult to facilitate contact with them. The officer claimed that obtaining money was more important to many of the women than was reporting attacks;
Officer: “Yeah, I mean they’ll wake up and the first thing they will think of is to get money for drugs, not meeting myself or a project worker……a lot of these girls don’t want to tell the police (about acts of violence) because it eats into their money making time.”

Women on the move :displacement and sex work

The officer confirmed the findings of interviews with women and support workers that workers were displaced as a result of the zone, migrating towards more public arenas.

Relationship between support project and the police

The current relationship between the support project and the police was deemed as unsatisfactory by the officer. Both groups were enthusiastic about creating a better relationship and had the opinion that this would offer the potential to be beneficial in the creation of a safer environment for women. The officer emphasised her commitment to her position and addressing violent incidents through the gathering of intelligence but pointed to ‘red tape’ which obstructed the sharing of information. One issue for the police is that of the support project’s commitment to preserving confidentiality of its service users, something that the officer argued as problematic in ensuring the safety of working women. The officer felt that certain attacks were not relayed on to them due to the wishes of some women to not press ahead with charges, however the officer argued that this simply permits violent men to commit more offences. Unfortunately, the legislation may be the barrier which blocks reporting due to women believing that by disclosing information relating to sex work, they themselves would be identified as a worker by the police and thus attract attention from them in the future. The officer communicated no rises in attacks since the zone was disbanded, however it was acknowledged that this did not mean they were not taking place, with women being simply less likely to report.
Evidence suggested that the project wished to halt the police’s involvement somewhat with regards to accessing women. It was argued that support projects were uncomfortable with appearing to the women to be involved with the police for fear of alienating them from the project and its aims. The police officer was informed that women would not be comfortable with suggested initiatives such as the facilitation of street work with women and the liaison officer. The officer considered this a beneficial idea due to her previous experience as a youth worker. The officer felt this equipped her in the ways of communicating effectively with women. Despite it being communicated by the project that women would not be comfortable with this, the officer found that when speaking to them personally, they were quite amenable to the idea. The officer also expressed frustration regarding restriction of access to some women due to the will of the support project.

**Personal ideology - the public nuisance discourse and complaints from the public**

It was identified that the new legislation, whilst removing many women and kerb-crawlers from the Harbour area, had served to appease the small number of businesses and residents there but also served to displace workers to other areas of the city, which ironically are more populous. Considering that the ideology of the Act is reminiscent with a ‘public nuisance’ discourse, one would argue that the aims of the Act have failed spectacularly due to women’s now more obvious presence in the public domain. Indeed, complaints from the public had started to accumulate as a result of the women migrating in search of business;

**Officer**: “The folk are glad the zone has been abolished…..there has been a considerable drop-in the amount of complaints from residents there. But. Now we are finding girls in Market Street, Exchange Street, Ship Row - people stay down there .....complaints have started coming in from there now”
The officer clearly considered the women’s presence as the embodiment of ‘public nuisance’, and argued that women were unwelcome in residential areas.

**Officer**: “The last thing folk want to see standing outside their door is a girl”

Officers are now actively encouraged in executing the full enforcement of the new law by policy makers who trumpet the public nuisance discourse, framing street prostitution as unacceptable, problematic and embodying an uncivil nature (Sanders, 2007; 792). One issue with this way of considering the ‘problem’ is that the message can reflect in individuals automatically associating sex workers with criminality. These views were exhibited by the police officer;

**Officer**: “So the girls are like, let’s go down and do business (to entertainment area of the City as opposed to the Harbour) and the next thing the guy has his wallet robbed and assaulted or whatever”.

The officer also assumed the automatic presence of ‘crime shuffling’, in which women graduate towards other forms of criminality arising from their need to make money with little or no legitimate options;

**Officer**: “The girls are still needing to make their money or whatever so they are just filtering through to the city centre and shoplifting and whatever”

Women are labelled as likely to steal from members of the public, disrupting the activities of ‘regular men’ on a night out.

It was hypothesised that complaints originating from the Harbour area would be likely to increase again as a result of the forthcoming regeneration of the area, as some women continue to work in the area.
**Officer:** “The more people who end up living down there, and if the girls continue using that area, of course, there’s gonna be more complaints”

The fostering of a trusting relationship between the police and women was, in the officer’s opinion, blocked due to the sporadic nature of women’s working practices. Furthermore, the officer patrols the area once per week and so has a limited time frame with which to contact and develop relationships with women.

**Officer:** “You know we can speak to one girl and not see her again for ages, the next time I meet them you don’t remember them. Other times you see more regular faces which is good for developing relationships but that’s not very often”.

This does not mean that some women are not working frequently, but are working at times where police change over shifts in an innovative ploy to avoid detection.

**Effectiveness of the legislation**

In respects of removing women from the location of the previous zone, the officer identified the new legislation as a success, and argued that in respect to targeting kerb-crawlers policing had become easier as they knew what they were seeking in terms of what constitutes a kerb-crawler. The legislation has not been successful however, in achieving the eradication of women working on the streets. The officer hypothesised that women might eventually all filter away into other parts of the city, into their own homes and so on, and as a result would no longer occupy public space. This may be the underlying aim of policy makers due to a lack of policies which would realistically facilitate the removal of women from sex work and provide them with viable alternatives.

The final chapter provides some conclusions which have arisen as a result of the study, together with recommendations for the future.
Chapter Seven: Conclusion - What next for the working women of Aberdeen?

This thesis reaches its conclusions acknowledging that the full impact of the legislation is yet to be discovered, as women were only recently returning to work at the time of study after a short period away due to increased police presence. This, together with the effects of the impending regeneration of the Harbour, solidifies the need for future research.

The restructuring of a market: shifts in women’s working practices

Respondents indicated an alteration in the operation of the street market, as attempts are made to innovate in order to continue to generate an income. Women are now more likely to work alone in desolate areas, and are more likely to enter cars without conducting any form of risk assessment before hand. Although the viability of assessing risk realistically can be questioned, the importance of perception cannot be discounted (Sanders, 2005;43,76,). As it has become more difficult to work, women are having to labour longer and service more clients. Other women have elected to work from home using the internet. Currently little is known about this phenomenon, and further research is required to discover and understand new working practices and the potential problems embodied within these, some of which were uncovered such as the problem of clients possessing knowledge of women’s home addresses. Perhaps the time has come to re-focus our attention more upon the indoor sector as there may be trend towards indoor working due to increasing pressure on women to leave the streets. Without intelligent provisions to engage in alternative options, migration to indoor work may increase.

Sex workers, clients and new issues pertaining to health and safety

Respondents claimed that some men are exploiting women, requesting reduced prices for services, and argued that some were honouring these requests due to need for money. No respondents directly engaged in unsafe sex, despite being
asked. However, it must be emphasised that comments pertaining to the activities of women outside the study were speculative, but is a critical issue and merits further enquiry before a solid conclusion can be attained.

**The need for realistic methadone provision**

The women encountered during fieldwork experienced a range of problems including drug misuse. There is a need for efficient methadone programmes to be provided before women can realistically exit sex work. The current delay is obtaining a prescription is proving a significant barrier to exiting.

**The evolution of geographical space: Impending regeneration in ‘The Granite City’ - an opportunity for women or a new, more violent arena?**

The forthcoming regeneration of the Harbour area was viewed as problematic with regards to complaints from a new ‘breed’ of resident who were considered to be attracted to the area. All parties saw this development as negative, although it could also be viewed in a positive light. The re-gentrification of the area may also encourage the state to invest in proper arrangements to assist women in leaving sex work in order to appease residents. As women working in Aberdeen generally are working out of need as opposed to want, this could be viewed as an ethical move provided measures are executed in a user friendly manner. Conversely however, the situation could embody a more sinister character should lack of provisions for alternatives continue and women continue to work, as some do. Numerous studies have shown violent vigilante style attacks against women as residents seek to eradicate workers from ‘their’ area. Without the provision of intelligent alternative options for women, the forthcoming regeneration of the city has the potential to offer sex workers little other than an uncertain future and a potential acceleration in the already established dangers of the work as a result of the shake up of legislation pertaining to prostitution and the new working practices this has brought about.
Conflicting interests, enhanced barriers: support workers and the police

There is a need for the police and agency support workers to facilitate an improved relationship with better communication between both. Currently, as a result of different interests, the two agencies in the course of their duties ‘pass each other like ships in the night’ (Sampson et al, 1988; 488). The current uncertainty of women’s futures means that it would be beneficial for the police and the agency to work together to devise ways in which women can be assisted and protected. Women argued that they were not willing to approach any police officer for fear of a charge or poor treatment, and contact with the liaison officer was reported as minimal.

The ideologies embodied by the police officer and support workers paved different ways for which women and their work are perceived. More work with the police must be performed, as one interview cannot be viewed as representative of an entire police force. It is apparent that officers do not embody a homogenous entity and possess different ways of viewing and dealing with women which is evident in the poor treatment distributed to workers by some officers. This lack of consistency is problematic as women cannot be sure of how they will be treated by individual officers. This, together with criminalisation, does not bode well for facilitating an atmosphere in which women can approach officers and report crimes. Both agencies had their own agenda, with police focusing on intelligence gathering and the agency about assisting the women. This resulted in a clash as both parties were not comfortable with exchanging information.

The wider issue for Scotland’s sex workers - The criminalisation of prostitution.

The decision to continue to criminalise women does nothing to alleviate their current stigmatisation by society and the problems this encompasses in its association, such as the damaging psychological effects of possessing a ‘spoiled identity’ (Goffman, 1968; cited in Scrambler, 1997; 110) and drastically reduced
chances for gaining legitimate employment owing to a criminal record. The threat of sanction deters women from reporting acts of violence committed against them by clients and others. As well as women being at risk, this could also be seen as a public threat as violent men are permitted to continue their violent acts. This in turn articulates the message to them that they are more likely to evade prosecution for committing an act of violence against a sex worker.

Without provision for alternatives, criminalisation and ‘crime shuffling’ may result in more women encountering the penal system. Some may argue that prison may assist in weaning women off drugs however it is suggested that this should be facilitated without the need for incarceration. Homelessness continues to present a problem for some women working on Scotland’s streets (Scottish Executive, 2004;26), however despite this, a charity which provides the women with accommodation has had its funding significantly cut. The political wish for women to exit sex work can surely only be realised with the provision of a range of crucial services, one of the most basic being adequate provision of suitable accommodation and access to methadone programmes.

_The Management Zone in Aberdeen: the solution or simply a cover up of gendered inequalities?_

Project workers supported the provision of a zone, as they were of the opinion that its existence offered a reasonably safe space in which women could work. A cynic may suggest that the existence of street work also serves to keep these individuals in employment, thus there is the presence of a strong vested interest. All women interviewed wanted to see the zone re-instated. Whilst taking these views into account, it is useful to also consider wider issues pertaining to gender, and ask whether there should be a market for a zone at all. Rather than call for the reintroduction of the zone, it is suggested that policy makers spend time, money and resources into providing a range of opportunities for women to enable them to explore other opportunities for income generation.
Leaving the streets and ‘moving on’ .... to where?

The lack of realistic provisions for assisting women in leaving sex work is problematic, and somewhat bizarre considering the political will for women to cease street work. It is the opinion of the author that women should not be involved in sex work unless they genuinely have chosen it. Findings suggest that women based on the street do not wish to continue working, and thus this thesis supports the opinion of the Scottish Executive’s working group in recommending the decriminalisation of women involved in prostitution in order to then broaden their options without the practical and ideological barrier of a criminal record, whilst continuing the criminalisation of clients in order to reduce the amount of customers. However, it is crucial that effective support networks are in place to assist women financially so they do not continue to take risks. A further positive aspect of decriminalising women is that they should feel at liberty to speak with police officers. For this to happen, it is crucial that all officers operate in a professional and approachable manner when communicating with this socially stigmatised and often vulnerable group of women.
Bibliography


Notes

1 Comment extracted from transcript of interview conducted with ‘Maggie’, an agency support worker.

Chapter One: Setting the scene - Street based sex workers in the City of Aberdeen and the arrival of the Prostitution (Public Places) (Scotland) Act 2007

2 The term ‘Management Zone’ is the official identifier applied to the section of urban space allocated to sex workers in Aberdeen. Other jurisdictions use other terms to refer to the same or similar arenas, with Edinburgh having adopted the term ‘Non-Harassment Zone’ to refer to its space. Other terms found within the literature and policy documents include ‘Zones of Toleration’, ‘Tolerance Zones’ and ‘Toleration Zones’. In respect of the area studied, the term ‘Management Zone’ will be used throughout this thesis.

3 For purposes of geographical clarification, a map detailing the precise location of the Management Zone is included in Appendix G. Thanks are attributed to Aberdeen’s local police constabulary for supplying this information.

4 The term State Apparatus is used in this thesis to refer to agents of social control including the Police, Government and Local Authority Councils.

Chapter Two: The street based sex market and a new direction-policy, practice and the usefulness of prostitution ‘Management Zones’

5 The concept of kerb-crawling refers to the persistent soliciting of a person for the purposes of prostitution, either on foot or from or near a motor vehicle (Gangoli and Westmarland, 2006; 27).

6 Anti Social Behaviour Order.

7 Please refer to Appendix F for examples of the marketing campaign.

8 Closed Circuit Television.

Chapter Three: The existence and management of sex work-a theoretical focus

9 Numerous additional arguments have been offered regarding the way sex work is viewed and regulated by the Police. Word count restricts a far-reaching discussion however additional issues include policing priorities (Sharpe, 1997; 38), allocated resources and the political climate at the time which directly influences the police’s focus (Sanders, 2005; 93, Reiner, 1985; 88). Some members of the public may also apply pressure, demanding that the police ‘do something’ about the ‘problem’ of street based sex work (Hubbard, 2006; 4).
Chapter Four: In the field-research methodology

13 The information leaflet and interview schedules can be found in Appendices D and C.
14 The title of the research project did not feature on informed consent forms provided to respondents, as it was felt that knowledge of the title may bias responses.

Chapter Five: Data analysis: Voices on the ground-Pauline, Vicky and Claire, working women in Aberdeen

15 In an effort to attach a personal perspective to the data, a brief biography of each woman can be found in Appendix H.
16 BL represents the researcher’s initials.
17 The personal morality of men who choose to purchase sex does not form the remit of this thesis, however the capacity for women to be treated in a polite and physically respectable manner is important. For the avoidance of generalisation, it must be relayed that not all men who purchase sex on the streets treat women in a (directly) exploitative fashion.

Chapter Six: Data analysis: Working with (and against?) the women-agency support workers and the police

18 Appendix I details figures showing a decline in visits to the harm reduction drop-in centre.
19 The descriptor ‘Bareback’ refers to anal or vaginal intercourse without the provision of a protective barrier.
20 Access to the women was restricted to the officer by the support project when she attempted to visit the drop-in service one evening. This restriction was reported by all research participants, including support project workers.