

Corporate Policy and Strategy Committee

10.00, Tuesday, 21 January 2014

Sex Work in Edinburgh – A Harm Reduction Framework

Item number	7.2
Report number	
Wards	All

Links

Coalition pledges	Reducing poverty, inequality and deprivation Strengthening and supporting our communities and keeping them safe Ensuring Edinburgh, and its residents, are well cared for
Council outcomes	CO10 , CO15 , CO21
Single Outcome Agreement	SO1 , SO2 , SO3 , SO4
Appendices	Appendix 1 – Sex Work in Edinburgh – A Harm Reduction Framework

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Executive summary

Sex Work in Edinburgh – A Harm Reduction Framework

Summary

On Friday 15 November 2013, the Regulatory Committee of the Council agreed to consult on a proposal to remove the licensing of saunas and massage parlours from the City of Edinburgh Council's Public Entertainment Resolution. A final decision on this matter will be taken at the Regulatory Committee on 3 February 2014.

At the meeting on 15 November 2013, a motion was approved to develop work on harm reduction with regard to saunas and massage parlours in the city.

This report indicates work that has been completed since 15 November 2013 in response to this motion. It also seeks approval for a new Harm Reduction Framework (January 2014 to March 2015) and associated delivery and governance arrangements. These build upon existing work undertaken by other agencies and seek to develop this work further (attached at Appendix 1).

The need to develop a holistic approach to this area of work has emerged from engagement with partners. The approach therefore focuses not just on saunas and massage parlours, but also takes into account different environments in which sex work takes place in the city.

Recommendations

The Corporate Policy and Strategy Committee is recommended to:

1. note the multi-agency harm reduction work, which has been identified since the 15 November 2013
2. agree the Harm Reduction Framework (Appendix 1) to take this work forward
3. note that officers will engage in discussions with the Scottish Government on national policy and legislative implications
4. note that officers will submit a progress report in March 2015 to the Health, Social Care and Housing Committee.

Measures of success

This is a difficult public policy area within which to develop a coherent performance management system. However, work has been undertaken since 15 November 2013 to

develop a three dimensional performance model, and accompanying success measures. Work to date is described below, and approval is sought to develop this approach further as part of the development of the Framework.

1. Output and outcome measures (e.g. how many people are accessing multi-agency service interventions? What changes are resulting from these interventions? Are criminal acts being identified and tackled effectively?).
2. Process measures (e.g. are there effective engagement and referral systems? Are there effective multi-agency policy and planning systems? Is there an improved understanding of sex work in the city?).
3. People measures (e.g. do people accessing services feel they are useful and relevant?)

Financial impact

Resources for this approach are being contained within Council and partner agency budgets, and the approach is being mainstreamed into existing service delivery arrangements. No new resource requirements have been identified at this time.

Equalities impact

The development and implementation of a Harm Reduction Framework is consistent with the Equality Act 2010 public sector equality duty, and human rights legislation and conventions. It is also well aligned to Council and partner agency equality and rights outcomes. Equality and rights impact assessment is, and will continue to be, an integral feature of the development and delivery of the Framework, and due regard will be paid to any resultant recommendations.

Sustainability impact

The review will contribute to Council efforts in support of the city's sustainable development objectives described, in particular the advancement of vibrant flourishing communities, social and economic wellbeing and an efficient and effectively managed city.

Consultation and engagement

Consultation and engagement have taken place with the following organisations, networks or groups since the 15 November on these matters:

- Men and Women Involved in Sex Work – Multi-Agency Group
- E Division Police Scotland
- NHS Lothian
- ScotPep
- Zero Tolerance
- Street Work

- SACRO
- Equality Network
- Violence Against Women Partnership

Background reading / external references

Links to evidence sources are described within the Draft Harm Reduction Framework.

Sex Work in Edinburgh – A Harm Reduction Framework

1. Background

- 1.1 On 15 November 2013, the Council's Regulatory Committee approved a period of consultation on a proposal to remove licensing arrangements for saunas and massage parlours from the Council's Public Entertainment Resolution. A final decision on this matter will be taken by the Regulatory Committee on 3 February 2014.
- 1.2 At this meeting, a motion was also approved to develop harm reduction approaches at saunas and massage parlours, and for the Director of Health and Social Care to provide a further report on progress in January 2014 to this committee.
- 1.3 This report provides an account of progress since the 15 November 2013, and seeks approval for a Harm Reduction Framework (January 2014 to March 2015) to develop this area of work further. The Framework is very much a work in progress, and further actions will be developed as partnership work in this area strengthens.

2. Main report

Harm Reduction Work Identified and Developed Since 15 November 2013

- 2.1 The Council has engaged with interested parties to inform the licensing consultation and the development of the Harm Reduction Framework.
- 2.2 Police Scotland has undertaken problem profile work, which has provided more clarity about the extent of sex work in the city. This has enabled a more informed evidence base, and an improved identification of needs. It has identified extensive activity through the internet in flats and through escort agencies, in addition to saunas, massage parlours and street-based work.
- 2.3 NHS Lothian and third sector organisations have continued to provide a variety of high quality frontline services and interventions to men and women involved in sex work. Much of this work is focused on saunas and massage parlours, and sex work on the streets. Of significant import has been the outreach work and clinic provision to improve health and wellbeing, including sexual health and

work to address blood borne viruses. A core of workers involved in direct contact with men and women involved in sex work has now been identified, and this group will be a critical network going forward. This work is being coordinated through the Women and Men Involved in Sex Work Multi-Agency Group.

- 2.4 Those NHS Lothian and third sector services involved in direct frontline provision have indicated that demand for work on routes out and access to welfare benefits information is growing. In response, improved referral systems and service pathways are being developed with relevant Council, NHS Lothian, Police Scotland and third sector services, through the multi-agency group described at 2.3 above.
- 2.5 Police Scotland has developed the work of its Prostitute Liaison Group further.
- 2.6 NHS Lothian has developed information sharing and partnership activity through the multi-agency group. The Council is now fully engaged in this group, and will contribute more policy development support, and service delivery, through this group. This group proposes to lead on the development, delivery and evaluation of the Framework going forward.
- 2.7 The Edinburgh Drug and Alcohol Partnership, chaired by the Director of Health and Social Care, will also contribute to the development and delivery of the Framework.

Developing a Harm Reduction Framework

- 2.8 In light of the above developments, a proposed Harm Reduction Framework is attached at Appendix 1, based on engagement with the stakeholders identified above.
- 2.9 Many of these stakeholders have differing political, ideological and sociological viewpoints. For example, some suggest that sex work should be legalised, and that the rights of sex workers should be upheld. Some suggest that female sex work is a direct result of commercial sexual exploitation, and are aligned to the Scottish Government's standpoint that sex work can be seen as a form of violence against women. Others argue for a sole focus on harm reduction, where the safety, health and wellbeing of the person remain paramount. Others adopt viewpoints that are a combination of the above. Going forward, the development of Council and partner agency work in this area will require further engagement in these debates to inform a longer term vision for the work. A key feature of this engagement will be discussions with national policy makers on these matters.
- 2.10 It has therefore become apparent that there are significant difficulties in developing a framework founded on any one viewpoint. Consequently, a pragmatic approach has been adopted, where the principles of maintaining

contact with those involved in sex work, harm reduction, and keeping people safe and well are core components.

Framework Structure

2.11 The proposed Framework builds on work described above. It describes a set of guiding principles and identifies research and other evidence sources on sex work. These principles and evidence sources have informed a range of multi-agency actions, delivery and governance arrangements, together with performance and success measures. The timescale for the Framework is from January 2014 to March 2015. Thereafter, it is proposed that a progress report be submitted to the Health, Social Care and Housing Committee.

Framework Principles

2.12 A set of guiding principles underpinning the proposed Framework is described below.

- a) Effective engagement with those who buy or sell sex has to be based on a pragmatic approach, which does not align itself with any particular ideological or sociological perspective or value judgements about sex work.
- b) A key feature of that pragmatic approach is harm reduction, to ensure people are safe, that vulnerable people are supported, that risky behaviours are challenged, and the impacts of these behaviours are minimised.
- c) Attempts must be made to try and find common ground and cooperative action between organisations with differing views on these matters.
- d) A multi-agency approach firmly linked to community planning and public sector and third sector governance arrangements, provides for better opportunities for success.
- e) A person centred approach, which enables people who sell or buy sex to make informed choices, is more likely to succeed.
- f) Active and ongoing intelligence and information gathering, collation and analysis are key components. This activity will improve understanding of needs and lead to better multi-agency responses.
- g) Where intelligence or information indicates criminality, this will be addressed through appropriate investigation, based on agreed inter-agency procedures.
- h) Any approach to developing harm reduction in this area needs to be holistic and take into account the different environments in which sex is bought and sold (e.g. activity on the streets, in saunas and massage parlours, through the internet, and in flats and through escort agencies).

Framework Actions

- 2.13 The set of multi-agency actions has been developed to promote a harm reduction approach and to keep people safe. Some of these actions are already in train, others are newly proposed. In this way, the Framework builds upon existing good work and avoids duplication.
- 2.14 The actions are evidence-based and targeted at different environments in which sex is bought and sold, with a focus on the wellbeing of those involved.

Framework Delivery and Governance Arrangements

- 2.15 It is proposed that the current 'Men and Women Involved in Sex Worker Multi-agency Group', facilitated by NHS Lothian, will expand its membership and become the Project Team responsible for development, delivery and evaluation of the Framework. Discussions have taken place with lead officers in NHS Lothian who are content to approve this proposal. Current membership of the Group includes NHS Lothian, council, police and third sector agencies.
- 2.16 There are several existing groups, networks and partnerships, with an interest in this public policy area and a wish to be involved in the development and delivery of this Framework. It is proposed that the Project Team take lead responsibility for wider partner consultation, engagement and support.
- 2.17 In addition, it is proposed that reporting takes place within key partner agencies, such as the Council, NHS Lothian and Police Scotland. For the Council, the Health, Social Care and Housing Committee is proposed as the committee to fulfil this function.

Framework Performance and Review

- 2.18 Work has begun on developing a performance management framework and a range of success measures. This will form a key component of the work of the Project Team. A full review of the Framework is planned during March 2015.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1 The Corporate Policy and Strategy Committee is recommended to:
 - a) note the multi-agency harm reduction work, which has been identified since the 15 November 2013
 - b) agree the Harm Reduction Framework (Appendix 1) to take this work forward
 - c) note that officers will engage in discussions with the Scottish Government on national policy and legislative implications
 - d) agree that officers should submit a progress report in March 2015 to the Health, Social Care and Housing Committee.

Links

Coalition pledges	Reducing poverty, inequality and deprivation Strengthening and supporting our communities and keeping them safe Ensuring Edinburgh, and its residents, are well cared for
Council outcomes	CO10 - Improved health and reduced inequalities CO15 - The public are protected CO21 - Safe – Residents, visitors and businesses feel that Edinburgh is a safe city
Single Outcome Agreement	SO1 - Edinburgh's economy delivers increased investment, jobs and opportunities for all SO2 - Edinburgh's citizens experience improved health and wellbeing, with reduced inequalities in health SO3 - Edinburgh's children and young people enjoy their childhood and fulfil their potential SO4 - Edinburgh's communities are safer and have improved physical and social fabric
Appendices	Appendix 1 - Appendix 1 – The Sex Industry in Edinburgh – A Harm Reduction Framework.

Sex Work in Edinburgh

A Harm Reduction Framework

January 2014 to March 2015

DRAFT

Section 1 - Introduction

- Rationale for the Framework
 - (i) Recent developments with regard to:
 - (a) ongoing police operations and investigations and intelligence gathering
 - (b) an enhanced focus on harm reduction and public protection within the Edinburgh Partnership and Edinburgh Chief Officers Group
 - (c) political decisions in the Council to progress work on harm reduction with regard to saunas and massage parlours
 - (d) ongoing work by NHS Lothian and third sector organisations to engage with sex workers
 - (e) growing evidence from the Police indicating the advertising of sex work in the City through the internet; and
 - (f) continuing interest in, and challenges to, the Council's Public Entertainment Resolution to licence saunas and massage parlours, have all led to the need to develop this framework.

The Framework has been developed through initial consultation and engagement with community planning partners, and a range of interested organisations and networks. It attempts to develop an approach, which engages with the many different elements of sex work in the city, and to harness cooperative working and collective action, which places vulnerable people at the heart of service delivery. The Framework is a work in progress and will be developed further in light of more evidence gathering and partnership working.

- Timescale of the Framework
 - (i) The Framework has an initial timescale of January 2014 to March 2015, thereafter it will be evaluated, and progress reports will be submitted to relevant partner agency governance arrangements. At this point, partner agencies involved in the development and delivery of this Framework will assess the need for further work.
- Structure of the Framework
 - (i) The Framework has the following key components:
 - (a) a set of guiding values and principles
 - (b) an evidence base drawn from partners to inform a needs analysis

- (c) a set of multi-agency actions based on the needs analysis
 - (d) multi-agency delivery and governance arrangements; and
 - (e) performance management and review arrangements.
- Guiding Values and Principles of the Framework
 - (i) Effective engagement with those who buy or sell sex has to be based on a pragmatic approach, which does not align itself with any particular ideological or sociological perspective or value judgements about sex work.
 - (ii) A key feature of that pragmatic approach has to be harm reduction, to ensure people are safe, that vulnerable people are supported, that risky behaviours are challenged and that the impacts of these behaviours are minimised.
 - (iii) Attempts must be made to try and find common ground and cooperative action between organisations with differing views on these matters.
 - (iv) A multi-agency approach firmly linked to community planning approaches, and public sector and third sector governance arrangements provides for better opportunities for success.
 - (v) A person centred approach, which enables people who sell sex or buy sex to make informed choices provides for better opportunities for success.
 - (vi) There has to be active and ongoing intelligence and information gathering, collation and analysis. This will improve understanding of needs and lead to better multi-agency responses.
 - (vii) Where intelligence or information indicates criminality, this must be addressed through appropriate investigation in accordance with agreed multi-agency procedures.
 - (viii) Any approach to developing harm reduction in this area needs to be holistic and take into account the different environments in which sex is bought and sold (e.g. activity on the streets, in saunas and massage parlours, in flats, through escort agencies).

Section 2 - Evidence Base

This section indicates evidence drawn from a range of qualitative and quantitative evidence sources submitted by partners. Where evidence indicates a specific need, actions to meet these needs have been identified in Section 3 of this plan. It is intended that as part of the development of the Framework, further evidence will be gathered to enable an improved understanding of needs across the city.

1. Home Office – Drug Problems and Street Sex Markets: Solutions and Strategies – 2004
2. Home Office – Paying the Price – 2004
3. Melissa Farley – Prostitution in Nine Countries: an update on violence and post traumatic stress disorder – 2003
4. NHS Scotland – Commercial Sexual Exploitation – 2013
5. Manchester City Council – Manchester Prostitution Strategy 2013/14
6. Police Scotland E Division – Sex Workers Problem Profiling – 2013
7. Police Scotland E Division - Submissions to the Council's Regulatory Sub Committee – 2013
8. NHS Lothian – Services for Female Sex Workers Report – 2013
9. NHS Lothian DRAFT Position statement – Working with Women Involved in the Sex Industry – 2013
10. Melissa Llano – Qualitative Analysis of Services for Sex Workers PhD Extract – 2013
11. City of Edinburgh Council – Environmental Health Officer Visits and Inspections – 2013
12. M Farley – Prostitution and the Invisibility of Harm – 2003
13. Global Network of Sex Work Projects - <http://www.nswp.org/resources/results/taxonomy%3A1>).
14. World Health Organisation – Implementing comprehensive HIV/STI programmes with sex workers: practical approaches from collaborative interventions' http://www.who.int/hiv/topics/sex_work/en/

15. Global Commission on HIV and the Law – 'HIV and the Law: Risks, Rights and Health'
<http://www.hivlawcommission.org/index.php/report>
16. UK Network of Sex Work Projects – <http://www.uknswp.org/resources/>

Section 3 – Multi-agency Actions

Evidence of Need	Action	Lead Responsibility	Timescale	Performance Measures
Risks relating to sexually transmitted diseases and blood borne viruses	<p>NHS Sexual Health and Harm Reduction Team to engage in outreach with those buying or selling sex on the streets, in saunas / massage parlours and in flats and escort agencies to offer information, advice and services</p> <p>Sexual Health Clinics to provide services to people involved in sex work who present at clinics</p>	<p>NHS Lothian</p> <p>NHS Lothian and Third Sector</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Number of people accessing services</p> <p>Feedback from those accessing services</p> <p>Outcomes for people accessing services</p> <p>Reported levels of STIs and BBVs</p>
Risks relating to social isolation, marginalisation and poor wellbeing	<p>NHS Lothian, third sector and Council agencies to ensure delivery of 'wellbeing' services to men and women involved in sex work</p> <p>NHS Lothian and third sector to maintain confidential contacts for those involved in sex work</p>	<p>City of Edinburgh Council</p> <p>NHS Lothian and Third Sector</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>NHS Lothian</p>	<p>Number of people accessing services</p> <p>Feedback from those accessing services</p> <p>Outcomes for people accessing services (to be defined)</p>

Evidence to indicate those involved in sex work want to explore routes out / exiting from sex work	Another Way Worker (SACRO) to link with and signpost to Council, NHS and voluntary sector services, e.g. substance misuse and employability services to develop improved pathways for routes out	Third Sector and City of Edinburgh Council	March 2014	Number of people accessing services Number of people assisted into other employment, education or training Efficiency of referral systems
Health and safety risks at business premises in which sex work takes place	Environmental Health Services to visit business premises	City of Edinburgh Council	Ongoing	Number of visits made to business premises where risks are identified and mitigated
Specific risks associated with street sex workers	NHS Lothian and third sector to continue to provide outreach services	NHS Lothian and Third Sector	Ongoing	Number of people accessing services
	Council, NHS Lothian, third sector and Police to review and strengthen provision	Police Scotland	March 2014	Outcomes from service interventions
Improved intelligence and information gathering	Police Scotland to develop problem profiling work further and partners to continue to monitor the needs of men and women involved in this work	Police Scotland	Ongoing	Improved understanding of the issues facing sex workers
		Police		

	Where intelligence or information indicates criminality, action in accordance with agreed procedures will be taken	Scotland	Ongoing	
Improved Sex Worker liaison in flats and escort agencies	Partnership activity to ascertain the most productive methods for engaging with sex workers in flats and escort agencies	NHS Lothian and Third Sector	June 2014	Number of people accessing services Outcomes from service interventions
History of sexual, physical or domestic abuse amongst sex workers	Ensure clear and consistent referral systems and service pathways are in place between those organisations undertaking contact with sex workers and services to tackle sexual, physical or domestic abuse	City of Edinburgh Council	Ongoing	Staff feedback on referral processes Number and type of complaints made regarding referral systems Number of people referred and outcomes from referrals
Human trafficking	Where intelligence indicates evidence of human trafficking, concerted partnership action will be deployed in line with the agreed local and national protocols	Police Scotland	Ongoing	Number of cases of human trafficking dealt with Outcomes from such cases
Demand from people buying sex	Further research into why people buy sex and developing actions to address associated risky behaviours	City of Edinburgh Council	December 2014	Improved understanding of how to reduce the numbers of people buying sex

	<p>Develop improved engagement plans with those who buy sex to alert them to associated risks</p> <p>Reviewing health and wellbeing inputs with young people to develop key messages on 'selling and buying sex', particularly over the internet</p>	<p>City of Edinburgh Council</p> <p>City of Edinburgh Council</p>	<p>March 2014</p> <p>December 2014</p>	<p>Improved understanding of issues facing those who buy sex</p> <p>Review outcomes and recommendations</p>
<p>Growth in those organisations and individuals organising the selling or buying of sex through the internet</p>	<p>Consider ways to engage with individuals and organisations who organise the buying or selling of sex, with a view to harm reduction activity and / or investigation</p> <p>Where engagement information indicates illegal activity, referrals to Police Scotland will be made</p>	<p>City of Edinburgh Council</p> <p>Police Scotland</p>	<p>December 2014</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Number of organisations or individuals engaged with</p> <p>Outcomes from such engagement</p>
<p>Lack of awareness of issues facing those involved in sex work</p>	<p>Develop frontline service learning and development sessions to enable improved understanding of sex work and possible interventions amongst frontline service providers</p>	<p>Third Sector</p>	<p>June 2014</p>	<p>Staff satisfaction with learning and development sessions</p> <p>Learning outcomes from learning and development sessions</p>
<p>Improve multi-agency partnership governance arrangements</p>	<p>Work to strengthen partnership activity through the Men and Women Involved in Sex Work Multi-agency Group</p>	<p>The Multi-agency Group</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Referral pathways in place, established roles and responsibilities and reporting arrangements</p>

Section 4 – Multi-agency Delivery and Governance Arrangements

- **Project Team** – The NHS Lothian chaired 'Men and Women Involved in Sex Work Multi-agency Group' will fulfil the function of the Project Team. This will involve a focus on framework development and coordination and development of service delivery functions. This group will be responsible for engagement and consultation with the different elements of the sex industry, and a range of functions across public and third sector organisations. It will also evaluate performance measures in line with the Framework.
- **Project Board / s** – Individual partner organisations involved in the multi-agency group will agree internal reporting arrangements as part of the development of this Framework. A key link will be into the Edinburgh Chief Officers' Group – Public Protection, which will be a primary reference point.

Section 5 – Performance and Review

- The following will form the basis of a draft performance model. Further work on this will take place through the Project Team and the Project Board.
 - Output and outcome measures (e.g. how many people are accessing multi-agency service interventions? What changes are resulting from these interventions? Are criminal acts by organisations being identified and tackled effectively?).
 - Process measures (e.g. are there effective engagement and referral systems? Are there effective multi-agency policy and planning systems? Is there an improved understanding of the sex industry in the city?).
 - People measures (e.g. do the staff involved believe they are working well together? Do people accessing services feel they are useful and relevant? Do people selling or buying sex feel safe?).
- Performance Reporting – Bi-monthly reporting into the Men and Women in Sex Industry Multi-agency Group and reporting into partner internal governance arrangements.
- A full Framework review will be undertaken in March 2015.

Section 6 – Further Information and Contact Details

Further information about this Framework can be obtained from:

- Michelle Miller – Chief Social Work Officer – City of Edinburgh Council michelle.miller@edinburgh.gov.uk
- Susan Mooney – Head of Service Community Safety – City of Edinburgh Council susan.mooney@edinburgh.gov.uk
- Dona Milne – Deputy Director of Public Health – NHS Lothian dona.milne@nhslothian.scot.nhs.uk