A critical analysis of perceptions of street-based sex workers, as victims of crime, by police officers and staff in a police service in the United Kingdom

by

Amy Laidler

Canterbury Christ Church University

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Abstract

There are several research studies exploring sex workers perceptions of the police (Balfour and Allen, 2014; Sanders, 2016). The findings often show sex workers fear the police because of past experiences. The present study aimed to discover the perceptions of police officers and staff relating to street-based sex workers, as victim of crime. The focus was on professionals' perceptions of sex workers as victims of crime because existing research suggests sex workers are unwilling to report crime over concerns their reports will not be taken seriously (House of Commons, 2016; Sanders et al, 2016). The research used a cross-sectional mixed methods research design and constructed a 20-minute online survey to be completed by individuals within a UK police service. Data was collected from a mixture of uniformed officers, detectives, and police staff (n=60). The online survey included a variation of the Attitudes Towards Prostitutes and Prostitution Scale (APPS). Levin and Peled (2011) found that overall perceptions of sex workers can be divided into normative and problem-oriented attitudes (Litam, 2019). The measures on the APPS scale represent the two dominant feminist perspectives of sex work, choice versus coercion. The liberal and radical feminist perspectives have been heavily debated due to their polarised views around sex work. Understanding attitudes towards sex workers is necessary for implementing change (Levin & Peled, 2011). The findings from the adapted APPS found street-based sex workers were perceived as more a normative part of society, than "socially deviant in nature" (Litam, 2019, p. 401). However, the overall perceptions of whether they were more victimised or choose to be street-based sex workers was mixed. 85% of participants were not aware of any strategies for policing sex work, corresponding with the results found by the National Ugly Mugs research, which found that 86% of officers had not heard of the NPCC guidance for Sex work and Prostitution (NUM, 2021). Police perceptions of street-based sex workers included a lack of cooperation from street-based sex workers, a lack of evidence when investigating the crime, the fact street-based sex workers were often involved in other criminal activity, and street-based sex workers were often victims of exploitation. The thesis concludes with recommendations designed to improve the relationship between the police service and street-based sex workers.

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Abbreviations

APPS	Attitudes towards Prostitution Scale
ASBO	Anti-Social Behaviour Order
CAQDAS	Computer Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Software
CBO	Community Behaviour Order
CCCU	Canterbury Christ Church University
CJS	Criminal Justice System
COP	College of Policing
CPN	Community Protection Notice
CPS	Crown Prosecution Service
CPT	Community Policing Team
CSE	Child Sexual Exploitation
GDPR	General Data Protection Regulation
HOLMES	Home Office Large Major Enquiry System
IRMA	Illinois Rape Myth Acceptance Scale
LPT	Local Policing Team
MA	Managed Approach
MAC	Make a Change
MIR	Major Incident Room
MIRSAP	Major Incident Room Standardised Administrative Procedures
MP	Member of Parliament
NDM	National Decision-Making Model
NPCC	National Police Chief's Council
NRM	National Referral Mechanism
NUM	National Ugly Mugs
ONS	Office for National Statistics
PHA	Protection from Harassment Act
PNCV	Prostitution as Choosing/Victimised
PNND	Prostitution as Normative/Deviant
PSCV	Prostitutes as Choosing/Victimised
PSND	Prostitutes as Normative/Deviant
PSNI	Police Service of Northern Ireland
RMA	Rape Myth Acceptance
SIO	Senior Investigating Officer
SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Sciences
SW ISVA	Sex Worker Independent Sexual Violence Advisor
SWCV	Sex Worker as Choosing/Victimised
SWND	Sex Worker as Normative/Deviant
UK	United Kingdom
VISOR	Violent Offender and Sex Offender Register

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Introduction

Sex work has been termed the "oldest profession" (Salmon, 2008, p. 2), not unique to the United Kingdom (UK). From street-based sex workers to the establishment of highly paid escorts, sex work has long been a feature of civilisation. The perceptions of sex workers can be highly stigmatising, with pejorative terms used to describe them ranging from 'whore' to 'hooker' (Moen, 2012; Weitzer, 2018). Previous research has found both clients of indoor sex workers, and workers' themselves have distinguished indoor sex work from street-based sex work (Easterbrook-Smith, 2021; Weitzer, 2018), demonstrating a potential divide in what they perceive to be a more acceptable form of sex work. The media representation of street-based sex work generally portrays it negatively, stereotyping sex workers as drug users who are victims of abuse (Weitzer, 2018). However, there have been some more glamourous portrayals in dramas such as Diary of a Call Girl, starring Billie Piper. Historically, wider societal views of sex workers have not always been the most positive (Miller & Schwatsz, 1994). However, the rise of the social media platforms such as OnlyFans, may be changing traditional views. The platform has become increasingly popular for online sex work and becoming more widely accepted amongst the millennial and Gen Z generations. Many people have made jokes about signing up to create an account for such content, due to perceptions of how easy it appeared to make money (Safaee, 2021). Nevertheless, there is a possibility some of these negative perceptions still exist. If negative perceptions exist within the police service, this could impact the relationship between the police and sex workers. A previous study found 79% of sex workers have experienced physical violence whilst working (Campbell, 2002). Street-based sex workers experience far more physical attacks than any other type of sex worker, and have the highest risk of homicide (Campbell, 2002; Sanders *et al*, 2017). However, the rate at which sex workers are willing to report crimes against themselves to the police service is low (Sleath & Bull, 2017).

The existing body of research on sex workers' willingness to report crime suggests one of the reasons is because most sex workers are concerned the police will not take their reports seriously (House of Commons, 2016; Sanders *et al.*, 2016). The introduction of new police policy and practice over the

years could have resulted in a better police response towards sex workers. The National Police Chief's Council (NPCC) and the College of Policing (2017) updated the current national guidance for policing sex work and replaced it with the 'National Policing Guidance for Sex Work and Prostitution' (NPCC, 2017). The purpose of the guidance was to improve the policing of sex work. The guidance identifies three key points for frontline officers and staff, and investigators. Key points for frontline officers and staff, who have daily interactions with sex workers, are to build trust, address safety, and recover evidence sensitively. Guidance for investigators suggests they should understand vulnerability, target those who exploit, and share information (NPCC, 2017). However, it is questionable how beneficial this guidance has been, or what impact it has made on the police service across the UK. In 2019, research from National Ugly Mugs (NUM) found that 86% of the 152 officers they surveyed had not heard of the NPCC guidance for Sex Work and Prostitution (NUM, 2021). Therefore, there could be a lack of awareness of how the police service should treat sex workers (Bowen *et al*, 2021). Moreover, it appears there is no standardised approach towards policing sex work, as the NPCC only offers guidance to police services, which is not mandatory (NPCC, 2017).

There are many studies analysing how sex workers view the police (House of Commons, 2016; Sanders, 2016). However, there is limited research analysing the police perceptions of sex workers. Each police service in the UK has a different response to dealing with sex workers. For example, Suffolk Constabulary has been a part of a multi-agency team, Make a Change (MAC). MAC focused on helping young people who were at risk of child sexual exploitation (CSE). However, a part of the protocol states the police who find adults in off-street premises, where forms of sex work are occurring, will treat them as victims (Suffolk County Council, 2012). Suffolk Constabulary also has a strategy to tackle three areas of sex work; Support or create effective partnerships, protect individuals and communities from risk, threat, harm, and exploitation, and investigate and disrupt organised criminal activity (Suffolk Constabulary, 2020). In another example, Kent Police began a 'Safe Exit' scheme to help women stop sex work (Mac & Smith, 2018). The present research could identify whether the current approaches positively impact police officer's perceptions. By comparing perceptions of police staff, uniformed

officers, and detective officers from a UK police service, suggestions could be made about how to best improve the relationship between sex workers and the police.

The purpose of this thesis is to analyse the police officers' and staffs' perceptions of street-based sex workers, who report being victims of crime, within a UK police service. Many sex workers across the UK have reported they would not report crimes to the police, for fear of not being believed (Boff, 2012; Balfour & Allen, 2014; Sleath **&** Bull, 2017). The thesis also aims to identify whether the perceptions differ between police staff, uniformed officers, and detective officers. More recently, there has been a growing interest in sex workers' perceptions of the police service. Much less is known about perceptions of police officers within a police service in the UK (Klambauer, 2017; Smith *et al*, 2020; Benoit *et al*, 2016; Zvi, 2021). Understanding perceptions of members of a UK police service may assist in improving the relationship between street-based sex workers and the police service.

The history of prostitution has resulted in many negative connotations attached to the terms 'prostitution' and 'prostitute'. Herein, the terms 'sex work' and 'sex worker' will be used to replace the previous terminology. The reasoning behind this change in terminology is to support the principle that sex work is not just sex but is classed as an occupation (Smith & Mac, 2018). This thesis separates sex work into three categories; street-based sex work, which refers to sex workers who engage with potential clients on the street; indoor sex work, referring to any type of sex work operating behind closed doors, including brothels and escort services (Home Office, 2004; Jeal & Salisbury, 2004); and online sex work. In the context of this thesis, online sex work refers to any form of pornography which is shared online in exchange for money or other means of profitable value. There are approximately 72,800 sex workers in the UK (English Collective of Prostitutes, 2019). Street-based sex workers make up for about 15% of sex work in the UK, the rest occurs in either indoor settings or online (Brooks-Gordon *et al*, 2015).

This thesis has three research questions, which have been constructed with the aim to fill some current gaps within the existing literature around policing and street-based sex workers. The research questions for this study are as follows.

1. How are street-based sex workers perceived by police staff, uniformed officers, and detective officers?
2. In what ways do the perceptions differ between police staff, uniformed officers, and detective officers?
3. To what extent are police officers and staff within the UK police service aware of guidance for policing sex work?

For this research project, the responses of police staff, uniformed officers and detective officers were analysed from a UK police service. Participants were asked to complete a 20-minute online survey about their perceptions of street-based sex workers (see reflections within Chapter 2 for further discussion of what the intended outcomes of this were and what came into fruition). The online survey was constructed with a mixture of open and closed questions, collecting both quantitative and qualitative data. A section of the online survey included an adaptation of the Attitudes Towards Prostitution and Prostitutes Scale (APPS), which is a validated scale originally constructed to replace the previous Attitudes Towards Prostitution Scale (ATPS) (Levin & Peled, 2011; Sawyer & Metz, 2009; Basow & Campanile, 1990). The research design utilised a cross sectional mixed methods study. The quantitative data is correlational, and the qualitative data is phenomenological, with a pragmatic research philosophy.

This thesis is divided into four chapters, beginning with the literature review. The literature review analyses the current research available and considers topics which have not yet been discovered and explored in research literature. The chapter aims to do this by exploring the different feminist perspectives towards sex work, the development of law and legislation around sex work, looking at the types of crime different types of sex workers are often victims of, and the current literature around the relationship between the police and sex workers. The second chapter is the Methodology. The

methodology explores in depth the research methods and presents an evaluation of how decisions were made and the reasoning behind these decisions. This section also covers areas such as theoretical frameworks and the theoretical background of the APPS, research design, sample selection, ethics, data analysis and limitations of the research design. The third chapter is Findings. The findings chapter will begin by describing the demographics of the participants and looking at the participants understanding of police policy around sex work. The quantitative data from the adapted APPS from Levin and Peled (2011) have been displayed, differentiating between the means score of the subscales of the scale for each police rank, gender, and length of service. The qualitative responses were outlined, highlighting the main struggles for the police when investigating crimes sex workers report as a victim, and whether there have been any differences between the interactions with street-based sex worker since the COVID-19 pandemic. This chapter also draws out the themes within the responses from the online survey, investigating crime, lack of cooperation, lack of evidence, criminal activity, and exploitation. The fourth chapter is the Discussion. This chapter explores the findings in more detail, beginning with the overall attitudes from members of the UK police service, then moving towards the differences in attitudes between police staff, uniformed officers, and detective officers, commenting on any correlations found between the data. Main themes will also be discussed within the chapter; vulnerability, fear, and police willingness to engage. These themes will be linked to the current literature and theoretical perspectives which shaped the APPS and this study. Overall limitations of the study will be discussed. Conclusion and Recommendations will conclude the thesis, summarising the key findings by identifying what the overarching themes have been throughout the discussion. The thesis will conclude with recommendations for the future.

Chapter 1: Literature Review

Introduction

Sex work can be an unsafe occupation, as research has shown all types of sex workers are more likely to become a victim of crime due to the nature of their work (Connelly, Kamerade & Sanders, 2018). The homicide rate for sex workers has not been formally calculated. However, it is predicted to be 12 times greater than non-sex workers in the UK (Ward *et al*, 1999; Cunningham *et al*, 2018). More recent estimates suggest female sex workers operating on the street are 60 to 100 times more likely to be murdered than non-street sex workers (Salfati, James & Ferguson, 2008; Boff, 2012). Similar statistics have also been reported in Vancouver, where it has been suggested that street-based sex workers were between 60 and 120 times more likely to be a victim of homicide compared to other women (Lowman & Fraser, 1994; Cunningham *et al*, 2018). Despite the higher vulnerability of street-based sex workers to homicide, up to 56% of assaults on all types of sex workers go unreported (Boff, 2012). Older studies have shown violence is more often reported to the police by street-based sex workers, compared to indoor sex workers (Church, *et al.*, 2001). Due to the low reporting rate from all sex workers, it is important the police maintain a trusting relationship with all sex workers to encourage reporting (Jones & Newburn, 2001; Armstrong, 2017). Sex workers who have reported a crime to the police have often felt criminalised. Studies have shown these feelings have been caused by the focus of an investigation shifting towards other crimes which have been committed, instead of investigating the original crime they reported (Balfour & Allen, 2014). Consequently, sex workers often chose not to report crime committed against them whilst working (Boff, 2012; Balfour & Allen, 2014). Sex workers may feel more criminalised because they are not perceived as 'ideal' victims (Matthews, 2015).

Christie (1986) identifies some individuals as having certain characteristics which makes them more likely to be seen as 'ideal' victims. There are five characteristics an individual should have to be seen as an ideal victim; they are weak, engaged in reasonable activities at a sensible time, the offender was "big and bad", and was not known to the offender personally (Schwobel-Patel, 2018, p.709). Sex workers, especially street-based sex workers encompass several attributes of being a non-ideal victim;

being somewhere they should not be, they are to blame, "hints of deviant status" (Duggan, 2018, p.106). In contrast, some academics would argue sex workers are some of the most victimised people in society (Matthews, 2015). Davies (2016; cited in Duggan, 2018, p. 107) has also discussed that individuals could be considered 'deviant victims' if they do not meet the normal expectations for a victim. The general perception of sex workers has been quite negative, with previous research showing some members of the public believing sex workers to be "unrapeable" (Miller & Schwatsz, 1994, p. 10). There is a possibility some of these myths are still prevalent and enduring amongst our society and could influence how police officers perceive sex workers. As many police officers used to hold quite misogynistic views, not limited to sex workers, as previously demonstrated in the Yorkshire ripper investigation (Byford, 2006).

In England and Wales, prostitution itself is not illegal, but exists in a legal grey area. Prostitution is defined as the sale and purchase of sexual services (House of Commons, 2016). There are many activities associated with sex work which are illegal, including exploitation, controlling prostitution, managing a brothel, and purchasing sex in public (House of Commons, 2016). Sex workers could be committing offences themselves in relation to sex work for breaching a Community Protection Notice (CPN) or Criminal Behaviour Order (CBO) (CPS, 2020). These are punishments for anti-social behaviour but can be given to sex workers to prevent them from operating in certain areas. A breach in a CBO would result in being arrested (CPS, 2020).

The aim of this chapter is to critically analyse the academic literature currently available around sex workers and their relationship with the police service. The purpose of this is to help recognise the gaps in the field of research. This is important as it will assist in the development of the research questions for this research study. The literature review will be divided into four sections. The first section will critically analyse different feminist perspectives around sex work, in particular the debate around choice versus coercion. The second section will focus on the development of the law around sex work, including the history and current legislation operating in the UK, and comparing these to laws in other countries. The third section will examine the types of crimes and violence sex workers are vulnerable

to, and how this may differ depending on the category of sex work. Additionally, the current charities to support sex workers in the UK will be discussed. The fourth section will analyse research exploring the relationship between the police and sex workers by looking at rape myth acceptance and the current rates of rape attrition in cases involving sex workers, as well as sex workers' willingness to report crimes to the police and the current policing methods which are used to police sex work. This chapter will end with a summary of the current literature and highlight the gaps in the research. The end of this chapter will also then discuss the relevant research questions this study aims to answer.

Feminist Perspectives

The sex industry has fuelled debate, often through the lens of feminism where two polar opposite perspectives were developed. Liberal feminists, for instance, view sex work as work, suggesting that sex workers are free to enter and leave sex work through their own personal choice (Ma, Chan and Loke, 2017). Radical feminists perceive sex work and exploitation as synonymous, more specifically that sex work is based around power and women becoming a sexual product of the men who purchase their services. Women are being oppressed and controlled through the sexual acts they perform (Musheno & Seeley, 1986; Digidki & Baka, 2017). Radical feminists would push for the criminalisation of sex work. However, Vanwesenbeeck (2017, p. 1631) argued the criminalisation of sex work is "barking up the wrong tree", as the laws are fighting sex work instead of crime.

The typical feminist debate is centralised around the idea that sex workers are either victims of coercion and exploitation, or they have free choice to be sex workers and feel empowered by what they choose to do with their bodies. However, some researchers have discussed the perspectives beyond the binary of choice and coercion and highlighted the issue is more complex than this (Mac & Smith, 2018; Vanwesnbeeck, 2017). Mac & Smith (2018) argue people often overlook the fact people sell sex to earn money. They demonstrate how people find this reasoning "so strange and terrible", that people choose to sell sex "for the same mundane, relatable reasons that govern everybody else's lives" (Mac & Smith, 2018, p. 46). This argument from Mac and Smith (2018) moves beyond the polarised view of sex work, suggesting that perspectives can be multiple, and can move along a scale between liberal and radical

feminism. The idea leans more towards a liberal feminist perspective, as it suggests sex workers have free choice. However, it does not necessarily mean they find it empowering. An abolitionist would argue this is not a rational choice, instead it is the more favourable option due to the circumstances they are in (Vanwesnbeeck, 2017).

The police are beginning to recognise sex workers involvement in the sex industry is wider than the "simple voluntary/forced binaries" (Sanders *et al*, 2020, p.3). There are many factors which make sex work complicated, for example migrant sex workers in the UK, as they are often victims of exploitation and trafficking (Sanders *et al*, 2020). The polarised concepts of sex work have dominated policy and practise within the UK, and globally (Scoular et al, 2019). The current legislation demonstrates how 'exploitation' and 'victimhood' are central to policy responses in the UK, as evidenced by the Modern Slavery Act 2015, which includes sexual exploitation. The UK response to sexual exploitation of sex workers prior to the Modern Slavery Act 2015 was poor and managed by legislation which did not address the problem (Broad & Turnbull, 2018). Phoenix and Oerton (2005) highlight a division of how sex work is perceived between feminists and policy makers. Feminists understand women's involvement in sex work through the lens of men and poverty, whereas policy makers have previously failed to recognise women's involvement in sex work through force (Phoenix & Oerton, 2005). However, this statement may not be as straightforward in the contemporary context, as there is no single feminist perspective towards sex work (Beran, 2012).

Sex Workers – The Development of the Law and Legislation

Sex work is not illegal. However, several acts surrounding sex work have been criminalised (*Sexual Offences Act 2003*). 'Kerb crawling' or soliciting is an example of an activity relating to sex work which was made an offence (*Policing and Crime Act 2009*; CPS, 2017). This is sometimes referred to as 'Partial Criminalisation' (Mac & Smith, 2018). As sex work is not illegal, sex workers should not be directly criminalised for selling sex under most circumstances. However, the criminalisation of several acts around sex work makes finding clients for a stable income more difficult. Sex workers currently face many challenges in relation to the legality of selling sex in the UK, due to the legislation that

penalises sex workers working together, the act of selling sex outdoors, and advertising sexual services (*Stevens v Christy [1987] Cr. App. R. 249, DC*; Serious Crime Act 2015; Criminal Justice and Police Act 2001). As a result, sex workers can be criminalised if they break any of these laws whilst working. In many cases sex workers are forced into sex work by necessity, to earn for basic needs (Balfour & Allen, 2014). Sex work could also be a doorway for further issues relating to larger criminal activity. The complete criminalisation of sex work would be challenging, and it is likely it would be near impossible to completely abolish as there has always been, and will likely continue to be, a demand for sex work. The consistent demand for sex work as a profession means the legalisation of sex work creates a margin for a profitable and stable business. As a result, this could lead to facilitating larger scale criminal activities, such as sex trafficking.

There are many offences surrounding sex work which have been amended over the years. For example, the offence of loitering or soliciting for prostitution was first introduced in s. 1 of the Street Offences Act 1959. The offence was replaced by s. 68 of the Serious Crime Act 2015. The new offence stated it only applied those over the age of 18. This was to identify children are not facilitating the offence and would be victims. A famous example of this was the Rotherham CSE case. From 1997 to 2013, over a thousand children were sexually exploited in Rotherham. The police were criticised for ignoring years of sexual abuse of children due to sensitivities around race relations. The children were often referred to as ‘child prostitutes’ and their activities overall described as ‘child prostitution’ (Jay, 2013). The police had failed repeatedly to identify the children as victims of CSE (Jay, 2013). Several other acts associated with sex work are also illegal including keeping a brothel, which is a criminal offence under s. 55 of the SOA 2003, paying for sexual services which is an offence under s. 14 of the Policing and Crime Act 2009 and Causing or inciting prostitution for gain is an offence by s. 52 of the SOA and controlling prostitution for gain in s. 53 SOA 2003. There are also more specific offences, such as s. 46 of the Criminal Justice and Police Act 2001 which makes it an offence to place adverts for prostitution in telephone boxes.

However, the current legislation around sex work has been described as “complicated and confusing” (APPG, 2014). Some sex workers have even argued it is the laws which are ‘criminal’ and putting them at risk (Phillips, 2020). The legislation around keeping a brothel has resulted in several sex workers being arrested for working together, as “premises only become a brothel when more than one woman uses premises for the purpose of prostitution, either simultaneously or one at a time” (*Stevens v Christy [1987] Cr. App. R. 249, DC*). Therefore, if two women are selling sex from the same location, this is considered a brothel (CPS, 2019). The legislation on how a brothel is defined was expanded by case law, specifically Stevens v Christy 1987. The possibility that more than one sex worker would like to work in the same location for their own protection is not uncommon. A spokeswoman for the English Collective of Prostitutes stated many cases the arrests were not in the public interest (Phillips, 2020). However, it is not a criminal offence for an individual to use a premises for the purpose of sex work if it is only used by them (*Gorman v Standen, Palace Clarke v Standen [1964] 48 Cr App R 30*). This poses a risk for the sex worker wishing to sell sex, as they are putting themselves at risk of harm. With the potential harm occurring behind closed doors, it can make conviction for offences of sexual nature harder to prove, as it is one word over another. In addition, the result of case law made it not illegal to sell sex at a brothel if the sex worker is not involved in the management or control of the brothel (*Gorman v Standen,Palace Clarke v Standen [1964] 48 Cr App R 30).* Ironically, the law suggests a sex worker would not be criminalised for selling sex if they are being controlled by someone keeping a brothel, but they would be criminalised for selling sex if they are operating with another sex worker. If the priority is the safety of these individuals who are involved in sex work, the legislation appears counterproductive. Therefore, a vicious cycle for policing sex work has been produced, as the inconsistency in the legislation breaks down attempts by the police service to build better relationships.

The dilemma this presents is that unclear legislation makes it even more difficult to enforce. The law in the UK criminalises many activities associated with sex work. The legislation also often fails to target the perpetrators. Section 14 of the Policing and Crime Act 2009 was written broadly from the beginning (Carline, 2011), this was mentioned in the House of Lords and the wording was changed to acknowledge “the original wording was too wide” (Carline, 2011, p. 328). However, it still weakly defines coercion

within the act of paying for sexual services of a prostitute subjected to force. As a result, prosecution rates are typically low (APPG, 2014). The number of convictions under s.14 Policing and Crime Act 2009 between 2009-2012 were a total of 43 across England and Wales (Kingston & Thomas, 2014). The section continues to be criticised by academics and further research shows it is hardly used by police services across England and Wales, calling into question its value (Kingston & Thomas, 2014).

Sex trafficking is one of the many risks of sex work. Trafficking for sexual exploitation is now an offence under s. 2 Modern Slavery Act 2015. In 2014, the CPS identified 1,139 victims of trafficking for sexual exploitation and within the first three months of the act being in place, the number of victims identified fell to 248 (House of Commons, 2016). However, sexual exploitation still affects many lives, including children, with reports of 16,830 episodes of child sexual exploitation in the year ending March 2021 (ONS, 2022).

The legislation around sex work varies across the globe. In the UK, sex work is not illegal, but sex work 'on the streets' has been criminalised, which is a similar approach to the Netherlands. The Netherlands legalised sex work, although it is regulated with licenses. The history of sex work in the Netherlands is unique, as legislation and the nature of sex work has progressed further compared to other countries and is well-known for its 'Red Light District' which is one of the main tourist attractions in Amsterdam. In 1999, the Netherlands legalised sex work, including brothels, which was the beginning of a regulated sex work industry (Outshoorn, 2012). The decision to legalise sex work was an attempt by the Dutch government to protect the women involved in the industry, by providing work permits (Schulze, 2014). The Dutch announced plans to introduce new legislation around sex work, 'Regulation of Prostitution and Prevention of Abuse in the Sex Branch', which required owners of sex businesses to register and request a license from the government (Brouwers, 2017). There has recently been a proposal for new legislation which would require those applying for a license to run a sex business to be screened before given approval from the government. This would benefit sex workers as it would mean those who have previously been convicted of exploitation of sex workers would be rejected from obtaining a license (Brouswers, 2017). Sex workers must also be registered with authorities to work legally (Outshoorn,

2012). The legislation around sex work was also updated to raise the legal age of being a sex worker from 16 (the legal age to consent) to 18. (Outshoorn, 2012). More recently, there have been proposals to update the legislation further to make prostitution illegal under the age of 21. The proposition would be to "only criminalise those who hire sex workers under the age of 21, instead of the underage individual" (Brouwers, 2017). Since the COVID-19 pandemic, the decision was made to temporarily close the Red-Light District in De Wallen. As the district re-opened, and workers were instructed to observe new rules to prevent the spread of COVID-19. A recent announcement stated the brothel windows would be closing, as there are plans to open an erotic centre away from the city centre (Boffey, 2021).

In Germany, sex work has also been legalised. However, it is regulated by many laws, such as prostitution zones, which restricts where sex work may take place (Brouwers, 2017). In 2017, Germany introduced the 'Prostitutes Protection Act', which stated every sex worker must be registered and complete regular health consultations to continue with their sex work legally (Brouwers, 2017). New Zealand has a completely different approach to sex work. Sex work in New Zealand has been decriminalised since 2003, through the implementation of the Prostitution Reform Act 2003 (House of Commons, 2016). MPs in New Zealand have commented positively on the decriminalisation of sex work as it has improved the relationship between sex workers and the police and has enhanced cooperation, as many sex workers feel more comfortable in reporting incidents (House of Commons, 2016). However, the act does not recommend any solutions to those involved in forced prostitution, which is dealt with separately under the Crimes Acts 1961 and covers all trafficking, including sex (Lambert, 2014). Another common approach to the regulation of sex work is the sex buyer law, also known as 'the Nordic Model'.

The sex buyer law is legislation which makes the purchasing of sex illegal (House of Commons, 2016). This approach criminalises the client rather than the sex worker, and it is legislation which actively operates in Sweden, Norway, Northern Ireland, and France (House of Commons, 2016). The potential benefit of the sex buyer law is it could reduce the demand for prostitution. In Sweden, there have been

reports that since the implementation of the legislation street sex work was reduced by half and there were no reports of lethal violence against female sex workers (House of Commons, 2016). However, some may argue there is a lack of evidence to support such claims and a conclusion cannot be made that the sex buyer law reduces demand. The introduction of a sex buyer law without support for sex workers would potentially be detrimental. Sex workers would lose income and may be left with no source of income which could push them towards other means of illegal activity. Hubbard (2016) argues that approaches to prohibit sex work do not prevent or reduce the demand for sex work. There will always be a demand for sexual services and the increase in efforts to restrict sex work practices, the more likely people will find other methods of buying or selling sexual services (Hubbard, 2016; cited in House of Commons, 2016).

In 2015, Northern Ireland introduced the new law to make it a criminal offence to pay for sex under the Human Trafficking and Exploitation Act 2015, regardless of whether it is in public or in a private dwelling. The Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) criticised the sex buyer law as they believed it would be difficult to enforce the ban and intensive resources would be required to formulate sufficient evidence (House of Commons, 2016). A study was carried out by Ellison *et al* (2019) on sex workers in Northern Ireland. Out of 199 participants, none identified themselves as street-based sex workers. The sex work population was described to be 'almost exclusively based online' (Ellison *et al,* 2019, p. 38; cited in Campbell *et al,* 2020, p. 286). The proposal that most of the sex work in Northern Ireland is operating online, arguably leads to the suggestion that the intended purpose of the sex buyer law to reduce the demand for prostitution, has not reduced sex work. Instead, it has simply forced the sexual services to operate behind closed doors. A campaign was launched to bring the 'Nordic Model' to the UK, which was backed by an ex-detective superintendent in Suffolk who suggested:

> *"By decriminalising the sale of sex, criminalising the purchase of sex, and providing the necessary support and exiting services to help women find routes out of prostitution, we can shut down the demand that is fuelling the exploitation of women through prostitution."* (Adwent, 2014).

The concept described within this quote seems ideal. However, the reality of the three stages working effectively together may be difficult to achieve. The resources needed to enforce the criminalisation of the purchase of sex whilst providing beneficial and adequate support to direct those out of sex work would unlikely cooperate hand in hand across the UK. The English Collective of Prostitutes, which is an organisation of sex workers working across the UK campaigning for the decriminalisation of prostitution and sex worker rights, stated their strong views against the sex buyer law and have campaigned for 'No Nordic Model' (English Collective of Prostitutes, 2019). In 2014, the English Collective of Prostitutes collated evidence from a survey which showed 63% of sex workers in Sweden, under the sex buyer law, said the new law had "created more prejudice from the authorities" (English Collective of Prostitutes, 2019).

The legislation around sex work in the UK is still developing. The current approach to policing sex work is unclear which results in increasing difficulty for the police in enforcing the law. There have been many types of approaches to sex work across the world; full criminalisation, part criminalisation and decriminalisation. However, more research is required to fully understand the best means of managing sex work as all methods seem to have their advantages and pitfalls, though some acquiring points on one side more than others. One's opinions of sex work will greatly influence what one believes to be the best way to approach it. The current legislation in the UK does not seem to be improving the safety of sex workers and thus potentially hinders the relationship between them and the police service. New Zealand has seemed to have the best response to sex work through decriminalisation as it recognises the victimisation of all forms of sex workers. The decriminalisation of sex work has also shown one method of obtaining a positive and constructive relationship between sex workers and the police, as it has resulted in sex workers feeling more comfortable in reporting crimes against them (House of Commons, 2016). Therefore, better relationships seem to encourage sex workers to cooperate with the police service, as they become more willing to report crime and violence against themselves. The decriminalisation of sex work may influence the attitudes held by the police service, which could influence how the police interact with street-based and indoor sex workers.

Violence and Crime Against Sex Workers

Most street-based and indoor sex workers frequently experience forms of physical violence against them. Female sex workers are most likely to experience work-related violence (Connelly, Kamerade & Sanders, 2018; Campbell, 2014; 2016). In Merseyside, research discovered that 79% of sex workers had been attacked whilst working (Campbell, 2002). Campbell (2002) conducted a study indicating the most frequent forms of violence committed against street-based sex workers were being slapped, punched, or kicked. In comparison, sex workers working in indoor environments are more likely to be victim to non-violent crimes (Connelly, Kamerade & Sanders, 2018). Non-violent crimes refer to stalking, harassment, fraud, hate crime and refusing to wear a condom (also known as rape, as decided in the case law of Assange v Swedish Prosecution Authority (2011)), which are more likely to be reported by indoor sex workers. However, the frequency and likelihood of reporting these non-violent crimes differ. The likelihood of reporting appears to be dependent upon the type of sex market the individual is working in, which could influence how seriously they may think their report will be taken (Connelly, Kamerade & Sanders 2018).

Female sex workers are more likely to be victims of homicide than any other individual, with past research showing the rate in the UK was up to 12 times more likely, compared to non sex workers (Ward *et al,* 1999; Cunningham *et al,* 2018). Between 1990 and 2016, there have been 180 sex workers who were victims of homicide. Many of these cases have remained unsolved (Sanders *et al,* 2017). One of the most infamous unsolved sex worker homicide cases in the UK is the Whitechapel Murders, or notoriously known as 'Jack the Ripper' (Eckert, 1981). It is believed Jack the Ripper murdered between five or six women in 1888, all the victims were sex workers (Eckert, 1981; BBC, 2014a). The attitudes police officers previously held towards sex workers in the 1970/80s is prevalent in the case of Maxwell Confait and the Yorkshire Ripper case. Maxwell Confait, (also known as Michelle), was a transgender woman who was found murdered in 1972. There were many failings in this case. However, the way that Confait was portrayed in the investigation was significant. The police labelled Confait as a male homosexual prostitute. During the investigation, the police surgeon did not measure the rectal temperature, which was standard procedure to indicate the time of death. As a result, the police had

never established how long Confait had been dead. During court, the police surgeon stated, "There were reasons to suspect that this man might have indulged in unnatural practises" (Price and Caplan, 1977, p. 22), as his justification for not measuring rectal temperature. The judge had also commented,

> *"He was an odd creature and indeed it may even be your view that he has been no great loss to this world, but of course that is not at all the proper way to look at this matter because, in the eyes of the law, life is still life"* (Price and Caplan, 1977, pp. 22-24).

These perceptions of Maxwell Confait were openly expressed at court, demonstrating an example of the societal practises at the time.

The Yorkshire Ripper, also known as Peter Sutcliffe, is another famous example. Sutcliffe murdered thirteen women between 1975 and 1980, seven of whom were sex workers (Wattis, 2015). The motivations behind his murders were driven by his beliefs, as he claimed to be on a mission to kill prostitutes with the intention of "cleaning up the streets" (Mac & Smith, 2018, p. 100; Kinnell, 2008). The attitude of 'cleaning up the streets' has been compared to police attitudes by Mac and Smith (2018, p. 100), who highlighted police crackdowns on sex workers has been referred to as 'cleaning up' the streets. In the Yorkshire Ripper case, Jayne McDonald was Sutcliffe's fifth murder victim and the first non-sex worker murdered. As a result, McDonald's murder created more uproar than the previous victims, as she was described to be the first innocent victim by police officers (Kinnell, 2018). The police service utilised this to their advantage to provoke more public assistance in the enquiry (Kinnell, 2008). One of the senior detectives at the time told reporters the killer had "made it clear he hates prostitutes, many people do, but the Ripper is now killing innocent girls" (BBC, 2020b). These comments suggested the women who were sex workers were not innocent. The statements made by senior officers are clear reflections of the attitudes held about sex workers at the time. During these times, these beliefs were considered 'normal' and were accepted amongst the wider society.

These attitudes towards sex workers could have affected the investigation. Wilma McCann was the first victim Sutcliffe murdered. However, two victims were attacked by Sutcliffe and survived, before McCann was murdered. Despite these two victims having similarities in their attack injuries, they were

dismissed from the investigation for not being involved in the sex industry (Smith, 2020). In addition, during the time of the Ripper murders, there was a police movement to attempt to reduce sex work within the Leeds area. The police arrested 152 women for prostitution over a 12-month period (Miller & Gordon, 2014). These women could have been key witnesses to the attacks on sex workers at the time. However, the police priorities seemed more focused on reducing sex work than following potential lines of enquiry to enhance their murder investigations (Miller & Gordon, 2014). The police officers working the case had a preconceived idea of who their perpetrator was and dismissed all lines of enquiry which did not fit into their image of who they were looking for (Byford, 2006). Since Sutcliffe's death, West Yorkshire Police issued a public apology to all the relatives of Sutcliffe's victims for the "language, tone and terminology used by senior officers" about the victims during the investigation, and insists their investigations are now more victim orientated (BBC, 2020c). The apology given by West Yorkshire Police is significant because it implies a reflection had occurred within the organisation on their previous actions and the impact they had on the victim's families, and it could be appropriately assumed the police service does not support those negative attitudes towards victims. However, the police service may have only apologised because they felt obliged to do so. Therefore, these views towards sex workers could still exist, and negatively affect their investigations.

Another homicide case against sex workers was the 'Suffolk Strangler' in 2006. Five female sex workers were murdered by Steve Wright in Ipswich (Campbell, 2014). Unlike many other serial murders of street-based sex workers, this investigation was short and effective. Wright was arrested twenty days after the body of the first victim was discovered. He was convicted two years later (NPIA, 2007; Wattis, 2015). Suffolk Constabulary were able to conduct a fast and short investigation because of their initial response when Tania Nicol was reported as a missing person (Byford, 2006). A Major Incident Room (MIR) was formed, and the Home Office Large Major Enquiry System (HOLMES) was used. Following a second report of a missing person with a similar lifestyle fourteen days later, the two investigations were declared a critical incident (Byford, 2006). The aftermath of the case resulted in the police service setting the objective to remove sex work from the streets of Ipswich within five years (Livingstone, 2020). The plan was to suppress the demand for sex work by focusing on arrests for kerb

crawling. The decision was made to not prosecute the sex workers as it would be counterproductive to the cause. A direct comparison can be made from the decisions made by the police service during the Ripper investigation to those made during the Ipswich murder investigation. West Yorkshire Police failed to find the Yorkshire Ripper for several years, whilst also arresting sex workers for prostitution offences (Miller & Gordon, 2014), whereas Suffolk Constabulary chose to target those who purchase sexual services, over criminalising the sex workers themselves (Livingstone, 2020). These factors demonstrate the priorities of both police services during murder investigations of street-based sex workers. The increased arrests and ASBOs to purchasers of sexual services from Suffolk Constabulary was successful in reducing the demand for sex work (Livingstone, 2020). Suffolk Constabulary continued their approach of targeted engagement to support sex workers in moving away from sex work. The number of sex workers working on the streets of Ipswich has now decreased, currently there is known to be around nine street-based sex workers (Rimmer, 2021).

A similar approach is being undertaken in Southend, Essex, as part of Operation Vimto (Essex Police, 2021). The Community Policing Team (CPT) have been working with partnership organisations to offer support to street sex workers. Officers in the area have increased their police presence, aimed at targeting kerb crawlers, and finding people controlling the women working on the streets (Essex Police, 2021). As a result, residents have noted considerably fewer sex workers operating in the known areas and a reduction in traffic following through. However, the increase in police presence targeting consumers of sexual services does not indicate the reduction of sex work operating in the area. These policing methods can often force sex workers to find their clientele in other ways. Some policing practises, such as the use of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, have been criticised and described as ‘intensive’ (Sanders, 2004). These methods enforce a crime prevention strategy to act as a solution to street sex work. However, this results in a social displacement of sex work, forcing sex workers to operate behind closed doors or other means (Sanders, 2004; Maher and Dixon, 1999). The most recent sex worker murder case in the UK relates to the Bradford Murders, known as the Crossbow Cannibal. Between 2009 and 2010, Stephen Griffins killed three female sex workers working in Bradford (BBC, 2010). The seriousness of risk which sex workers are exposed to during work has been recognised by

the NPCC's National Policing Sex Work Guidance, which stated sex workers are becoming victims of murder "at an alarming rate" (House of Commons, 2016, p.11).

In comparison with previous sex worker homicide investigations, policing has changed a lot since the 1970s. As a result, there are many differences between the Yorkshire Ripper investigation and the Suffolk Strangler investigation. The emergence of the Byford report (2006) since the Ripper case allowed for reflection on police practice and recommendation for improvement. The intention of the report being to learn from the failings in the Ripper case, when investigating sex worker homicides, to improve future responses. Evidently, this was the case for the Suffolk Strangler investigation. An early identification of the vulnerability of a missing person initiated a fast response to the investigation, followed by effective leadership demonstrated by declaring the situation a critical incident. Since the Byford report, there were significant changes to police investigations. The major incident room standardised administrative procedures (MIRSAP) and HOLMES were both introduced because of the Ripper investigation (Wattis, 2017). The MIRSAP provides guidance to senior investigating officers (SIOs) and other involved staff to effectively run a major incident room (NPCC, 2021). HOLMES is database storing all data relating to major crime inquiries (Wattis, 2017). The HOLMES database and MIRSAP were both used and assisted with the police investigation of the Ipswich murders. Another notable difference since the Ripper case was the change in language used to discuss the investigation in the media by police. The police recognised the women were sex workers, but they were not described in a degrading manner.

The more traditional indoor sex work industry, where sex work operates through brothels, saunas, and parlours, typically experience more robberies or attempted robberies, and sex workers in these environments are more likely to report this type of crime (Phipps, 2013; Connelly, Kamerade & Sanders, 2018). The rates of violence in indoor sex markets are typically lower compared to street-based sex work, and indoor sex workers are also less likely to be murdered (Sanders, 2016). This may be due to indoor sex workers being able to create stronger bonds with their clients (Connelly, Kamerade & Sanders, 2018). Indoor sex workers are more concerned about clients not following the contractual

agreement, such as condom removal and failing to comply with financial agreements (Sanders, 2016). 70% of sex work operates indoors, and is quickly expanding online (Kinnell, 2008; Sanders, 2006; Phipps, 2013).

One of the biggest platforms that has become more popular is 'OnlyFans', an online website where users can sign up and share their choice of pornographic images or videos in exchange for a monthly payment subscription. As with most things, the process of sharing images online can put individuals at risk of being victims of crime. Technological advances mean it is easier than ever to create copies of images and threaten to share those elsewhere. Revenge porn is another risk of sharing pornography online. It is defined as "the sharing of private, sexual materials, either photos or videos, of another person without their consent and with the purpose of causing embarrassment or distress" (Ministry of Justice, 2014), and is an offence within Section 33 of the Criminal Justice and Courts Act 2015. Indoor sex workers are more likely to report non-violent crimes, such as stalking and harassment (Connelly, Kamerade & Sanders, 2018).

Stalking is an offence under the Protection from Harassment Act (PHA) 1997 and can be committed two ways: stalking involving fear of violence and stalking involving serious alarm or distress. Harassment is an offence under s.2 of the PHA 1997, which defines harassment as "a course of conduct; which amounts to harassment of another; and which the defendant knows, or ought to know amounts to harassment of another". Due to the untrusting relationship between sex worker and the police, sex workers often do not report these crimes for fear of not being believed or taken seriously. However, they may be more likely to report to other organisations. National Ugly Mugs (NUM) (2020) is an organisation based in the UK which aims to prevent violence against sex workers, and any type of sex worker can join the organisation. Members of the organisation can report crime through the organisation, which also offers support to those who want it. In addition, they can share information about clients if they have had a bad experience, such as their car registration. This allows other sex workers to be wary of these individuals if working in similar areas (Ellison & Smith, 2017). NUM will often work with the local police services to share information about clients or illegal activities, creating

an anonymous platform to continue to report crime (Bowen *et al*, 2021). NUM makes it clear reporting to them is not an alternative to reporting to the police, intelligence is merely shared with police with the consent of the sex worker. Therefore, reporting to them alone, will not result in any convictions (NUM, 2021). The popularity of the NUM has increased since it was first piloted in 2012, with 3,514 members recorded in 2016 (Connelly, Kamerade & Sanders, 2018).

Despite current prevention methods, violence is still prevalent towards all types of sex workers in all sex markets and crimes such as rape and murder are accepted as potential risks of the job. With street-based sex workers at the highest risk of homicide and experiencing physical violence, a statistic which continues to be widespread (Campbell, 2002; Sanders *et al*, 2017). Indoor and online sex workers are more likely to be at risk of experiencing non-violent crimes. However, it should not be so widely accepted that sex workers are commonly victims of crime. The NUM and other charities are in place to support sex workers and help prevent violence against them. However, more needs to be done to protect sex workers. The stigma which surrounds sex workers and how they are perceived by society could be considered as an explanation as to why their safety is not prioritised and are often victim to violence or crime (Sanders, 2016).

The Relationship Between the Police and Sex Workers

Sex workers are often seen to be far from an 'ideal victim' due to their choice of work (Christie, 1986). These beliefs are closely linked to rape myth acceptance, which is a set of stereotypical attitudes around rape (O'Neal & Hayes, 2019). Rape myths are beliefs about rape or sexual violence which delegitimize the violence the individual experienced (Gerger, Kley, Bohner & Sieber, 2007; cited in O'Neal & Hayes, 2019). Rape myth acceptance can be measured using the Illinois Rape Myth Acceptance Scale (IRMA), developed by Payne, Lonsway and Fitzgerald (1999). The scale uses a five-point Likert-scale, but the wording/terminology used has been revised by different academics (Hust *et al*, 2013; Fejervary, 2017). Unfortunately, the police are not exempt from developing these types of attitudes (O'Neal & Hayes, 2019). The way sex workers think they are perceived by police officers is one of the main reasons why sex workers often do not report crimes against them. Research has shown police officers

judgements of rape victims and their credibility have been affected by many factors including an individual's profession, such as sex work (Hine & Murphy, 2019). As a result, sex workers' willingness to report crime is typically quite low. However, police services around the UK are currently trialling different policing methods in attempt to improve this relationship.

Rape myth acceptance exists among many cultures and these beliefs continue to be held between 19% and 57% of the public (Sussenbach & Bohner, 2011). These attitudes can be problematic for the criminal justice system and how rape investigations are managed, for police officers who tend to be the first responders for sexual assaults (Gerger *et al*, 2007; O'Neal & Hayes, 2019). In a recent systematic review conducted by Sleath and Bull (2017), they reviewed police perceptions of rape victims from articles published between 2000 and 2016, concentrating on victim blame and credibility. The results of the review showed the levels of rape myth acceptance amongst police officers is typically low, which corresponds with the results of a study by Page (2010), who found that 6% of officers displayed signs of rape myth acceptance. Page's (2010) study did show officers would perceive certain victims as less credible if they had specific characteristics, one of those being a sex worker. Whilst the rate of rape myth acceptance amongst police officers is low and is a relatively positive statistic, these attitudes should arguably not exist at all within policing and the small percentage of victims it may affect will inevitably have a larger impact on the perceptions of policing. An individual's credibility should not be determined through their choice of work or any other perceived "character flaw" (O'Neal & Hayes, 2019, p. 140). All complainants making a report to the police should be given the opportunity to have their report investigated without judgement and should be based on the facts of the case alone. Another factor worthy of discussion is the research around rape myth acceptance. The RMA scale was produced to be used as an initial indicator as to whether someone's acceptance of rape myths was high or low. Rape myth acceptance is arguably difficult to measure due to not knowing whether the answers are truthful or not. It is likely many people, including members of the police service, would adapt their responses to what they believe should be the correct answer, compared to what they truly believe. These studies are examples of research showing how police officers may perceive rape victims. However, it is not specific to any type of sex work, and sexual violence is not the only crime sex workers can be a

victim of. These factors demonstrate current gaps in research around police perceptions of street-based sex workers.

Many rape cases which are reported are discontinued by the CJS before they result in a conviction. This process is also known as rape attrition, which remains high (Lea *et al*, 2015). A recent study found sex workers who reported rape were more likely to succeed in securing a conviction compared to non sex worker rape cases (Lea *et al*, 2015). This is encouraging for sex workers who are often vulnerable to sexual assault. Nevertheless, the rate of reports and their willingness to report rape or other sexual offences remains low, suggesting there could be an issue with making the reports. Within the first four years of the launch of the NUM scheme, almost 2000 reports of crime were made. However, only 25% of victims were willing to report these crimes to the police (House of Commons, 2016). In 2015, a survey conducted by NUM and Leeds University found "that 49% of sex workers are 'worried' or 'very worried' about their safety and 47% have been targeted by offenders", and "49% were 'unconfident' or 'very unconfident' the police would take their reports seriously" (House of Commons, 2016, p. 17; Sanders *et al*, 2016, p. 10). This evidence could suggest there is an issue with the process of reporting a crime to the police, and further development is required to improve the police response (Lea *et al*, 2015).

In the UK, there are many policing strategies for tackling sex work, ranging from enforcement-focused policing, which focuses on targeting men who pay for sex and helping sex workers find exit routes, to protection-focused policing, where the safety of the sex workers is a priority. In Holbeck, Leeds, the police initiated the 'Managed Approach (MA)'. In 2014, the MA was approved as a 12-month pilot scheme, operating in a designated area in Leeds, whereby between the hours of 7pm and 7am, there were no arrests for loitering, soliciting or kerb-crawling (Sanders & Sehmbi, 2015). After a review of the MA, a key outcome was that relationships between the police and sex workers had improved. In addition, the sex workers' willingness to report crime to the police in the area increased by 50% (Sanders & Sehmbi, 2015). Leeds City Council had previously announced at the time the scheme had been a 'success', despite the murder of Dario Pionko in 2016, a sex worker working in the managed

area whilst the scheme was operating (Bindel, 2019). Dario Pionko was a victim to a violent attack which led to her death, her body was found in the so-called 'managed' zone (Binko, 2019). Despite this, the tolerance zone continued to operate. The MA could be developed further with future improvements, the main concern being the police presence in the area had slowly decreased and left the sex workers feeling less safe (Sanders & Sehmbi, 2015). However, this could be resolved by increasing patrols in the area, allowing sex workers to feel safer, and reduce the number of violent attacks on them.

In March 2020, the tolerance zone was closed. The decision was made to close the managed area after a "significant reduction" was noted in the amount of sex workers operating there (BBC, 2021). However, there are other factors which may have affected the drop in sex workers working in the area, such as the emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic. The tolerance zone closed as the country went into a national lockdown. Therefore, it is difficult to determine whether the reduction in sex workers in the area was due to the scheme being effective, or whether the sex workers made a choice to stop working to avoid the disease. In addition to the positive outcomes which were determined from the MA, there were groups who felt strongly against the idea and advocated for the closure of the designated area, such as the Save Our Eyes campaign (Bentley-Smith, 2021). Save Our Eyes began as a Facebook group formulated by residents to report issues and liaise with police. As assumed by the name of the campaign, the group were not supportive of the MA, and their attitudes and motivations aligned with the views of radical feminists (Holt & Gott, 2022). Claire Bentley-Smith, who worked closely with the campaign, believed the MA was ineffective and did not protect sex workers from exploitation (Hyde, 2018). Additionally, Bently-Smith used discarded items around the MA area to create sculptures of sex workers, including broken dolls heads and monopoly money. Therefore, it appears her actions showed her attitudes were less concerned with the sex workers being victims of exploitation, but rather demonstrated her true perceptions of street-based sex workers through her sculptures (Bateman, 2021).

In 2006, Merseyside Police adopted the 'Hate Crime Approach', meaning all crimes committed against sex workers would be dealt with as hate crime (Campbell, 2016). The introduction of the hate crime approach has implemented many other positive changes for sex workers. As well as increasing the status

of crimes against sex workers, the hate crime policy had created a closer partnership between the police and the Armistead Street sex work project. There were several positive outcomes after the partnership was formed, including a rise in perpetrators being prosecuted, and police initiatives taking place to build trust with sex workers, such as police sex worker liaison officers, the introduction of an Independent Sexual Violence Advisor for sex workers and the Specialist Rape and Sexual Offences Unity Team (Campbell, 2016). Campbell (2016) highlighted the key element in the Merseyside approach was 'strategic enforcement'. Identifying crime against sex workers as hate crime recognised that "violence and other crimes against sex workers are often shaped by discrimination, attitudes of hostility and prejudice" (Merseyside Police, 2019, p. 2). The National Policing Sex Work Guidance acknowledged "simple enforcement" is not enough regarding providing protection to sex workers and can result in sex workers being more vulnerable to violent attacks (House of Commons, 2016, p.17).

Campbell (2016) conducted in-depth face-to-face interviews with police officers and sex workers from Liverpool to understand their attitudes towards each other. A key finding was there had been a significant positive shift in the attitudes of the police towards sex workers. Sex workers in the area had described officers as having a "more caring, respectful and professional attitude towards them" (Campbell, 2016, p. 169). Many officers stated they believed new recruits brought a new approach to policing sex work and many officers who held more negative, outdated views were now retired, which supports a general attitude shift within the force. A factor which was described as a catalyst for change was the murders of sex workers, resulting in "shaping personal, attitudinal change" and a reason for supporting police initiatives (Campbell, 2016, p. 154). The change in attitude in Liverpool officers could be a result of the hate crime policy, helping officers better understand sex workers as victims and their true vulnerability. However, the interviews revealed that at the time of the study, only 64% of officers were aware of the hate crime policy (Campbell, 2016). Nevertheless, most officers expressed supportive views of the hate crime policy, whether they were previously aware of the policy or not.

More evidence of a recent positive change in police attitudes is seen through the choice of language used by officers to describe sex workers. In May 2021, a man was sentenced for assaults against sex

workers in Southampton (Hampshire Constabulary, 2021). Following the charge, both uniformed officers and detectives commented on the incident. Both individuals constantly referred to the victims as 'vulnerable women', instead of prostitutes (Hampshire Constabulary, 2021). The women were identified as 'sex workers' solely for the purpose of encouraging other sex workers to report crimes against them, to demonstrate their allegations would be taken seriously. These comments could demonstrate a shift in attitudes held by police officers. The police demonstrated they were educated on the struggles experienced by sex workers when reporting crimes committed against them and presented a clear understanding that sex workers are more at risk of experiencing violence.

In 2009, Kent Police began a scheme to help sex workers safely leave sex work in Medway, called 'Safe Exit' (Mac & Smith, 2018). However, the scheme was heavily criticised for being poorly executed. The scheme was supposed to offer support for drug and alcohol addiction and house those who were vulnerable. A sex workers' rights campaigner found the scheme was "far from safety or even exit" (Mac & Smith, 2018, p. 100). The scheme produced many Anti-Social Behaviour Orders (ASBOs), sixty-seven women were charged with prostitution offences over the time frame of five years. Some claimed the 'Safe Exit' scheme to be a publicity stunt to show a balance between enforcing the law and providing sex workers with necessarily support (BBC, 2014b). However, it appears the project did not provide adequate support to those who needed it (Mac & Smith, 2018).

In 2019, the NPCC commented upon the sex industry in support of the International Day to End Violence against Sex Workers. They addressed the changes in the sex industry and recognised "sex workers are some of the most vulnerable people to violence in our society" (NPCC, 2019). They also mentioned police attitudes and specified that "it is not for policing to pass judgement on the personal choices people make" (NPCC, 2019). This is encouraging because it suggests the police service are learning from past mistakes in policing. However, it is not obvious this knowledge is being shown in police practice as sex workers are still reluctant to report crimes against them. A more recent survey with responses collected from all types of sex workers from NUM has discovered that anonymous consent to share information with the police service has declined by 31%, between 2012 (95%) to 2020

(69%) (NUM, 2021). The reasons for this continued to be consistent to those reported in previous academic studies, such as fear of experiencing criminalisation, fear of stigma and receiving an inconsistent police response (Bowen, 2021). One sex worker stated:

> *"It seems that there is not a unified approach in the way the police deal with incident. There is very little consistency even from within the same police force. There are many occasions when the cons outweigh the pros to reporting"* (NUM, 2021).

In addition to this, NUM also discovered within a survey of 156 police officers, 86% of them had not heard of the NPCC Sex Work and Prostitution guidance. The concerns are whether this statistic is representative of all police officers across the UK. If so, the question should be asked whether policy is being appropriately shared to frontline officers and implemented into current practice.

The gradual change in police attitudes supports statistics evidencing low rape myth acceptance amongst police officers. However, it is still arguable that rape myth acceptance should not exist within the police, especially towards sex workers as they should be recognised as vulnerable victims across the UK. Within the CJS, rape attrition for sex workers is narrower and cases are more likely to succeed. Therefore, the sex workers' unwillingness to report crime could be rooted to their interactions with the police and the process of reporting crime. However, new approaches have shown positive changes and are increasing sex workers' willingness to report to the police. Leeds approach to policing sex work with the Managed Approach had benefits, but the scheme needed to be realigned and required more focus on increasing police interaction with sex workers in the tolerance zone to improve the scheme and work more efficiently at increasing the safety of sex workers. A key factor which has seemed to excel since the introduction of the hate crime policy in Liverpool, a change to public protection policing is likely to be the main influencing factor for better police responses and improved police attitudes in Merseyside.

Summary

The UK approach to sex work is vague. The partial criminalisation of sex work in the UK means the understanding of what is legal and what is illegal becomes unclear (Mac & Smith, 2018). As a result, the relationship between most sex workers and the police is not adequate. Behind unclear legislation, follows inconsistent policing. A 'clean up the streets' attitude amongst police services towards sex work is detrimental when trying to improve a relationship (Mac & Smith, 2018). All police services in the UK have differing approaches to policing sex work, which can lead to further frustration from sex workers. For example, Leeds having a tolerance zone where sex work could take place, despite all the offences in UK legislation which have criminalised many activities relating to street sex work (Sanders & Sehmbi, 2015). Independently, police services have been creating their own approaches which has resulted in blurred lines across bordering counties. The current overarching theme across the country of managing sex work is many of these approaches appear to be driven by 'policy vs. prostitution'. Police services are creating policies which they believe would be best fit to achieve an improved relationship with sex workers. However, the best option could be to work with sex workers to help find the best approach.

The NUM has built a good relationship with sex workers because they understand sex work and have communicated with other sex workers, which has shown they are working with sex workers to support them, rather than against. The NUM now operates as a bridge for the police to be able to work better with sex workers and to understand what crimes are taking place against them. A multi-agency response could be the best option for working with and building a relationship with sex workers, as sex workers would be represented by individuals who are working to support them. It is clear from Kent's 'Safe Exit' scheme that the police cannot adequately work alone to police an area and offer sex workers the support they need to leave sex work (Mac & Smith, 2018). It is unrealistic to solely blame police officers for their approach to sex work as those working on the frontline are often only following the instructions from those above them. However, if those on the frontline, dealing with sex workers understood their situations and understood how to help them their attitudes towards them could improve. These issues could be resolved with more training and providing more information on the force's policies regarding sex workers. Additionally, a more consistent police presence in areas where sex work operates could

allow officers to speak more with sex workers and therefore build better relationships with them personally.

Previous research shows all types of sex workers are generally not willing to report crime to the police, due to sex workers thinking the police will not believe them (House of Commons, 2016; Sanders *et al*, 2016). However, it is not fully understood what the overall attitudes police officers have of street-based sex workers. The poor relationship between them, and street-based sex workers being worried they would not be believed if reporting a crime would indicate police officers also have negative attitudes towards street-based sex workers. The police potentially having negative attitudes toward street-based sex workers reporting crime could be a result of police officers understanding the law and reporting process so well that they start to predict the outcomes. For instance, if many street-based sex workers decide to drop rape allegations, police officers see all the paperwork they must complete and then the investigations being abandoned. In the officer's frustration, it can appear the work was for nothing. Alternatively, they may respond to an initial report of rape and could already predict the court outcome may not be in the complainants favour due to the lack of evidence. These negative attitudes may not be driven by a dislike of street-based sex workers, or by rape myths, but by the paperwork and processes they take the complainant through.

This chapter has explored the feminist perspectives around the sex industry, the laws around sex work across jurisdictions, the crimes sex workers are victims of, and the relationship between sex workers and the police. As a result, there is a scope for research that seeks to explore how modern police officers and staff, within a UK police service, perceive street-based sex workers, as victims of crime. The research questions derived will seek to cover the current gaps in the research around the relationship between the police service and sex workers. The research questions derived are:

1. How are street-based sex workers perceived by police staff, uniformed officers, and detective officers?
2. In what ways do the perceptions differ between police staff, uniformed officers, and detective officers?

3. To what extent are police officers and staff within the UK police service aware of guidance for policing sex work?

Chapter 2: Methodology

Introduction

A methodology is "the collection of methods or rules by which a particular piece of research is undertaken" (Somekh & Lewin, 2005). Walter (2006) defines a methodology further as a "frame of reference for the research" and is guided by the "paradigm in which our theoretical perspective is placed or developed" (p. 35). The purpose of the methodology is it allows other readers to understand the process of the research. Methodology should begin with mapping out the research objectives and choosing an appropriate research design.

A crucial aspect of conducting any research is to clearly state the research questions that will be answered by the end of the research. Jensen and Laurie (2016) describe the research question as the foundation to your research. It is important the research questions are focused and answerable to avoid research resulting in broad conclusions (Jensen & Laurie, 2016). To reiterate the research questions previously mentioned in the conclusion of Chapter one, this study first aims to answer how street-based sex workers are perceived by police staff, uniformed officers, and detective within a UK police service. This is important because it can contribute to understand the current relationship between sex workers and the police and how their relationships could be further improved if required. Secondly, in what ways do the perceptions differ between police staff, uniformed officers, and detective officers? This is important because a potential difference of perceptions between types of staff could indicate different levels of training and understanding. Thirdly, to what extent are police officers and staff within the UK police service aware of guidance for policing sex work? Each of these individuals have a different role within the police service, therefore depending on what the overall results show, there could be differences in views which correlate with knowledge of force policies.

The methodology has been divided into seven sections. The first section explores the research design for this research study. The second section discusses the theoretical framework of the research, including the research paradigms and theoretical perspectives this research relates to. The third section

discusses the research methods used, the type of data that was collected and style of questions that were presented to the participants and an outline of how the online survey was formed. The fourth section discusses the sample selection chosen for this study, the purpose of the specific sample of participants and the motivations for the sample selected. The fifth section examines the ethics of the study, discussing why ethics are important and how this study was adapted to comply with ethical guidelines. The sixth section covers the data analysis, this explores how the data was analysed and the methods used. The seventh section examines the limitations of the methods that were presented and any reflections for future reference. The methodology concludes with a summary of the overall methods chosen and the effectiveness of the research methods.

Research Design

Constructing a research design is essential for research, it allows the researcher to ensure their research questions can be answered using the appropriate methods (Jensen & Laurie, 2016). To effectively answer the research questions, this study will use a cross-sectional mixed methods research design. A cross-sectional research design study is used to describe a population, or subgroups of a population, at one specific point in time (Allen, 2017). Within this study, police staff, uniformed officers and detectives have been asked to participant to share their perceptions of street-based sex workers, including since the recent exposure of COVID-19.

As the research design is mixed methods, it has utilising both qualitative and quantitative style questions within an online survey. Qualitative research methods are typically used to answer questions around experience and perspective (Hammarberg, Kirkman & de Lacey, 2016). There are several types of qualitative research designs: case studies, grounded theory, ethnographic, phenomenology, narrative research and historical. The qualitative data will use a phenomenological research design. Phenomenology focuses on the experiences lived by individuals (Groenewald, 2004). Quantitative research methods are more objective, as you can compare variables to find relationships between them. There are various quantitative research designs, including descriptive, non-experimental, quasi-experimental and experimental. The quantitative data within this study will use a non-experimental

research design. A non-experimental research design (also referred to a correlational research design), is used to describe a relationship between two factors, which cannot be manipulated by the researcher (Salkind, 2010). The purpose of these designs is to observe trends between factors such as age and sex, and the measures of the study (Thompson & Panacek, 2007). For example, within this research study, trends could be identified between the length of service of police officers and the perceptions they have of street-based sex workers, as victims of crime. Mixed methods were used over only using qualitative or quantitative methods because it provides an opportunity to understand quantitative data better. Other studies measuring attitudes such as Sleath and Bull (2015), were only able to interpret the results of the RMA without the further analysis of why some participants may have felt certain ways. However, utilising both qualitative and quantitative data arguably presents an opportunity for more discussion and better understanding of data.

Theoretical Framework

All research stems from philosophical assumptions which creates a foundation that the research is built upon and directs the researcher to narrow their research to a more focused path; these concepts are ontology and epistemology (Al-Saadi, 2014). Ontology is the philosophical study of being, which is concerned with how the world is viewed and the fundamental beliefs of reality (Crotty, 1998; Al-Saadi, 2014; Berryman, 2019). The ontological assumptions held by the researcher outline the way the research questions are studied (Saunders *et al*, 2019). Ontology can be perceived in one of two ways; realism (positivism) or relativism (interpretivism). A realist perspective believes one truth exists, it does not change, and it can be measured objectively. A relativist's view is more subjective, as they would believe multiple realities exist, and the truth does not exist without meaning (Levers, 2013).

Epistemology is the theory of knowledge (Crotty, 1998). The relevance of epistemology is defined by Maynard (1994) who stated, "epistemology is concerned with providing a philosophical grounding for deciding what kinds of knowledge are possible and how we can ensure that they are both adequate and legitimate" (p. 10). The main premise around epistemology is understanding knowledge and "how we know what we know", or 'what it means to know' (Crotty, 1998; Berryman, 2019). There are several

epistemological stances, objectivism, constructionism, and subjectivism (Crotty, 1998). An objectivist epistemological stance would suggest that knowledge exists, and states "that reality exists independently of consciousness" (Gray, 2013, p. 20). Comparatively, a constructionism epistemological stance would suggest truth and meaning exist once humans have engaged with the reality, otherwise meant that there is "no meaning without a mind" (Crotty, 1998, p. 8-9). Within a subjectivist epistemological stance, humans "make meaning out of something" (Crotty, 1998, p.9). The meaning of something does not materialise from interaction between the object and subject, the subject gains meaning but it emerges from 'collective unconsciousness', such as dreams or religious beliefs (Gray, 2013).

A research paradigm influences the way studies are investigated (Mackenzie & Knipe, 2006). Bogdan and Biklen (1998) previously defined the term 'paradigm' as "a loose collection of logically related assumptions, concepts, or propositions that orient thinking and research" (p. 22). In other terms, a paradigm is 'the pattern of thinking of a person' (Groenewald, 2004, p. 44). There are several research paradigms which are referenced in research methodologies to provide more insight on the direction of the research, a few examples are, positivist/postpositivist, constructivist/interpretivist, transformative and pragmatism are a few of the more common paradigms. For this research, a pragmatic research paradigm has been adopted. A pragmatic research philosophy identifies "there are many different ways of interpreting the world and undertaking research" (Saunders *et al*, 2019, p. 144), and focuses on understanding individuals' experiences (Duram, 2012).

Theoretical Background for the APPS

The APPS was formed as an addition to an existing scale to measure attitudes towards prostitution (ATPS) (Levin & Peled, 2011; Sawyer & Met, 2009). Levin and Peled (2011) felt the previous scale failed to provide an explanation for the theoretical perspective behind their development of the scale. Within their study, they discuss several theoretical frameworks which have influenced the development of the APPS. They introduce symbolic interactionists, labelling theorist and subcultural theorists as all agreeing sex work is an integral function within society, whilst defining a clear line between the norm

for woman's behaviour and what is deemed inappropriate (Levin & Peled, 2011). The two feminist perspectives, liberal and radical, and how they interpret sex work and sex workers is also explored. Liberal feminism perceives sex work is an opportunity for women to express themselves and have free choice over their decision to enter and exit sex work. Comparatively, radical feminists believe sex work objectifies all women involved in it and demonstrates the power struggle between men and women. As they would say sex workers are there for the enjoyment of men, and they do not believe women have a choice in whether they are sex workers or not. These various perspectives shaped the framework for the APPS. Levin and Peled (2011, p. 584) developed two main categories within which the views of sex workers fit. These were "normative" perspectives and "problem-orientated" perspectives. The normative approach representing beliefs which indicate sex workers form a normal part of society, who have free choice to do what they want, mirroring the views of liberal feminism. The problem-orientated approach suggests sex workers as being socially deviant members of society, or victims of abuse who would not willingly choose to be a sex worker. Similarly, this approach relates to the attitudes of radical feminism.

Research Methods

The methods used in any research need to be representative for the type of data the researcher wishes to collect. For this research, the data was collected through an online survey with a mixture of open and closed questions. The open questions will gather qualitative data. A large section of the online survey will include a variant of the Attitudes towards Prostitutes and Prostitution Scale, created by Levin and Peled (2011). This scale collects quantitative data through Likert-style questions. The online survey begins with some basic definitions of what is meant by 'sex work', 'sex worker' and how the research has chosen to define 'street-based sex worker'. This is important as most of the questions in the online survey were based on street-based sex workers, the idea behind defining the terms is to make sure the participant understands they should answer the questions based on their interactions with this group of sex workers in mind. The questionnaire began with initial personal multiple-choice questions around age, gender, ethnicity, and general questions about their work experience within the police force. These questions will help identify any trends in attitude differences between the sample population.

A survey can be used to collect both qualitative and quantitative data, depending on the types of questions which are asked. For this research, it is aimed to determine what attitudes police officers have towards sex workers. Therefore, it was assumed making a survey would be better for discovering attitudes, compared to a face-to-face interview, as people may be more likely to be honest. There are four types of surveys; online surveys, telephone surveys, post surveys and in-house surveys, where the researcher visits the participant at their home or workplace to conduct the survey. This research used an online survey to collect data, the reasons for this are because it provides the most anonymity across all types of surveys, they are most cost effective as they are free to send out to participants and the participant can choose the best time to fill out the survey without feeling pressured (Mathers, Fox & Hunn, 2007). However, the biggest disadvantage of surveys is it cannot be guaranteed the desired response rate will be achieved, and therefore the research may not be representative. Other methods of data collection would also be appropriate for this research, such as telephone semi-structured interviews, which would allow the opportunity to gather more in-depth qualitative data and ask follow-up questions. However, when gathering attitudes, it could be argued the most honest responses will be obtained through data collection which provides the most anonymity and where the participant would feel judgment free for having certain beliefs, which could be frowned upon amongst their force.

Qualitative data is the most suitable form of data for this research. Not all research can be conducted scientifically, producing quantitative data. Qualitative research is used to understand meaning, how people make sense of the world and individual experiences (Merriam, 2009). Epistemologically, this research aims to gather mainly qualitative data to analyse police staff and police officer's perspectives of street-based sex workers, based on their experiences with them. It is essential the types of questions asked in a survey are planned and structured, to receive suitable data for analysis. Surveys need to be worded carefully and defined clearly, to be interpretated by the participant in the way intended by the researcher. Unlike interviews, follow up questions cannot be asked based on the participants responses. Therefore, the survey will ask applicable questions to receive attitudes held by police officers. The survey will ask open questions, which will allow the participant to fully explain their responses in detail.

Online Survey Development

The online survey began with standard demographic questions about the participants. Questions about age and gender will both be open questions. The benefits of having age as an open question means the respondents specific ages can be gathered, rather than grouped into age brackets, this allows for more accurate analysis. As for gender, it was also an open question and therefore self-defining by the respondent. This also included questions about the participants time and role within the police service, followed by asking whether they are aware of any policies or strategies their police service has in place for managing/policing sex work.

The second section, and a large section of the online survey, includes a variation of the APPS. The APPS is a scale created to measure attitudes towards prostitutes and prostitution. Levin and Peled (2011) identified there was a gap in research for a scale to measure attitudes towards prostitution, as the scales which had been made previously are now outdated. They created a new updated tool with the intention that this scale could be applied to measure public opinions or measure the attitudes of professionals 'from various disciplines that work with prostitutes' (Levin & Peled, 2011, p. 585). Within their research, they identify in their notes they opted to use the terms 'prostitute' and 'prostitution' as they are the most common terms. However, within this research, the terms 'sex worker' and 'sex work' have been adopted due to the negative connotations that are associated with the term's 'prostitute' and 'prostitution'. Consequently, this is the first way in which the APPS has been modified for the purposes of this research project.

The APPS is structured using Likert-scale style questions. The Likert-scale was developed by Likert (1932) and was produced to help measure attitudes (Boone & Boone, 2012). A Likert-style question usually proposes a statement, for which the participant is presented with a five- or seven-point scale response, with the choices typically ranging from 'strongly agree' to 'strongly disagree'. The researcher uses these responses to determine how much the participant agrees with the statements. These styles of questions produce quantitative data. Likert-style surveys are simple to construct, once the researcher

has decided the number of measures, and are easy for participants to complete. However, they do have their limitations, such as central tendency bias. This is when a participant may avoid choosing more extreme response categories (Bertram, 2007). In addition, the participant may be displaying social desirability bias, which means they choose options which they believe would portray them in a more favourable light, instead of being honest (Bertram, 2007). Some police-related research has been conducted and accounted for this factor by including a measure for social desirability bias, such as including The Marlowe-Crowne Social Desirability Scale-Short Form C (M-C Form C) (Venema, 2017). Venema (2017) was examining police officer's rape myth acceptance and included this scale as a control variable to assess social desirability. Whilst this may be an effective way of accounting for social desirability bias, it is also an addition 13 items to a survey which could be a concern for the length of a survey (Venema, 2017). For this research, a five-point scale was used, like the APPS. A five-point scale allows the option for participants to respond in a neutral manner to the question (Bernard, 2013). However, given the target audience for the online survey is police officers, it is expected they will be able to make definitive decisions in their responses.

The final version of the original APPS included 29 items to measure attitudes towards prostitutes and prostitution. These items have also been divided into four subscales by Levin and Peled (2011); Prostitutes as choosing/victimised (PSCV), prostitution as choice/victimisation (PNCV), prostitutes as normative/deviant (PSND) and prostitution as normative/deviance (PNND). For this research project, only 14 questions have been used from the APPS, which are those questions relating to the PSCV and PSND subscales. Levin and Peled (2011) have defined the PSND subscale as, "the extent to which prostitutes, as individuals, are seen as either normative or deviant in their personalities and behaviours". The PSCV subscale was also defined as, "the extent to which prostitutes, as individuals, are seen as either choice makers in their engagement in prostitution or as victimised into it". These 14 questions are all measuring attitudes towards sex workers, instead of both sex workers and sex work, as these questions are more in line with the aims of this research. As a result, the subscales have been changed to street-based sex workers as choosing/victimised (SWCV) and street-based sex workers as normative/deviant (SWND). Some questions asked relating to SWCV subscale ranged from "Women

choose to be street-based sex workers" to "Street-based sex workers are victims of drug abuse" (Appendix B). For the SWND subscale, questions ranged from "Most street-based sex workers are drug addicts" to "Women become street-based sex workers because they were not properly educated" (Appendix B). The other benefit to using half of the APPS, is it reduces the length of the online survey. Much like the feminist debate around the sex industry, the APPS is measuring attitudes on two binaries. Therefore, it seemed important to include further questions in the online survey which would allow candidates to expand their opinions beyond these two main attitudes.

The next part of the online survey focused on street-based sex workers and crime to explore the police attitudes towards street-based sex workers, as victims of crime. This was a mixture of Likert-style, open and closed questions. There were Likert-style questions on the three main topics of this areas, the interactions between the police and sex workers, sex workers reporting crime and investigating crimes reported by sex workers. These statements were followed up by open questions to dig deeper into the area and gain a better understanding of each area from the individual participant. An example of this would be as follows; "Have you had any interactions with street-based sex workers?" and "If yes, how would you describe the general response you receive from street-based sex workers when interacting with them? (e.g., compliant, friendly, aggressive etc)" (Appendix B).

The fourth section of the survey concentrates on street-based sex workers and the impact of COVID-19. Most individuals have been affected in one way or another since the emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic, including sex workers. In the UK, there have been many reports on how sex workers have struggled to continue working due to restrictions on contact with other people from other households, combined with a lack of support for sex workers from the UK government (NUM, 2021; Lam, 2020; Platt *et al.,* 2020). These are important factors to this research as it is guaranteed the COVID-19 pandemic will have had an impact on the interactions the police have had with street-based sex workers. Similarly, to the previous section, this section also had a mixture of Likert-style, open and closed questions. The purpose was to measure the changes since COVID-19, if any, in interactions with street-based sex workers and their reporting of crimes (as victims). The current climate of COVID-19 may

have had different effects on policing sex work, which could potentially impact the perspectives held by officers. The types of questions which were included were, “Has sex work continued during the COVID-19 pandemic?”, followed by, “Please explain your answer, including how you think this has occurred.” (Appendix B).

The final question of the online survey was asking for respondents to add any further information about their experience and/or views of street-based sex workers, policing sex work or dealing with crimes against street-based sex workers. It was important to include this optional question at the end of the survey to allow participants to express certain opinions or experiences which they felt were important to the topic but may not have had the chance as they may not have directly aligned with the questions in the survey. It also offers an opportunity to add more context to previous questions if necessary. One of the disadvantages to an online survey is they are rigid, and questions are already set and based upon what the researcher wants to know. However, these questions allow space to learn things around the topic or find answers to questions the researcher may not have originally thought of or known about.

Sample Selection

Sampling is selecting a group of individuals representing a population to involve in research. Sampling methods are split into two categories: probability and non-probability (Daniel, 2012). Both types have several different types of sampling within them. Probability sampling is a selection of individuals from a population, including simple random sampling, systematic sampling, cluster sampling and stratified sampling (Daniel, 2012). Non-probability sampling is a sample based on a non-random criterion, and not every section of the population is equally included. This research has used self-selection sample, which is a type of non-probability sampling. A self-selection sample is when the researcher sends the survey to groups or organisations, and the individual decides themselves whether to agree or decline to be a participant in the research (Sterba & Foster, 2008).

For this research, online surveys were sent round to police staff, uniformed officers, and detective officers within a particular UK police service. The participants within this research have chosen to be a

part of the sample. It was assumed the uniformed response officers would have more interactions with street-based sex workers. However, the reason for wanting to collect data from individuals in these three roles is because they will all have different interactions with sex workers. These findings aim to demonstrate differences, if any, in perspectives held by the officer's dependent on the regularity of interaction they have with sex workers and the reasons they are working with them in their work-based setting. Originally, this research was only interested in the responses from uniformed officers and detective officers. However, the responses from police staff were included in this research because there may have been police staff who have previously had interactions with sex workers.

A link to the online survey was sent on the police force's email system and was available to complete by anyone who was willing to take part. The online survey was accessible by password only, to guarantee the participants are only from the police service who had access to the online survey link and password.

Ethics

When conducting any research, the researcher needs to ensure the research complies with ethical guidelines. The research project must comply with data protection laws, such as the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018. A health and risk assessment were carried out before the online surveys were sent to the officers, the main risk was there could be a chance the research caused emotional or mental stress. This was due to the survey asking questions about their experiences in managing sex workers. However, it was deemed the risk was quite low. A data sharing agreement (Appendix D) was given to the UK police service and signed by the principal researcher, an individual on behalf of Canterbury Christ Church University and an individual on behalf of the police service. The agreement will give details of the research, methodology and details of data security and data handling to ensure it is compliant with GDPR, the Data Protection Act 2018 and CCCU's data protection policy. This agreement confirmed with the UK police service no other party will have access to the personal data and it will not be shared with anyone else outside the agreed parties, to confirm

confidentiality and anonymity. In addition to being GDPR compliant, this research project was submitted and approved by the CCCU Ethics Panel (Appendix C).

Before any participant began the online survey, and in compliance with GDPR, the Data Protection Act 2018 and CCCU's data protection policy, they were required to give informed consent (Appendix B), to confirm they agreed to participate in the online survey. Participants were also provided with a participant information form (Appendix A), which gave more details of the research project, what they would be required to do, confidentiality and data protection, dissemination of results, process for withdrawing consent and contact details. The participant was only able to continue with the online survey if consent was given. Additionally, their right to withdraw their consent will also be made clear at this point on the form, and participants were informed they will have up to one month after participation to withdraw consent. The reason for providing a one-month deadline for withdrawing consent is to allow plenty of time for participants to withdraw but also provides a cut off so analysis of the data can start and not be disrupted by having to withdraw certain data. As a part of this process, participants were informed at the beginning of details of how their data would be stored, processed, how long their data would be stored for and how their data would be disposed. The participant information form will outline the basic details of the research and the task provided of them. The survey will summarise with a debrief statement which will remind participants of the important details already provided and information on how to withdraw consent.

This research collected personal identifiable data which required ethical justification. Personal data is any data which can identify the individual. Demographic data was collected, such as age, gender, and ethnicity. This data was collected to better understand the population sample with the intention of analysing whether these factors contributed to differences in perceptions of sex workers. Details of the participants employment were also asked. These questions were asked to see whether factors such as length of service influenced perceptions. Personal views of the participants are also classed as personal data as the views are personal to the individual. These were collected from all participating individuals to be analysed to find out how they perceive sex workers. The participants contact details were also

collected. Participants contact details were not processed for the purposes of this study and their details were stored separately from the rest of the personal data. The purpose of collecting contact details from participants was important in case any of the participants wanted to withdraw their data from the study, their contact details could be used to identify their data and inform the participant their data was deleted. All personal data was stored on a secure survey platform, Online Surveys, and securely on a password protected encrypted laptop. Participants were informed their data would be stored until the research project was completed. Once the research project was completed, all personal data is to be disposed of securely in line with the university's disposal process.

Data Analysis

The results from the online survey produced qualitative and quantitative data. Both types of data required separate methods of analysis. To effectively analyse both types of data, two different types of data analysis were used to analyse the data. There were several open-ended questions within the survey providing an opportunity to gain an insight into the experiences the participants had in interacting with and policing street-based sex workers. Therefore, thematic analysis was be used to analyse the qualitative data. Thematic analysis is a method used to derive patterns and meanings from qualitative data (Braun & Clarke, 2012; Javaid, 2018). It is often an effective approach for analysing data collected from interview transcripts, focus groups and open-ended survey responses (Swart, 2019). This method uses thematic coding by which codes or labels are attached onto parts of the data, this allows the researcher to identify commonalities between the participants. Braun and Clarke (2006; cited in Swart, 2019, p. 5) constructed six phases of thematic analysis: familiarising yourself with the data, generating codes, searching for themes, reviewing the themes, defining the names of the themes, and producing the report. When using thematic analysis, it is important to re-read the data to familiarise yourself with the responses to discover what the themes are in the data.

For research studies collecting large quantities of data, it is common to use computer software to assist with thematic analysis, often referred to as Computer Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Software (CAQDAS). The type of CAQDAS used for this research project was NVivo. NVivo does not analyse

the data, it does however provide a manageable way of viewing large amounts of data and provide visual aids to assist with coding. The relevant qualitative data from this research was imported into NVivo to be coded. The analytical process was divided into stages. The data was coded into each qualitative question, to allow all the responses for each question to be viewed separately. The data was read and re-read multiple times to become familiar with the responses. Initially, the codes were divided into positive and negative perceptions. Beginning the coding with these vague themes were helpful to become more engaged in the responses, as the texts were being read more thoroughly to search for aspects which appeared either positive or negative. From further analysis, themes were uncovered and quotes from the responses were coded to the themes. There were many functions within NVivo which helped with the thematic analysis, such as coding stripes. Coding stripes were used to see which parts of the text had already been coded, and to which codes.

The remaining quantitative data was analysed using SPSS. SPSS is a software used to analyse quantitative data, specifically advantageous at analysing large datasets. Many researchers use SPSS to assist with advanced and complex statistical equations and to help understand their results. For this research, the online survey gathered several demographic characteristics to understand the participants being surveyed. These characteristics include age, gender, ethnicity, rank within the police service, department and role within the police and length of service. SPSS was used to analyse these demographics. SPSS was used to analyse the Likert-style questions from the survey as they will produce quantitative data. The APPS, forming a large portion of the online survey, was narrowed down to 14 questions to include those only relevant for attitudes towards sex workers. The 14 questions were divided into the two subscales, SWND and SWCV. In terms of analysis of the APPS on SPSS, decisions were made to undergo certain tests over others. SPSS was used to find descriptive statistics, which found overall mean scores for the subscales. A Kruskal-Wallis *H* test was done to find whether there was a significant difference between the overall police attitudes for each police rank, for each subscale. A Mann-Whitney U test was also conducted afterwards to find whether there was a significant difference in the police attitudes between each police rank, this test is used to test between two variables which can be useful in finding the exact differences. Cronbach's alpha had been used to test the

reliability of the scale. The section of the APPS relating to attitudes towards sex workers from Levin and Peled's (2011), had an internal consistency of x=.73. The internal consistency for the subscale, PSND was x=.88, and for the subscale PSCV it was x=.81.

Limitations and Reflections

Within the initial planning stages of the research, using online surveys as a method to collect data was decided to be the best approach to discover honest perceptions from police officers about how they perceive sex workers as victims of crime. However, challenges have arisen through this method of data collections during the development stages which may not have occurred if other approaches were taken. For example, certain issues may not have happened if an interview approach was taken. The limitations of the research will be discussed around the issues of the methodology process, including conducting police research from an 'outsider outsider' position (Brown, 1995; cited by Horn, 2010), and reflections have been discussed around the decisions made throughout the research.

Many academics have undertaken police research. Brown (1995; cited by Horn, 2010) has identified the four types of positions a researcher could be in when undertaking police research, and the impact the position can have on the research. A researcher could either be an 'insider-insider' (a police officer conducting police research), 'outsider-insider' (former police officers conducting research on policing), 'insider-outsider' (academics employed by the police service to conduct research), or an 'outsider-outsider' (academics conducting police research with no police background) (Brown 1995; cited by Horn, 2010; Brunger *et al.*, 2015). There were problems with being an 'outsider-outsider' for this research. The initial issue was finding police services who were willing to participate with the research, as it was not initiated by the police service and may not have aligned with their current prioritises. Many gatekeepers were contacted for various police services. However, the contact was limited and due to many staff now working from home since the COVID-19 pandemic, there were often delays with communication. Many circumstances were beyond control due to the COVID-19 pandemic, which has had similar impacts on many research projects in multiple specialisms. Many workplaces have had to learn to adapt to new working environments and some are required to move to working from home.

Many police services are also feeling the impact of the pandemic on their workload. Increasing difficulty for their own priorities at work, and therefore unable to support further research as they may have in normal times.

The online survey was distributed through an email sent within the police services' internal system. Previous research studies show mailed invitations for online surveys, followed by an email reminder are more successful for increased response rate, as the postal invitation appears more legitimate and important (Dykema *et al*, 2012). Since many people's email inboxes are littered with spam and with increased phishing emails, many users do not trust links attached within emails (Dykema *et al*, 2012). However, for this research, postal invitations were not appropriate for inviting participants. The intention of mass email recruitment was to invite the maximum number of participants to complete the survey. To use postal invitations, the participants home addresses would need to be known, and due to the nature of participants who are being recruited, this was not an option due to privacy. A few complications did arise with the distribution of the online survey. The online survey link and password were distributed across the UK police service, and no responses were received after the first week. Upon following up the distributer, it appeared the online survey link had not been tested within the police services internal system. For participants to gain access, they would need to copy and paste the survey link into the web browser, rather than clicking on the link within the email. A further email was then distributed again to inform everyone how to access the survey. This resulted in further delays with the distribution of the online survey.

The use of online surveys means the survey can be mass sent to potential participants and accessed by more people. Therefore, there was an opportunity to receive more responses because they surveys have reached a larger audience. Some survey responses may be less detailed than desired, this could be due to the researchers' expectations for the open-ended questions. However, this method of data collection can be beneficial for analysis as there will be a more generalisable conclusion from the data collected. When speaking to the individual who would distribute the online survey link within the internal police email system, it was important to clarify the number of participants who would be contacted. It would

be unnecessary to send the online survey link to every officer within the police service, and although very unlikely, if every officer responded, it would be very difficult to process that level of analysis for a master's level research project. However, this factor became a concern for this research project. The online survey link was distributed to 1600 individuals within the UK police service, which was beyond what was requested. 60 participants completed the online survey, meaning there was a 3.75% response rate. The response rate is low. However, the online survey link was never intended to reach such as wide audience. The online survey produced a mixture of quantitative and qualitative responses. In this case, with a higher or more valid response rate, it would have made the analysis of the open questions too time consuming for a master's level thesis. The number of responses this research received was only slightly lower than the original target. The unexpected factor was how many participants the online survey link reached to achieve the initial target. There is not a definitive answer for what an acceptable minimum response rate is when conducting surveys, as it is heavily dependent on the type of survey and the target audience (Krishnamurty, 2018). Nevertheless, the 60 responses included in-depth qualitative data to compliment the quantitative data from the adapted APPS. Therefore, the findings of this research can make a valuable contribution to the current literature.

As previously mentioned, the COVID-19 pandemic has affected many people and the response rate is expected to be less with more people working from home and some working less hours. Many people within the police service may not have time to fill out surveys with their current workload. However, the low response rate and small sample size means the results of this research will not be generalisable to the rest of the police services in the UK. In addition to this limitation, the self-selected sample causes limitations to the study due to self-selected bias. Self-selected bias occurs when the topic of the survey may be more interesting to a certain group of participants, meaning there may not be a representative sample (Sterba & Foster, 2008). Nevertheless, this method was advantageous as members of a police service are a difficult sample to locate through other methods.

The length of an online survey can also limit the responses received. Several attempts were made to reduce the length, as this can often discourage individuals from participating within taking surveys. By

narrowing the survey, it was important to ensure the questions asked within the online survey were clear and concise. It was also important to make sure the questions remained focused and were consistent with the research questions this study aimed to answer. The online survey length was reduced to take around 20 minutes to complete. Another reason it was important to shorten the survey was because it was likely to be completed by participants whilst they were at work.

Another limitation with an online survey is the questions are set, and any miscommunications cannot be resolved. Similarly, follow up questions cannot be asked to expand on ideologies or opinions given in responses, as they could be in semi-structured interviews (Patten, 2017). Nevertheless, using an online survey means responses can be anonymous. Within this research, efforts were made to attempt to minimise miscommunication, this was done by including definitions at the beginning of each section of the online survey. The terms 'sex work', 'sex worker' and 'street-based sex worker' were all defined, and where questions were asking specifically about street-based sex workers, participates were reminded of the definition.

In addition, the APPS had many limitations. Some of the items within the APPS sway towards the stereotype of only women are sex workers and only males buy sexual services from sex workers. There are male street-based sex workers in the UK (Brooks-Gordon *et al*, 2015), and this is not represented in the APPS. However, male street-based sex workers mostly work in "cruising sites or gay districts" (Matolcsi *et al*, 2020, p. 50), and seek both paid and unpaid sexual services (Ellison, 2018). Previous research has found the rate of male street-based sex workers to be as low as 5% (Brooks-Gordon *et al*, 2015). Another limitation of the APPS is the sample used in Levin and Peled's (2011) study only includes Israeli university students, of mainly Jewish ethnicity. Therefore, it cannot be said to be generalisable to other countries or populations.

With more planning and better preparation, issues around clarity of the survey and survey length could have been resolved with a formal pilot study. An example of a research study using a pilot study to investigate police officers' perceptions was Dando *et al's*. (2008) research on inexperienced police

officers' perceptions of their witness/victim interviewing practices. The research design for this project included 30 pilot questionnaires with a cover letter asking for feedback. From the feedback of the pilot study, the wording of the questionnaire was modified, and they received a response rate of 73% (Dando *et al*., 2008). Using a pilot survey in this research could have been used to trial how many responses would be received. A pilot survey with feedback could also test whether the survey results would achieve what it had intended to and allow peers to offer input on how to improve the effectiveness of the survey from an outside perspective. One significant advantage of the online survey was including the adaptation of the APPS, which was a validated instrument and inspired other questions within the survey. Some of the questions in other sections of the survey were derived based upon the APPS. The theme of using Likert-style questions was consistently used within the survey and utilised when asking questions around street-based sex workers and COVID-19.

In addition to this, better communications with the potential police services participating sooner in the planning stages would have resulted in discussing any concerns over the online survey earlier on and settled whether the force wished to participate or not. The original proposal for this research project was to undertake a comparative analysis of the perceptions of sex workers, as victims of crime, between the UK and Dutch police. The proposal was to compare three police services, two from the UK and one from the Netherlands. The purpose of three police services was to compare a police service which had experienced a major investigation in terms of sex workers as victims of crime, one which had not, and a Dutch police service where the legislation around sex work is entirely different. A total of ten different police services were contacted with requests to consider participating with this research project. Many of these police services did not respond. A few responded asking for further details but decided not to participate. The main concerns for the police services related to data sharing, a lack of time to dedicate to other external research projects, officers experiencing survey fatigue from completing several surveys, and research not being commensurate with their current police service priorities. Many of these responses took a long time to receive, and further ethical approval was required to include research from other police services, in addition to those proposed in the original research proposal. The delays in communication impacted the research as original timescales were running out and there were continuing

struggles to find a police service willing to cooperate. The online survey was shared with a UK and Dutch police service. However, there were no responses from the Dutch police service and therefore the aims of the research project were forced to be adapted. It is still believed there is a research gap from a comparative perspective on this topic and this would be a recommendation for future research. Earlier communications with police services could have made a difference in determining which police services would participate. However, the reasons for the police services not wanting to participate were out of the researcher's control, and therefore it is difficult to determine whether this would have made a difference or not.

Summary

Over the course of this research, there have been several delays. Many police services were contacted to participate within this research. However, many police services decided not to participate in distributing the online survey. This research study aimed to understand police staff and police officers' perceptions of street-based sex workers. There is currently a lack of literature surrounding the attitudes of the police towards sex workers, as victims of crime. Researching this area is important as it contributes to help future development of ways to improve the relationship between sex workers and the police service. Unfortunately, this research will not be generalisable to the perceptions of the police service across the UK. This is due to the low response rate from the online surveys. However, this research offers an insight into the police perceptions of sex workers and demonstrates the current lack of research on the topic. Overall, it is still believed using a mixed methods approach as the research design for this research was the most appropriate approach to gather the information. Using mixed methods collects both quantitative and qualitative data, which was analysed using both NVivo and SPSS. Qualitative data can often enhance the understanding of the quantitative responses, which is useful when researching people's perceptions.

Chapter 3: Findings

Introduction

The online survey was completed by police staff, uniformed officers, and detective officers within a UK police service. The three main sections of the online survey were, the perceptions of street-based sex workers, street-based sex workers and crime, and street-based sex workers and COVID-19. The APPS aimed to measure the general perceptions the respondents had towards street-based sex workers using a rating scale. The following theme focused on street-based sex workers and crime, asking questions around the types of interactions the respondents have had with street-based sex workers and issues that may occur with investigating these crimes. The next section of the survey aimed to explore the types of interactions and the frequency of reporting crime from street-based sex workers since the COVID-19 pandemic. These three sections were chosen with the intention of answering the following research questions.

1. How are sex workers perceived by police staff, uniformed officers, and detective officers?
2. In what ways do the perceptions differ between police staff, uniformed officers, and detective officers?
3. To what extent are police officers and staff within the UK police service aware of guidance for policing sex work?

This chapter aims to analyse the findings of each of these themes from the UK survey responses.

Demographics

All participants were from the same police service. The ages of the participants (n=59) ranged from 22 to 56 years old, the mean age being 37 years old. One participant chose to not disclose their age. The age groups with the highest number of participants were 22-29 years and 40-49 years. In terms of gender, 32 (54.4%) of participants were male, 26 (43.9%) of participants were female and 1 (1.8%) preferred not to say. The ethnic background for most participants was British, English, Northern Irish, Scottish or Welsh, one was Asian and white, one was Caribbean and white, one was Irish Traveller or Gypsy and two preferred not to say. There was quite a wide range of experience in the responses for participants' length of service, ranging from a minimum of 6 months to a maximum of 29 years. The

most common length of service was between 1 and 5 years, with 22 participants (36.67%), followed by between 11-15 years and 16-20 years which both had 10 participants (16.67%). The participants also came from a variety of police ranks. There were 14 detectives (23.33%) of various ranks from Detective Constable to Detective Chief Inspector, 29 Police Constables (48.33%), a total of 7 Police Sergeants and Acting Police Sergeants (11.67%), 3 Inspectors (5%), 1 Special Constable (1.67%) and 6 Police Staff (10%). All participants came from an array of police departments, the most common was the Local Policing Team (LPT), with 15 (25%) participants. 6 (16.7%) participants stated they did not have much interaction with street-based sex workers due to their role. However, there perceptions are still valuable as they are part of the police service.

Police Policies

One of the research questions for this study aimed to explore whether knowledge of force policies or strategies towards policing or managing sex work has an impact on the attitudes towards street-based sex workers. When participants were asked if they were aware of any force policies for policing sex work, only 9 (15%) said yes, and 51 (85%) said no. Those who said yes were asked to explain what policies they knew. A few examples were given such as:

> *"Safe and well visits, NRM considerations" – P004*
>
> *"Regular online seminars and i-tutorials on working with vulnerable victims" – P011*
>
> *"NPCC Guidance" – P013*
>
> *"Identify vulnerabilities involved in sex worker industry and provide a first-class service to victims. We can also work multi-agency to provide safeguarding" – P036*
>
> *"I am aware of safeguarding teams, multi-agency working" – P017*

Similarly, only 9 (15%) participants were aware of any strategies their force had for managing sex work. Three of the responses were repeated, but in addition to the examples above, participants mentioned the following.

> *"Regular patrols, advice that can be provided to sex workers with financial or addiction problems" – P011*

> *"VISOR/RELEVANT ORDERS" – P030*
>
> *"Officers should take extra care and give consideration that sex workers could be victims of trafficking or human slavery" – P040*
>
> *"Intelligence reports relating to active brothels and sex work are disseminated to forces Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking Team. Following assessment. With identified brothels or suspected brothels, welfare [checks] are conducted on the workers there under certain circumstances" – P052*

In relation to whether the participants were aware of any force policies for policing sex work, one (9%) participant mentioned the NPCC guidance, which is guidance provided for all police services in relation to sex work. Another participant referred to identifying vulnerabilities involved in sex work, which is the first key point of guidance for investigators in the NPCC guidance. Of all the participants who commented, 2 (18%) respondents mentioned multi-agency working regarding safeguarding those who may be vulnerable. An additional participant referred to the National Referral Mechanism (NRM), which is a framework for a multi-agency approach to identifying victims, in relation to modern slavery and human trafficking (COP, 2020). 4 (36%) participants gave new responses when asked if they were aware of any strategies for managing sex work. One participant mentioned the violent offender and sex offender register (VISOR), a national multi-agency database used for recording information on potentially dangerous people (COP, 2017). 2 (18%) participants also referred to having an awareness of looking out for human trafficking and modern-day slavery, where individuals can often be sexual exploited through the management of brothels.

Attitudes Towards Street-based Sex Workers Scale

As part of the online survey, participants completed an attitude towards sex worker's scale. The APPS was derived from Levin and Peled (2011) and adapted to be more appropriate for this research. As part of the scale, the questions were divided into two subscales: sex workers as normative/deviant (SWND) and sex workers as choosing/victimised (SWCV). As mentioned in the methodology, the subscales reflect the two main feminist perspectives on sex work. The APPS was not fully completed by all participants.

Overall, of the 60 individuals who participated in the online survey, only 58 (83.3%) responses were included for the analysis for the APPS. Two of the responses were missing data, therefore they were removed from the analysis due to being incomplete. The original study tested the reliability of the Likert items using a Cronbach's alpha (r = .73), the Cronbach's alpha was also calculated for the current study (r = .75). The mean scores were calculated for the two subscales, SWND and SWCV. The higher the scores, the more likely the individual believes street-based sex workers are perceived as deviant and victimised, aligning with a radical feminist approach to sex work. Lower scores indicate participants perceived sex workers as normative and chose to be sex workers, reflecting on views of liberal feminism. The means scores for the subscales SWND and SWCV are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: *Overall Mean Scores for Subscales, SWND and SWCV*

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
SWND	58	8.00	25.00	17.1552	3.54817
SWCV	58	6.00	20.00	15.5172	2.37857
Valid N (listwise)	58				

The overall mean scores were higher for the subscale SWND (n=58, m=17.1), compared to SWCV (n=58, m=15.5). The score range was calculated for SWND to analyse the overall mean scores. This was calculated by the number of items in the subscale (n1 = 8) times the number of points in Likert (n2 = 5), (n1 = 8 x n2 = 5 = 40). Therefore, the maximum mean score would be 40. This range is used for analysing the overall mean scores for subscale SWND. A high mean score for SWND is between 30-40, the high medium score is between 20-30, a low medium score is between 10-20, and a low mean score is between 0-10. The overall attitudes for SWND were a low medium score, meaning street-based sex workers were perceived as more normative than deviant in general.

For SWCV, the mean score calculation was slightly different due to there being less items in this subscale. The number of the items in the subscale (n1 = 6) were times by the number of points in the

Likert (n2 = 5) (n1 = 6 x n2 = 5 = 30). Therefore, the maximum mean score for this subscale would be 30. A high mean score for SWCV would be between 20-30, a medium score would be between 10-20, and a low mean score would be between 0-10. The overall attitudes for SWCV were a medium score. Therefore, the attitudes towards street-based sex workers were mixed between perceiving them as victimised and choosing to be street-based sex workers.

Of the 58 participants, 33 (56.9%) participants disagreed or strongly disagreed street-based sex workers choose to be sex workers. This percentage demonstrates how the attitudes towards street-based sex workers being victimised or choose to be sex workers was almost evenly divided one way. The response from this question is representative of the overall mean scores for SWCV. Additionally, 42 (72.4%) of the participants agreed or strongly agreed to the statement that street-based sex workers are unable to get out of the situation they are in. The response from this question is higher than the overall mean scores for the SWCV, suggesting street-based sex workers are more victimised.

Table 2*: Kruskal-Wallis H Test*

Test Statistics[a,b]

	SWND	SWCV
Kruskal-Wallis H	1.373	3.795
df	2	2
Asymp. Sig.	.503	.150

This research wanted to find out whether there was a difference between the attitudes of each police rank, police staff, uniformed officers, and detective officers. A Kruskal-Wallis *H* test was carried out, which is a method of testing for non-parametric studies. The Kruskal-Wallis *H* test was used to compare the overall means of police attitudes between each police rank for each subscale. The results of the test can be found in Table 2. For the subscale SWND, there was no significant difference between the three groups ($H(2) = 1.37$, $p = .503$). Similarly, there was no significant difference for SWCV ($H(2) = 3.80$, $p = .150$). The Kruskal-Wallis *H* test showed the three police ranks were not significantly different for each subscale. As a result, a Mann-Whitney test was carried out. A Mann-Whitney U test is also a non-

parametric test used to compare the medians between two groups. The results of the test can be used to find whether pairs of groups are significantly different, which can be helpful to identify the exact groups that differ. A Mann-Whitney U test was carried out to determine whether there was any significant difference between the police rank groups. Three Mann-Whitney U tests were completed, between Rank 1 and 2, Rank 1 and 3, and Rank 2 and 3. Rank 1 was police staff, rank 2 was uniformed officers and rank 3 was detective officers. If the *p* value is less than 0.005, there is a significant difference between the groups.

Table 3: *Mann Whitney U Test Between Rank 1-2*

	SWND	SWCV
Mann-Whitney U	81.000	61.500
Wilcoxon W	102.000	82.500
Z	-1.137	-1.819
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.256	.069
Exact Sig. [2*(1-tailed Sig.)]	.274b	.072b

a Grouping Variable: Rank

b Not corrected for ties.

Table 3 shows the results of the Mann-Whitney U test between police staff (rank 1) and uniformed officers (rank 2). There was no significant difference between perceptions of police staff and uniformed officers for each subscale (SWND, U = 81.00, $p = .256$ and SWCV, U = 61.50, $p = .069$).

Table 4: *Mann Whitney U Test Between Rank 1-3*

	SWND	SWCV
Mann-Whitney U	29.500	30.500
Wilcoxon W	50.500	51.500

Z	-1.037	-.972
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.300	.331
Exact Sig. [2*(1-tailed Sig.)]	.312b	.353b

a Grouping Variable: Rank

b Not corrected for ties.

Table 4 shows the results of the Mann-Whitney U test between police staff (rank 1) and detective officers (rank 3). There was no significant difference between perceptions of police staff and detective officers each subscale (SWND, U = 29.50, p = .300 and SWCV, U = 30.50, p = .331).

Table 5: *Mann Whitney U Test Between Rank 2-3*

	SWND	SWCV
Mann-Whitney U	261.500	217.000
Wilcoxon W	366.500	322.000
Z	-.093	-1.024
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.926	.306

a Grouping Variable: Rank

b Not corrected for ties.

Table 5 shows the results of the Mann-Whitney U test between uniformed officers (rank 2) and detective officers (rank 3). There was no significant difference between perceptions of uniformed officers and detective officers each subscale (SWND, U = 261.50, p = .926 and SWCV, U = 217.00, p = .306). All three Mann Whitney U tests showed there was no significant difference between the three police ranks for each subscale. However, there is a visual mean difference between the overall mean scores for each police rank, for each subscale.

Table 6: *Overall Mean Scores for Each Police Rank*

Ranks

	Rank	N	Mean Rank
SWND	Police Staff	6	15.00
	Uniformed	38	17.02
	Detective	14	17.14
	Total	58	
SWCV	Police Staff	6	14.16
	Uniformed	38	15.84
	Detective	14	14.33
	Total	58	

One of the research questions was to find out whether attitudes differed between the police ranks. This was to establish if there were any significant differences on the APPS scale between the different roles. As there was only a small sample of responses for each police rank from one police service, the results will not be generalisable to the UK police service. The results of each police rank for both subscales can be found in Table 6. For the first subscale, SWND, the results were calculated for police staff (n=6, m=15), uniformed police officers (n=38, m=17.02) and detective officers (n=14, m=17.14). For the SWCV subscale, the results were also found for each role within the police service, police staff (n=6, m=14.16), uniformed police officers (n=38, m=15.84) and detective officers (n=14, m=14.33). The table shows the overall means scores for subscale SWND was lower than both uniformed officers and detective officers. All ranks for the SWND subscale individually remained within a low medium score. Police staff also had the lowest mean score for subscale SWCV, but this was only slightly lower than the detective's score. Again, all ranks individually scored a medium score for the SWCV subscale. It is important to note the sample size for the police staff was significantly lower than both other groups.

The scores were also found for each gender, to see if there were any significant differences in attitudes between genders. The results for the overall means scores can be found in Table 7. For both subscales, females had lower mean scores (n=26, m=15.73 and m=14.62). The standard deviation was larger

between males and females for the SWND subscale (Sd=2.92). Overall, males scored highest for subscale SWND (n=32, m=18.65), compared to a slightly lower score for SWCV (n=32, m=16.58).

Table 7: *Overall Mean Scores for Each Gender*

	Gender		
	Gender	N	Mean Rank
SWND	Male	32	18.65
	Female	26	15.73
	Total	57	
SWCV	Male	32	16.58
	Female	26	14.62
	Total	57	

Previous research from Campbell (2016) found many officers felt new recruits had a more positive approach to policing sex work, and the negative views held by officers were retiring. Therefore, it was decided to compare the mean scores for each subscale over the period a participant had been a part of the police service to see if there were any attitudinal differences between experience. The results can be found in Table 8. Of the 58 participants whose results were included in the analysis for the APPS. Two participants did not give details on their length of service. The participants gave exact time periods, these were grouped into groups of 5 years, the lowest length of service was 6 months and the longest was 29 years. For the SWND subscale, the highest score was from participants who had been with the police service for 16-20 years (n=9, m=18.55). The lowest score for SWND was from participants who had been serving for under a year (n=2, m=13.50). For the SWCV, the highest and lowest scores were the same groups, those who had been in for between 16-20 years scored slightly lower (n=9, m=17.22) than the SWND subscale. Whereas those who had been in under a year scored slightly higher (n=2, m=14.50) than their score for the SWND subscale. In both subscales, the mean scores dipped for those who had been serving between 11-15 years (n=10, m=14.82 and m=14.90).

Table 8: *Overall Mean Scores for Length of Service*

Length of Service

	Length of Service	N	Mean Rank
SWND	Under 1 year	2	13.50
	1-5 years	22	17.23
	6-10 years	5	17.20
	11-15 years	10	14.82
	16-20 years	9	18.55
	21-25 years	5	17.40
	26-30 years	3	16.66
	Total	56	
SWCV	Under 1 year	2	14.50
	1-5 years	22	15.73
	6-10 years	5	15.20
	11-15 years	10	14.90
	16-20 years	9	17.22
	21-25 years	5	14.60
	26-30 years	3	14.00
	Total	56	

Sex Workers and Crime

Types of Interactions

55 (91.7%) participants agreed or strongly agreed a positive relationship between the police service and street-based sex workers would encourage them to report crimes committed against them. Those participants who disagreed with the statement or felt neutral were both a mixture of male and female participants, therefore there did not appear to be any differences in the attitudes between genders for this statement. Similarly, there appeared to be no connection between these responses and the type of role these individuals were in, as they all ranged from police staff, to uniformed response officers and detective officers.

Only 24 (40%) of participants had had any interactions with street-based sex workers. These individuals were a mixture of police staff, uniformed response officers and detectives. The general response participants seemed to have with street-based sex workers appeared to be very mixed. Out of the 26

responses to this question, 10 participants (38.5%) described street-based sex workers as generally "compliant" and mostly "friendly" towards them. In addition to these comments, a detective with a rape investigation background responded with:

> *"My only contact has been when they have reported sex crime against them. I have always found them to be fourth right and genuine in reporting crimes against them. They have engaged with the investigations and been appreciate of the support provided to them." - P015*

These terms were coded together as part of demonstrating a positive relationship between the police and street-based sex workers. Comparatively, 5 participants described their encounters with street-based sex workers to be aggressive, which was coded as aspects towards a negative relationship. The general response the participants described that they receive from street-based sex workers appeared to differ depending on the reasons for the participants interactions with them. If the general response was relatively positive, for example described as "compliant" or "friendly", the reasons for interaction were often to benefit the street-based sex worker.

General response:

> *"Apprehensive at first but generally compliant" - P008*
>
> *"Generally compliant but hesitant in providing details, perhaps concerned that they will not be believed" – P031*
>
> *"Friendly but apprehensive" – P041*

Reasons for interactions:

> *"Reporting crime, warrants and general engagement" – P008*
>
> *"Reporting crime as victim of sexual offences" – P031*
>
> *"Reporting crime" – P041*

However, when participants described their general response from street-based sex workers as negative, the reasons for their interactions with street-based sex workers appear to have often been when the sex worker is a potential suspect, or the police are requesting information from them, such as requesting witness statements for other crimes.

General response:

"Tend to be very 'up and down' – unpredictable" – P007

"Generally, not interested in speaking to police. Not rude but also unwilling to support police investigations" – P050

"Disinterested" - P051

Reasons for interactions:

"Victims of crime; Suspect for non-sex related offences – shoplifting, drug related offences" – P007

"The individual was a potential 3rd party witness to a crime but would not give an account or provide a statement due to not wanted any involvement with police" – P050

"General engagement, requests for witness statements" – P051

Sex Workers and Covid-19

Of all the participants who completed the online survey, 54 (90%) believed sex work had continued throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. The remaining 6 (10%) participants either believed sex work had stopped during the pandemic due to the restrictions in place at the time, or more likely, were unsure whether sex work had continued or not and chose to not answer. One participant commented on the following question stating they had not been working long enough to know. The only options for the question were either yes or no. An error on the design as it should have been anticipated that some participants may not have much interaction with sex workers and therefore would not be aware on how it may be occurring. An option such as, "unknown" should have been included for participants.
Following the previous question, participants were asked to explain their answer and expand on how they believed sex work had continued. One participant commented that:

"During the pandemic I did notice a reduction of sex workers seen on the streets." – P025

14 (28%) participants suggested sex work may not have been as visible and had continued indoors, such as in hotel rooms or working out of their own homes or had most likely moved online.

"Then you have the growth in online sex work, such as onlyfans and cam sites to make money. I think there was a huge shift in people joining sites like that to make money during the pandemic." – P022

> *"I am aware that street-based sex work has continued because I have investigated offences against street-based sex workers during this time. Street-based sex workers continued to work in the same way they did previously, however there were less people on the streets due to lockdown, so I think a lot of sex work then moved online for example "only fans" or by sex workers working out of their own houses." – P048*

Additionally, 45 (75%) participants expanded on why they believed sex work had continued throughout the pandemic. The main belief being it is a source of income for those who sell sex and therefore they would need to continue to work. Some of the responses included:

> *"For example, there would be no furlough scheme in place for sex workers, who still need to earn a living" – P056*

> *"It is a way of life for people who make money through sex work, as they still need the income through the pandemic" – P060*

Equally, participants explained sex work would have continued as there would still have been a demand for it, especially during the pandemic where there was a general lack of social interaction and individuals could not meet other people casually.

> *"With people being unable to engage with their usual pass-times, some will have turned to sex workers for sex" – P032*

Due to the mixture of roles the participants have within the police service, some individuals may have had a better understanding of the frequency of sex work than others. There were 9 participants who stated or indicted they 'believed' or 'assumed' sex work had continued. The reasons they gave were because they did not believe the pandemic would have stopped people committing crime or finding ways to make an income. However, some participants had had interactions with sex workers throughout the pandemic due to the nature of their role.

Since the COVID-19 pandemic, 47 (83.9%) participants thought there had been no change in the frequency of interactions with street-based sex workers. 4 (7.1%) participants reported the frequency

had decreased slightly, and 5 (8.9%) participants reported it had decreased a lot. No one believed the frequency of interactions increased at all.

Only 5 (9.3%) participants reported there had been a change in the types of interactions they had with street-based sex workers since the pandemic. However, when asked to state in what way it had changed, there was only one explanation relating to sex work, which was that most sex work is based indoors, and they did not see much street-based sex work in their area. The other responses had 2 (3.3%) participants state 'N/A', 5 (8.3%) participants explaining they did not have any interactions with street-based sex workers, or 1 (1.6%) participant felt they had not been working long enough to know. All other responses to these questions explained the reason the types of interactions had changed were due to them moving to an office-based role. These answers could reflect on the 49 (90.7%) participants who stated there had been no change in the types of interactions with street-based sex workers, as a few who completed the survey could be in roles which do not require much interaction or may not have been working in a policing environment long enough to have interacted with street-based sex workers during the pandemic.

Reporting a Crime (as a victim)

56 (93.3%) participants agreed or strongly agreed a street-based sex worker should be treated like any other victim when reporting crime against themselves. Participants were asked what proportion of crimes they thought street-based sex workers reported to the police in their area. The responses ranged from 0-90%, the mean average was 17%. Therefore, 31 (51.6%) of participants thought the proportion of crimes reported was 10% or lower.

In relation to COVID-19, participants were asked whether frequency of reports from street-based sex workers reporting being a victim of crime to the police had changed. The majority reported there had been no change in the frequency of reports. However, this statistic is not necessarily an accurate representation of what has occurred since the pandemic. This question did not have an 'unknown' option for those who may genuinely not know whether there was a change in the frequency of reports or not.

Therefore, the closest option for these individuals would be to check 'no change', as it is the most neutral response. In addition, as previously mentioned, many of the participants no longer were in roles which required them to interact with street-based sex workers and a few participants lacked experience in their roles as uniformed officers. However, a small percentage, 7 participants (11.7%), reported they thought reports decreased slightly or decreased a lot. Seven of these individuals were uniformed response officers, and therefore are more likely to be aware of a change in the frequency of reports. The other two participants were police staff, both working in roles which actively engage with the community.

There was ultimately no change in the types of crimes street-based sex workers report during the pandemic. In this survey, 59 (98.3%) participants reported they had not noticed a change and therefore there were no specific examples given for how the type of crimes being reported had changed.

> *"It's often not a choice for sex workers to be in this line of work, they need money to survive, for some they have addictions that they are struggling to overcome, others have young families to support, some are exploited into sex work and are at risk if they try to stop this work. These pressures have not left during Covid-19 and remain present such that I believe it has continued" – P031*

Investigating Crimes

All reported crime is investigated. However, only 38 (63.3%) of participants agreed or strongly agreed all reported crimes against street-based sex workers are treated seriously and investigated thoroughly. There are several issues which may arise for police officers when investigating crimes. From the qualitative responses given by the participants, four themes were identified in relation to issues which may occur when investigating crimes against street-based sex workers, based around their sex work.

Lack of Cooperation

The main theme that was identified was a lack of cooperation. This appeared to be the largest issue for police officers when investigating crimes against sex workers. Out of all the participants who answered this question, 18 participants referred to issues around lack of cooperation. Participants explained there

is often a lack of engagement from street-based sex workers, often reluctant to disclose full details of an incident due to a lack of trust in the police and fear of reporting. Some participants suggested reasons as to why street-based sex workers may be reluctant to engage, such as past experiences.

> ***"****Victims not wishing to engage due to previous experiences of prejudice or negative experience of police" – P007*

Other participants suggested street-based sex workers may be reluctant to engage due to the police presence affecting their business.

> *"SW victims often will not engage with police. They will not provide statements or any information relating to the crime that has occurred. Some don't want anyone to know they're talking to police, as this could stop business, or cause other issues" – P027*
>
> *"There may be a reluctance to engage with police because our presence may affect their business" – P055*

Lack of Evidence

A lack of cooperation often leads to a lack of evidence from the street-based sex workers, which was the second identified theme. There were several reasons, provided by respondents, as to why there may be a lack of evidence:

> "*Street-based sex workers are most likely to be working in an area with minimal witnesses and CCTV, during hours of darkness. This makes finding evidence from CCTV/witnesses and house to house more difficult" – P048*

Other issues which can arise surrounding a lack of evidence are crimes relating to sexual offences,

> *"…as these are notoriously hard to convict for especially if suspect is not known we may have limited evidence to go of [sic]" – P055*

Furthermore, there can often be difficulties retrieving DNA evidence and there can also be issues around consent,

> "*Many of the allegations will be word on word due to the nature of the work and no witnesses". – P021*

Further difficulties can arise in court, if the victim has previously been convicted it can undermine their credibility to give evidence, or personal issues such as addiction or mental health issues could prevent the sex worker from giving clear evidence.

Criminal Activity

One of the themes was relating to criminal activity. There were 7 participants who described street-based sex workers may be more reluctant to cooperate in an investigation in fear of incriminating themselves. In addition,

> *"Previous offending history of victim causing difficulties in prosecution". – P049*

The main offence they would be incriminating themselves for from what was mentioned would be drug related offences. The participants were asked why they thought sex workers were unwilling to report crime and lacked confidence in the police service taking their reports seriously. Three themes were identified. The first theme is participants think street-based sex workers fear being criminalised. There is a mixture of reasons as to why they may feel they would be criminalised.

> *"Often these females have been suspects in other investigations, for low level crime. They often have involvement with social service regarding children they have and are fearful of services as a result" – P015*

13 (23%) participants believe street-based sex workers are involved with other criminal activity, and therefore they fear they may be arrested for other offences if reporting a crime.

> *"Due to criminality being intertwined with the sex workers daily lives they have mistrust that the police will respond positively without getting themselves incriminated" – P023*

Issues around being involved in other criminal activity were expressed as it can undermine investigations.

> *"Many of the allegations will be word on word due to the nature of the work and no witnesses so there won't be many prosecutions (rightly so without evidence). Also, many are involved in drug use and have convictions and multiple allegations for dishonesty offences, and these undermine their accounts, but this is not because they are sex workers" – P021*

However, some participants felt sex workers may be worried they will be criminalised due to being sex workers. These views were held by police staff and officers.

> *"Additionally, because sex work is, in general, criminalised, sex workers may feel reluctant to report something because they feel they are 'admitting' to sex work and will be arrested" – P022*
>
> *"They may fear that they will get into trouble for being a sex worker if they report a crime" – P025*

Another theme was sex workers may be fearful of being judged by other officers for being sex workers.

> *"The belief that they will be judged for the work that they do and be discredited for it" – P060*
>
> *"They feel they will be judged upon, which should not be the case" – P034*

Other expressed there may be old fashioned views, particularly from male officers.

> *"Bad attitude of officers, bigoted views" – P033*
>
> *"Male officers with a superior attitude" – P042*

Finally, 16 (26.7%) participants stated negative past experiences, from personal to those of others, could put sex workers off from reporting a crime.

> *"I believe many sex workers may feel this way due to having previous bad experiences with police, whether it's their own or someone else they know with in the industry, making it a cultural issue" – P050*

Additionally, historical attitudes of officers were highlighted as factors which may deter sex workers from reporting being a victim. These attitudes were mentioned by all types of officers.

> *"Previous attitudes by officers in the past" – P057*

> *"Policing is dominated by men in a power dynamic. Police have historically stigmatised sex workers and not taken them seriously" – P013*

> *"Most of the sex workers I have encountered have been drug addicts who have also been arrested and convicted for other offences relating to the support of a drug habit. Many negative interactions with the police can lead to people having little trust in the police as they have for the most part been dealt with as suspects. A perception of a low conviction rate and a long amount of time between report and conviction can also lead people to believe they are unsafe reporting to police. Many I have encountered do not like the police and for the most part think we are bad people. I am aware that the ones I have encountered are not representative of the sex workers on the whole." – P010*

Exploitation

The last theme was exploitation. There were 10 (16.7%) participants identified the issues relating to exploitation such as sexual exploitation, sex trafficking, modern day slavery and being controlled or coerced by someone, as reasons why they may have difficulties retrieving information relating to an investigation as sex workers may be

> "*intimidated/vulnerable and under duress not to report or engage with police". – P040*

Aspects of exploitation were mentioned less than other main themes. However, it seemed important to include this as a main theme as exploitation and human trafficking is often linked to sex work and it is important to recognise how the police service has acknowledged aspects of that type of crime.

Additional Information

The final section of the survey was an opportunity for participants to add any further information about their experiences and/or views of street-based sex workers, policing sex work or dealing with crimes

against street-based sex workers. Many participants state they had little to no interaction with street-based sex workers as this specific type of sex work is less common. A couple participants mentioned other types of sex work they were more aware of, such as brothels.

The responses show an effort from uniformed officers to build positive relationships with street-based sex workers.

> *"During patrol there is an effort to engage with them however in my experience they is a lack of trust in the police. It is very difficult to positively engage with a person who doesn't like you" – P010*

Alternatively, some individuals had very different experiences with sex workers reporting crime.

> *"I have always had a great job from their reports. Successfully gaining prosecutions against offenders who are a concern to all of society and who would not have been on the police radar with the sex worker reporting their experience and supporting a prosecution." – P015*

There seems to be specific departments who manage these reports and investigations, where the morale towards sex workers seemed more positive.

> *"I believe I work in a department (Phoenix – rape department) that treats all reports from sex workers very seriously and I hope we can overcome their worries about reporting to us by further interactions and treating their reports in this serious way." – P031*

> *"There was an operation in my area a few years ago to help and support sex workers, drug rehabilitation and housing issues were addressed. This reduced the amount of street workers seen on the streets by 80% and since that was introduced the numbers have remained low." – P025*

However, not all staff from this police service seemed to be as knowledgeable on the subject, a member of police staff commented:

> *"I really do think there needs to be some training or education on sex work because there is a lot of stigma around it" – P022*

A key attitude which was drawn from these responses was that,

> *"Policing is simple everyone matters or nobody matters" – P006*

Summary

This chapter has discussed the findings from the online survey. The results from the adapted APPS have shown the overall attitudes of street-based sex workers were lower, meaning they were perceived as normative, compared to deviant. These results suggest the overall views aligned more with a liberal feminist approach. However, the attitudes towards whether street-based sex workers were more victimised or choosing were more evenly split. The findings have demonstrated the general response police officers and staff have had from sex workers is influenced by the reasons for the interaction. Sex workers appear to be apprehensive due to the uncertainty of why a police officer may want to engage with them. However, this is not always the case. If the reason for the interaction is for the sex worker to report a crime, they are often still hesitant to cooperate. Four main themes were identified relating to investigating crimes. These were a lack of cooperation, lack of evidence, exploitation, and criminal activity. Since the COVID-19 pandemic, sex work has continued but is operating less on the street and has appeared to have moved into indoor spaces such as sex workers working from their homes or in controlled environments such as brothels. There has been little change in the reporting of crime by sex workers during the pandemic. The changes in reporting crime were likely to have decreased due to fear of repercussions as local restrictions were in place. Those participants who have worked in specific operations or departments where investigations can be more focused, have described more positive relationships with street-based sex workers.

Chapter 4: Discussion

Introduction

This research aimed to analyse how police officers and staff, within a UK police service, perceive street-based sex workers, as victim of crime. The online survey also aimed to explore sex work during the COVID-19 pandemic, including interactions with sex workers during this time and sex workers reporting being a victim of crime. The purpose of including questions in the survey around COVID-19 was to find out whether sex work had continued during the pandemic or not, which 90% of participants believed it had. Official statistics would not be able to identify this issue, or how sex work had continued. The main challenge would be engaging with current street-based sex workers to ask whether they had continued working or not, and due to the restrictions around social interaction it is likely many would not be truthful about the true extent of their work. The types of individuals who participated in the survey ranged from police staff, uniformed officers, and detective officers from various ranks. The responses from these participants revealed three themes in police attitudes towards sex workers as victims of crime; vulnerability, fear, and police willingness to engage. This chapter will discuss the main attitudes held by police staff, uniformed officers, and detective officers. The three main themes will then each be discussed. Firstly, the police attitude of how street-based sex workers are perceived as vulnerable people and impact this has. The fears the police service believe sex workers have towards reporting crime will then be analysed, followed by the police officers' and staff willingness to engage positively with street-based sex workers. Finally, this chapter will explore the relationship between the police service and street-based sex worker.

Interpretation

Police Attitudes

The survey included part of the APPS to find out the attitudes members of the police service had towards street-based sex workers. The APPS measured whether street-based sex workers were normative or deviant (SWND) and whether they choose to be street-based sex workers or whether they were victims (SWCV). Overall, police staff and officers scored a low medium score on the SWND subscale, meaning the attitudes gravitated towards a normative approach, on the normative to deviant axis. The normative approach suggests individuals tended to believe women have free choice in becoming street-based sex

workers and were a normal part of society (Levin & Peled, 2011). These beliefs form more of a liberal feminist perspective (Maccaro, 2020). This is significant as many street-based sex workers believe police officers perceive them as criminal (Bowen, 2021). However, it is more likely the police service would perceive street-based sex workers as criminals when they have committed crime. This highlights a wider issue around the legislation on sex work, as the current system is not supporting sex workers and is criminalising them instead of protecting them. This reinforces Vanwesenbeeck's (2017, p. 1631) argument that criminalisation of sex work is "barking up the wrong tree" and fighting sex instead of crime. For example, the legislation around brothels criminalises sex workers if they are working together from the same premises. In this instance, it could be assumed from the above results the police service would perceive them as criminals as they would be breaking the law. However, there is a possibility that policing of this type of offending is not in the public interest, as more serious crimes are occurring around sex work, and it could be assumed it is safer to work with people you know and trust.

The overall views were more divided for the SWCV subscale, and the perceptions were mixed. The overall attitudes scored a medium score, and around half of the participants believed street-based sex workers to be victims. These statistics go against Christie's (1986) theory of the ideal victim, as his stance would suggest street-based sex workers would be perceived as non-ideal victims. Many of the characteristics of street-based sex workers do not align with Christie's (1986) characteristics of an ideal victim. However, this does not necessarily mean street-based sex workers cannot be victims. The use of professional judgement and enforcement of the law means police officers should be able to see beyond the idea of an 'ideal' victim. The police are focused on the collection of evidence and facts to build an investigation, these are the foundations of their decision making and not those of prejudice. However, there is a possibility some street-based sex workers could be classed as deviant victims. Not because they do not fit into the group of an ideal victim, as suggested by Davies (2016), but due to street-based sex workers being a victim of crime, whilst involved in other criminal activities. Nevertheless, this should not undermine their status as a victim.

The adapted APPS asked participants whether they thought street-based sex workers choose to be sex workers, 33 (56.9%) of 58 participants disagreed. A factor in this analysis which was ill defined was the definition of 'choosing'. It is unclear from the original APPS to what constitutes as choice and to what extent. The assumption would be that the number of street-based sex workers who choose to be there out of free will would be less than those who are choosing to do some to fund other addictions. An example could be, a street-based sex worker chooses to be a sex worker, however the reasons behind this choice are to earn money to buy drugs. Arguably, this person could be seen as being victim to a drug addiction, who also made a choice to earn money this way instead of other options. The mixed responses on the SWCV scale suggests that all views on sex work are not necessarily defined by liberal or radical feminism. The reasons for sex workers being involved in sex work can be complex. Therefore, perceptions cannot be condensed into two polarised perspectives, but could be considered on a scale between them. As a result of the lack of clarity, it is difficult to conclude how the questions have been interpreted by the participants and whether their idea of choice would be different to the average person. As previously mentioned in the methodology, the APPS was only tested using a sample from one population of students. The inquisitive mind of someone in the police is likely to have a different method of thinking and decision making compared to the public. The police service train their staff and officers to use the National Decision-Making Model (NDM) to make their decisions (COP, 2014). As members of the police service are trained to record their decision-making throughout their work and justify their actions, this would be an example of how the thought process of someone in the police would be different to the average member of the public.

Previous research has shown that police officers engage in rape victim-blaming (Zri, 2021). This research focused on a wider aspect, analysing the police officers' and staff perceptions, within a UK police service, of street-based sex workers. However, the qualitative results from this research did not demonstrate direct victim-blaming. The responses displayed attitudes towards a lack of evidence when street-based sex workers reported crime, which poses difficulties for the police when investigating crime. The findings demonstrate examples of how sexual offences are hard to prove, especially if the suspect is not known. There is a possibility that an officer's frustration around their work could be seen

as a negative perspective. A similar conclusion was reported in a study of police officer's attitude towards positive action in domestic violence (Rowe, 2007). The study found officers were often frustrated when responding to domestic incidents, as some had seen few incidents result in any convictions (Rowe, 2007). The research focused on police perspectives in a totally different aspect of policing. However, the premise that if police staff or officers are repeatedly attending incidents which they put lots of time and effort into constructing a case, for there to be no result, could cause frustrations towards dealing with those areas of policing. On the other hand, the views of the police officers from this study could demonstrate a lack of awareness of the complexities of domestic violence victim's situations. Thus, could demonstrate a lack of awareness in police officers and staff's knowledge of the issues faced by street-based sex workers.

The findings of the APPS also looked to find differences of police attitudes between each gender. Overall, females had lower mean scores for both subscales than males. There was a larger gap between scores for the SWND subscale, suggesting that males were more likely to perceive street-based sex workers as deviant, compared to females. Whereas females were more likely to perceive street-based sex workers as choosing to be sex workers, and males perceived them more as victimised. The results indicate that males displayed a more 'problem-orientated' approach towards street-based sex workers than females, with views associated more with them being socially deviant or victims of abuse (Levin & Peled, 2011). The current literature around rape has found that overall men show higher levels of blame to victims than females, and one study has found this to be consistent with male and female officers (Zvi, 2021; Sleath & Bull, 2010). The results amongst female staff and officers could be linked to feminist perspectives towards sex work. Some feminists perceive sex work to be empowering for women who are involved as sex workers, as they have a choice to be a sex worker and can make their own choices around what they choose to do with their body (Maccaro, 2020). Liberal feminists would argue there is no difference between work of sexual nature and any other form of work if the intention is to work for money (Maccaro, 2020). Whilst this may be the case for some sex workers, there are also sex workers who are working on the streets because they are victims of crime, such as exploitation, or

because they need money to live, and therefore would not choose to be street-based sex workers in usual circumstances (Balfour & Allen, 2014).

Aspects of a radical perspective also emerged from some of the responses. Many participants suggested that sex workers have negative views towards male police officers. It was concluded that participants felt a power dynamic was a factor which played a part in deterring sex workers from reporting being a victim of crime. Radical feminism perceives sex work as an indication of a male-dominated society, demonstrating the power struggle between men and women (Levin & Peled, 2011; Becker, 2003). Ultimately, a radical feminist approach perceives sex work as sexual exploitation and dehumanisation of women (Becker, 2003). A few participants commented on the stereotype that most street-based sex workers were female, and many frontline police officers were male. The gender stereotype was mentioned more by female participants. However, a few higher ranked male officers also commented on how they believed the gender stereotype being a factor which affected how street-based sex workers viewed the police service. Misogynistic views, which contribute to the dehumanisation of sex workers, have previously affected street-based sex workers and how they were represented in police investigations (Campbell *et al.* 2020; Byford, 2006). Several participants believed that some people within the police service still held old fashioned views towards sex work, or else describe them as bigoted, bias, and misogynistic. Despite many believing that these types of views still existed within policing, none of the participants expressed any opinions or attitudes which were 'historic' or misogynistic.

Police attitudes were measured for length of service. Previously, research suggested new recruits had a fresh approach to policing and those officers with more old-fashioned views around sex work were retired (Campbell, 2016). The participants provided details of how long they had worked within the police service. The answers were grouped from under one year, to groups of five. The length of service was grouped into shorter lengths to better understand the difference between attitudes. The group with the most participants had served for between 1-5 years. For subscale SWND, all groups remained within a low medium score. However, those who had been serving for under 1 year had the lowest mean scores.

For subscale SWCV, all the groups had a low mean score. However, the group with the lowest mean scores had been serving between 26-30 years, although this was closely followed by those who had been serving under 1 year. The mean score results from both subscales seem to rise, and then dip for those who had been serving between 11-15 years. The scores both peak higher again for the next group, 16-20 years, and then start to decrease again. The group of participants who had been serving for 16-20 years had the highest mean scores for both subscales. However, it there was no definite increase in the mean scores as the length of service increased. Therefore, it does not seem obvious that those who had been serving for longer had higher scores and perceived street-based sex workers as more deviant and victimised. However, that does not necessarily dismiss previous research. Due to the potential self-selection bias, it could be likely that those who have particularly negative views of street-based sex workers chose not to take part in a research project around police attitudes.

Differences between Police Staff, Uniformed Officers, and Detective Officers

The online survey was completed by a mixture of police staff, uniformed officers, and detectives from various departments and of various ranks. The research study aimed to understand how street-based sex workers were perceived by all those who participated in the survey. Due to the nature of policing roles, there were many participants who would naturally have more opportunity to have engagements with street-based sex workers than others. Similarly, different interactions participants had with street-based sex workers also affected how they perceived them. Ultimately, the first aim of the research was seeking whether there were any differences in the views held by the different types of staff working for the UK police service.

The results of the APPS found there was no statistically significant difference of the police attitudes between each police rank. Similarly, the Mann-Whitney U tests found there was equally no significant difference between the attitudes between each group. However, there was a visual mean difference between the overall means scores of each group. Police staff had the lowest mean scores for each subscale. However, it was only slightly lower than the detective officers mean score for the SWCV subscale. Therefore overall, police staff believed that on the SWND and SWCV axis, street-based sex

workers were more normative and chose to be street-based sex workers, demonstrating views of the normative approach to sex work (Levin & Peled, 2011). The qualitative responses given by the few police staff who participated demonstrated broader views. Many seemed aware of the issues street-based sex workers might be struggling, such as with drug addictions. A few described that there was still a 'stigma' around sex work. As a result, one participant suggested there needs to be more training on sex work and sex workers, which could help with destigmatising sex work. Klambauer (2017) found in a recent study that a sex workers' perception of an interaction with the police was impacted by their internalisation of stigmas. Most of the police staff participants did not comment on factors in relation to street-based sex workers and the pandemic as they were not as aware of any changes in frequency of reporting. There were several shared views between police staff and other higher ranked officers. One of the most concerning views was a few participants indicated they believed sex work was a crime, and by reporting they were a victim of crime through their work, they would be incriminating themselves. In some responses, it did not seem clear whether they believed they may be incriminating themselves from 'admitting' to being involved in sex work or due to being involved with other activities.

Police Policy

The participants were asked whether they were aware of any force policies for policing sex work, or any strategies for managing sex work. Only 9 (15%) respondents said they were aware of any policies or strategies in relation to sex work. However, only 24 (40%) of participants stated they had any interactions with street-based sex workers. This would be expected if most participants were in a role where they would have no chance of interacting with street-based sex workers. However, 29 (48.33%) respondents, which is almost half, were uniformed police officers, who are arguably the most likely to have encounters with street-based sex workers. Only one participant had mentioned the NPCC guidance as a policy they were aware of. This does not necessarily reflect that police staff and officers are not aware of force policies around sex work. A few participants described actions, such as identifying vulnerabilities, which is a key factor within the NPCC national guidance for policing sex work. The question within the survey asked whether the participant knew of force policies. Whilst they may not have known the exact policy and checked 'no', they may have known the appropriate actions to take

when interacting with street-based sex workers. This is not exactly known due to the method of data collection, although this could be an area for further development and test the knowledge of police staff and officers.

The NUM also conducted research recently which found that 86% of the 156 police officers they interviewed were not aware of the NPCC Sex Work and Prostitution guidance (NUM, 2021; Bowen *et al.*, 2021). In comparison, the statistic from this research is consistent with the findings from the NUM research. This could be an explanation as to why street-based sex workers often fear the police, as they can receive different responses when they interact with police officers. The police service has been provided with national guidance but can also have a different approach because it is not mandatory. Therefore, there is not one standardised approach to policing sex work. These figures could suggest the current guidance is not communicated to frontline officers. Although, it is arguably not just uniformed officers who should have an understanding around sex work. Many police staff roles are engaged with working with members of the community, safeguarding and policy making. Police staff roles are arguably just as important as some will even work towards implementing changes in policing. Therefore, it is equally as important they understand policy and legislation. From these factors, it could be proposed the training given to police officers and staff around sex work should be reviewed to see whether it is being taught and understood by the recipients.

Vulnerability

Overall, across all types of participants, street-based sex workers when reporting a crime were perceived as vulnerable, and often victims. Across all the issues which were discussed, the most frequently used word in relation to the question about key issues in investigations was “victim”. Other vulnerabilities were discussed, such as mental health issues and drug addiction. There was a general awareness of the seriousness of sexual exploitation and human trafficking. Many participants mentioned that street-based sex workers may be unwilling to report being a victim of crime due to these factors, as they may be intimidated, in fear of reprisal. There were similarities with these responses and the current research around the perceptions of the police from sex workers (Sleath & Bull, 2017). However, previous

research has shown both indoor and street-based sex workers have felt the police had an unwillingness to offer support and protection due to them being sex workers (Klambauer, 2017). Additionally, if they are being controlled by a procurer (or 'pimp'), they may fear the police. In cases of sex trafficking, the procurer will often blackmail the victims by threatening to tell the police about their presence on the streets (Peterson & Durfee, 2003). Whilst the focus of this research was not aiming to include the perceptions of those individuals who are controlled, exploited, or trafficked, it is important to recognise the participants awareness of these individuals being victims of crime.

Fear of Repercussions

There were not many participants who were aware of the any changes in reporting and interactions with street-based sex workers since the COVID-19 pandemic, for many this was due to their job role. However, there were a few officers who believed that the reporting of crime from street-based sex workers would have decreased. The reasoning behind the frequency of reports decreasing during the pandemic is likely due to the sex workers being worried they would get in trouble for not following government guidance and carrying on with their usual work. Previous research has shown that sex workers do not report being a victim of crime due to fear of not being taken seriously or being arrested for being involved in other crimes (Sleath & Bull, 2017). There is a possibility this has heightened during a time where the public were advised of social distancing and isolating in their homes.

There were several participants who mentioned that sex workers may fear reporting a crime. There is a difference between having a fear of reporting because they feel as though the officer may not do their job properly, such as not take the report seriously, and a fear of reporting due to being criminalised (Sleath & Bull, 2017). Many described that is street-based sex workers had bad experiences with the police service, that this may discourage them from reporting a crime. A few examples of bad experiences were described from the police perception, such as being arrested for being involved in criminal activity or fear of having their children taken away. Whilst from the sex workers perspective, these situations are bad experiences, these were not actions made by the police service because they were victims of crime or because they were sex workers. There are policies and procedures in place to

stop mistreatment, and all arrests must be proportionate, legal, accountable, and necessary (COP, 2014). Therefore, it could be concluded that bad experiences are sometimes subjective. If the sex worker is engaged in illegal activity or there are concerns over the welfare of others, such as children, the police have a responsibility to safeguard them if they believe they are at risk of harm.

The participants also raised the issue that sex workers may not report crime due to believing that the report would not have any positive outcomes. There is often a lot of frustration for any victims of crime if their allegation did not lead to a successful prosecution. There are several reasons affecting the result, the most common being a lack of evidence. If there are evidential difficulties, the chances of a prosecution being successful are reduced. The police officer is the point of contact, 'middleman' between the court and the sex worker and it is possible that there may be resentment towards the officers if the prosecution was not successful. There are a few factors which could affect the prosecution including the lack of witnesses, and the character of the complainant.

Police Willingness to Engage

Attitudes were derived from this section, including a willingness from police to engage with sex workers. A perception one participant had towards the entire online survey was that,

> "Policing is simple everyone matters or nobody matters"

This summarises their overall attitude that it is irrelevant if someone is a sex worker or not, if they are reporting a crime, they are a potential victim. If they have committed a crime, they would be treated as a suspect. Everybody is treated the same regardless of what they do. However, street-based sex workers are often simultaneously victim and offender. With the nature of their work, they are more likely to experience higher rates of violence and sexual violence compared to non sex workers (Connelly, Kamerade & Sanders, 2018; Campbell, 2014; 2016). At the same time, those same sex workers could be criminalised under soliciting laws or for working together under laws around brothels. Other examples include cases of migrant sex workers, as they are often victims of exploitation and human

trafficking due to their vulnerability. However, migrant sex workers have also been targeted by police for arrests and deportation, and therefore treated as an offender (English Collective of Prostitutes, 2019).

The past perceptions of street-based sex workers were not positive, and many participants believed that these were core factors which still affected street-based sex workers and made them more fearful of reporting crime (NUM, 2021; Sleath & Bull, 2017). Many uniformed police officers mentioned they have undertaken general engagement with street-based sex workers, including welfare checks and general check-ups with street-based sex workers to help create a better relationship. Nevertheless, participants have generally shown awareness of the attitudes held by the police service in the past, which affected many victims of crime including sex workers.

In terms of street-based sex work, it was found many street-based sex workers do not want to spend too much time interacting with the police as the police presence can deter their potential clients from stopping or coming back ever again. Another consideration from this research is negative interactions with street-based sex workers can affect the views a police officer may have of sex workers, as negative experiences are often more memorable. One participant particularly shared their general interactions with street-based sex workers which were negative for them, as these sex workers did not like police and believed they were bad people. However, they shared they were aware these interactions were not representative of all sex workers. It is key to note that despite the negative experience this uniformed police officer had with a street-based sex worker, they have noted this is not necessarily how all street-based sex workers would respond and would not necessarily treat any potential street-based sex workers they may meet in the future differently.

Despite the efforts from police officers, sex workers are still apprehensive or dismissive towards the police and often do not want to fully cooperate with investigations because they do not trust the prosecution would result too much. The current situation has arguably entered a continuous cycle which results in a standstill in terms of attempting to improve the relationship between two parties. Street-based sex workers are fearful of reporting, for a multitude of reasons (Sleath & Bull, 2017). As a result,

the police service being keen to engage, but they are confronted with apprehensive individuals who are unwilling to cooperate with them, and the reasons for this are due to past perceptions and experiences, whether personal or those of others. Therefore, the question this poses is, how can you improve a relationship between two groups of people who do not fully understand each other and are stuck in a cycle? A possible solution would be a third-party involvement. A third-party involvement could be a charity, such as NUM, to continue working with organisations such as the National Police Chiefs Council (NPCC) to create a standardised police response for street-based sex workers as victims of crime. The collaboration of the two was effective in creating the Sex Work and Prostitution Guidance (NPCC, 2019). However, this is only guidance, and all UK police services remain to have their own strategies towards policing sex work which has not been created with the third-party involvement.

Limitations

The COVID-19 pandemic and the implications that has had on the country, in addition to personal life, resulted in delays within the research that may not have occurred in regular life. Several police services were contacted about distributing the survey amongst their officers. Many police services were unable to give support to this research. This research originally aimed to make a comparative analysis between UK and Dutch police. However, there have been delays with communication between several police services as many do not have the time to assist with additional research. However, the responses received from the police service who participated were better than expected. It was originally expected to receive 30 responses from each police service, and therefore it was not expected that many responses would be received from one single police service. However, 60 participants were involved in this research, and many provided in-depth responses. Nevertheless, having a broader selection of responses from additional police services would have enhanced the results produced from this research. A better approach to contacted police services should have been adopted in the earlier planning stages of the research. More police services should have been contacted to account for the desired police services not wishing to be involved in the research.

As mentioned in the methodology, there were limitations to this study about the methods chosen for data collection. A future recommendation for this research could be to mix the data collection to be half survey responses and half interview. By conducting interviews there is planning necessary beforehand which also requires finding the participants to interview. The advantage from this is knowing the desired response rate will be obtained. The opportunity is also available to ask follow-up questions on areas you wish to know more about, including topics that may not have been thought of or known about prior to the interview.

With better preparation, a pilot survey could have been produced to see what the survey response rate would have been like. The other benefits of creating a pilot survey are uncovering issues within the survey. As the survey was online and anonymous, therefore there was no way of knowing whether the questions asked were interpreted and understood by the participants as intended. This may have resulted in questions being answered incorrectly or individuals guessing what they may believe the correct answer should be. A pilot survey could have allowed feedback and resulted in an evaluation on how it could be improved to achieve the best possible responses from participants.

Summary

The primary focus of this research project was to analyse the perceptions of street-based sex workers as victims of crime, by police officers and staff in a UK police service. The results from this research have shown the overall attitudes towards street-based sex workers were more often perceived as normative than deviant individuals, reflecting a liberal feminist perspective. This is important as it implies it is less likely the police are arresting street-based sex workers because they have negative views towards them, and not judging the group of people based on past experiences. As there are policies in place to prevent police officers from acting this way towards anyone, it is more likely street-based sex workers are perceived as deviant when they have committed crimes and been involved in criminal activity. However, 51 (85%) of participants stated they were not aware of force policies for policing sex work, which could suggest a lack of knowledge around the best way to interact with street-based sex workers. Further research could be done to speak to police officers and staff about their

understanding of policing sex work, as these participants could have been aware of necessary actions to take but unaware of the policy they come from.

The adapted APPS results showed an even split between perceptions of street-based sex workers as choosing or victims, suggesting the views on sex work are not strictly defined by liberal and radical feminism. As further evidenced by the qualitative data, which provided richer data. Respondents generally viewed street-based sex workers as vulnerable people, either victims of exploitation, or subject to drug addictions and mental health issues. Most street-based sex workers fear being criminalised or are afraid of being arrested if they report a crime. Many believed it was inevitable street-based sex workers were likely involved in criminality, including drugs offences and low-level crimes. Many negative interactions with the police service in the eyes of the sex worker can lead to trust issues. Overall, the police seemed to demonstrate a willingness to engage. However, officers were often faced with individuals who do not want to speak to them or have any interactions with police. The past has created a damaged relationship which could arguably only be resolved with a third-party involvement.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Conclusion

This thesis has analysed police officer and staff perceptions of street-based sex workers. Those staff were from one UK police service. There were three main research questions for this study.

1. How are street-based sex workers perceived by detectives, uniformed officers, and police staff in a UK police service?
2. In what ways do perceptions differ between the different police ranks?
3. To what extent are police officers and staff within the UK police service aware of guidance for policing sex work?

The online survey included an adapted APPS to measure the attitudes of police officers and staff within a UK police service. The findings of the APPS were divided into two subcategories: SWND and SWCV. The overall mean scores of the first subscale, SWND, had a low medium score. A low medium score means the overall attitudes of police officers and staff were closer aligned with the normative approach, compared to the problem orientated approach. The overall results of the second subscale were not as definitive. The attitudes from police officers and staff were evenly divided between perceiving street-based sex workers as choosing to be sex workers with free choice, and individuals who are often subject to abuse and victimisation. The lack of conclusive outcome for the SWCV scale is representative of the current literature on the feminist approach to sex work. The sex industry is complicated, as are the reasons for individuals working in the field. Therefore, the answer is often not one or the other, but exists on a scale. Sanders *et al* (2020) identified police forces were beginning to understand sex work is more complex than the two binaries, and this finding supports their claim. The APPS was developed to measure attitudes of the public and was only used to measure attitudes of students from a mainly Jewish community. Further analysis of this scale would need to be undertaken before using it on a larger scale, to assess its accuracy in measuring the attitudes of police service personnel. Several factors would need to be considered, such as the assumption that all sex workers are female, and their clients are all male.

A non-experimental design for the quantitative data was essential for finding patterns between variables. The study used a self-selection sample. Whilst this was beneficial for garnering responses from UK police service personnel, only 40% of participants had interacted with street-based sex workers. This was disappointing as the desired sample would ideally have had some type of interaction with street-based sex workers. Nevertheless, the perceptions of all those who did participate were valued as they were all part of the same police service and contributed to an understanding of overall perceptions, including those of people more remote from the frontline responses to street-based sex workers.

The research aimed to discover whether perceptions differed between the different police ranks. Participants were divided into police staff, uniformed officers, and detective officers. A Kruskal-Wallis *H* test was conducted, followed by three Mann-Whitney U tests, and it was found that there was no statistically significant difference between the three police ranks for each subscale. However, the police staff had the lowest mean scores for both subscales, although it was only slightly lower than the detectives mean scores for the SWCV subscale. However, the number of police staff participants scored lower, compared to both uniformed and detective officers. Further analysis found males had the highest mean scores for both subscales, compared to female participants. The results were also analysed with length of service. The results also found those who had been serving for less than a year had the lowest mean scores for both subscales, and the highest mean scores were from those who had been serving between 16-20 years. There was no obvious connection between the mean scores increasing alongside the increased length of service, as other research has suggested (Campbell, 2016).

The combination of qualitative questions in addition to the APPS elaborated on the quantitative responses, providing rich qualitative data. This study used a cross-sectional mixed methods research design, which was significant in yielding the most beneficial results to answer the research questions. Pragmatic approaches within research focus on understanding the individual's experiences (Duram, 2012). For this study, it was important to understand the experiences of interactions with street-based sex workers from the perspectives of police officers and staff, to assist with understating their attitudes. It would be difficult to understand such perceptions without exploring the real-life and lived experiences

the participants have had. These were found through analysing qualitative responses within the online survey. The main themes within the qualitative data were vulnerability, fear, and police willingness to engage. The police staff, uniformed officers, and detectives all perceived street-based sex workers as vulnerable and demonstrated an understanding of the risks of modern-day slavery and human trafficking in relation to sex work. Participants identified street-based sex workers may fear reporting to the police, displaying an array of reasons which could deter them, including previous experiences with police and fear of repercussions such as being criminalised or arrested for other offences. Finally, the participants often demonstrated they wanted street-based sex workers to come forward to report crime and engage with them. However, street-based sex workers often did not want to engage with the police and appeared apprehensive when interacting with each other.

The knowledge of policies and strategies for policing and managing sex work were asked for from participants. Only 15% of participants stated they were aware of any policies. The results from this study were consistent with the results from the NUM. The NUM conducted their own study and found only 14% were aware of the NPCC guidance on sex work (Bowen, 2021). The NPCC only offers national guidance for policing sex work (NPCC, 2017). Therefore, police services in the UK can have different approaches for policing sex work as it is not mandatory. Consequently, street-based sex workers will experience different interactions with the police, as there is not one standardised approach to policing sex work (NUM, 2021). As a result, there are a mixture of responses from sex workers themselves about how they interact with the police. Some of these police approaches have received a more positive response than others. The Merseyside Police model of treating crimes against sex workers as hate crimes is arguably one of the best approaches applied by policing. Campbell (2016) discussed the hate crime approach had created the one of best conviction rates for those who have sexually assaulted sex workers across the UK. The effects of introducing the hate crime approach have resulted in positive action and proving that the theory works in practice and has actively improved reporting from sex workers. Some police services across the UK work in partnerships with charities such as NUM. These charities offer support to sex workers, such as with rehabilitation of drug or alcohol abuse, or

support with experiencing sexual assault. These actions are a step in the right direction for improving relationships and creating a better response from the police.

The police service recognises that many crimes are going "unreported and unpublished" (NPCC, 2019), because sex workers fear their report will not be taken seriously or they will end up being investigated themselves. Across the UK, the police service has demonstrated change. West Yorkshire Police apologised for the language and tone used by their officers in the past in relation to the Yorkshire Ripper investigation and acknowledge their attitudes towards sex workers were unacceptable (Byford, 2006). The NPCC (2019) have also released a statement addressing how the sex industry is 'evolving' and acknowledge it is mostly hidden from public view. The current research has also seen a change in attitudes through the police officers and staff displaying an understanding of how past actions from the police have impacted street-based sex workers.

Street-based sex work is the most dangerous as sex workers are more at risk of physical violence (Campbell, 2002; Sanders *et al*, 2017). The Merseyside approach is an example of actively supporting sex workers and prioritising their safety, in comparison to other police services in the UK, who have focused on supporting sex workers by removing demand and targeting their clients. Street-based sex workers interactions are less common as sex work is becoming more common through other methods. The true extent of sex work is being moved from the public view and relocating behind closed doors. The police actions in these situations have driven sex workers to start operating indoors. In these cases, their fears of stepping forwards to report crime are heightened as they may be punished for working in brothels. This research found that the attitudes towards sex workers are dependent on the type of sex worker and the positions they are in. These are the findings from one police service in the UK. As every police service in the UK has a different approach to policing sex work, these results cannot be generalisable to the attitudes of the rest of the police staff, uniformed officers, and detective officers across the country.

Despite how police staff, uniformed officers and detectives perceive street-based sex workers, there appears to be another substantial issue. The numerous attempts from police services across the UK to support sex workers and protect them from violence is arguably removing their customers from the streets and forcing them to work indoors. Previous attempts at managing sex work have been by removing the demand by targeting those who purchase sex (Livingstone, 2020). The number of sex workers is not decreasing, and the current statistics do not suggest the amount of violence sex workers are victim is decreasing too. The problem is that the resources are not available to these police officers and staff to understand the bigger picture and provide a uniformed response to all street-based sex workers.

Recommendations

The findings from this research have provided a useful insight into how police officers and staff, within a UK police service, perceive street-based sex workers, as victims of crime. As a result of the findings three recommendations are made.

Standardised police response

The first recommendation from this research would be create a standardised police response to managing reports of crime from street-based sex workers. This research suggests three ways this could be achieved.

1. Policy into Practice

The NPCC offers guidance on policing sex work. However, this response is arguably not enough to improve the relationship between the police service and street-based sex workers. Merseyside Police have led a positive example with the hate crime approach, working with NUM and producing a report on how to change their strategy towards sex work. This was followed by positive statistics demonstrating improved relationships between sex workers and the police. However, when police officers were asked whether they were aware of the hate crime approach in a recent survey, only 64% of officers were aware of the policy (Campbell, 2016). Therefore, it could be suggested the national guidance and force policies are not being communicated to all staff. A review of the policy being

implemented and understood in current practice could be beneficial in understanding the true level of knowledge of police officers and staff. This follows onto the next method.

2. National Police Policy

A standardised national police response could be achieved as an outcome of a future report aiming to find the best approaches towards building a relationship between police service and sex workers. Street-based sex workers have previously reported they received different responses from the police, even from the same police service (Campbell, 2016). The result of a report would be to suggest a single approach implemented by all police services across the UK. The national policy could be an updated and reviewed version of the current NPCC guidance. A standardised police response would benefit both the police service and sex workers. For the police service, it would give everyone an opportunity to have a better understanding of the position sex workers are in, and the uniformed police officers actively implementing strategies service could be better informed to support and help end violence against sex workers. This would allow all sex workers across the UK to have trusting relationships with police officers. Sex workers could feel safer and potentially increased levels of trust for the police knowing that no matter where they are in the UK, their reports would be treated seriously and would be investigated thoroughly.

3. Sex Work Liaison Officers

The next method would be to further research into the value of Sex Work Liaison Officers. Not all police services in the UK have a dedicated team who work with sex workers. In addition to the hate crime approach, Merseyside also introduced police sex worker liaison officers to build trust with sex workers (Campbell, 2016). Limitations to this would be some police services would not have the funding available to have a dedicated team. Further research could be undertaken in representative police services nationwide to understand the benefits of having dedicated Sex Work Liaison Officers to deal with interactions with sex workers. An alternative could be Independent Sexual Violence Advisors specifically for sex workers. There are Sex Workers' Independent Sexual Violence Advocates (SW ISVA) across the country to provide support to sex workers who have been victims of sexual crime.

However, these are independent from the police service, although they do work closely with the police and other services.

Further Research

The conclusions drawn from this research have explored how police officers and staff, within a UK police service, perceive street-based sex workers, as victim of crime. However, they also open a gateway for further research to follow suit. The second recommendation being further research should be completed focusing on police perceptions of off-street sex workers, where a comparative analysis could be undertaken between the perceptions of both street-based and off-street sex workers. In a wider study, these police perceptions of sex workers could be analysed and compared with the updated views of the police service from sex workers. These perceptions can help the police better understand how to improve their relationship with sex workers to make sure they feel more secure in being able to report crimes to the police without having to be investigated themselves. A better understanding could help the police also learn that not all sex workers wish to leave their job and need safe exits, but simply want a safe space to be about to report crime.

Recommendations to the Police Service

A recommendation to the police service would be to share force policy and procedures around sex work to all staff within the force. Many PCs in this research were not aware of current policies or strategies and these are the individuals who may have to directly interact with street-based sex workers the most in the future. Although the results from this research cannot be generalised to all uniformed police officers across the UK, it would be ideal for all members of staff to be aware of how street-based sex workers may be vulnerable victims. It is important to note police training, training pages or internal material on the police services system was not accessible to understand how they share information about current force policies to staff. However, their current approach may not be effective. The issues relating to street-based sex workers may not be directly in line with the roles of all police staff and the training and awareness they would require would arguably be less. However, many were not aware of the laws around sex work. It could be beneficial for staff to have optional training to understand these

areas of policing better. Additionally, 85% of participants were not aware of any policies for policing sex work or strategies for managing sex work, despite the NPCC guidance on Sex Work and Prostitution being made to improve the police response. Therefore, more could be done with regards to making the current information known to all police officers.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Participant Information Sheet

Canterbury Christ Church University

A Comparative Analysis of the Perceptions of Sex Workers, as Victims of Crime, between English and Dutch Police.

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION

A research study is being conducted at Canterbury Christ Church University (CCCU) by Amy Laidler.

Please refer to our Research Privacy Notice for more information on how we will use and store your personal data.

Background

The aim of this study is to find out how sex workers are perceived by police officers when they have been victims of crime and analyse the responses from English Police and Dutch Police. Previously studies showed that sex workers who have reported a crime to the police have often felt criminalized and the investigation focus has shifted to crimes relating to sex work, instead of the crime which was originally reported (Balfour and Allen, 2014). Therefore, sex workers have resorted to not reporting crime (Boff, 2012; Balfour and Allen, 2014). Studies show that sex workers are between 60 and 120 times more likely to be a victim of homicide and yet 56% of assaults on sex workers go unreported (Boff, 2012). There are many studies analysing how sex workers view the police. However, there is currently no current research analysing the perceptions police officers hold towards sex workers across different jurisdictions.

This research project is facilitated by Canterbury Christ Church University but is self-funded by the researcher.

What will you be required to do?

If you consent to take part in this research, you will be required to complete an online survey (no longer than 20 minutes). The online survey will ask you general questions about which force you work for and what rank you are currently working at to identify any differences between areas of work. You will also be asked to answer questions about your perceptions of sex workers.

To participate in this research, you must:

- Consent to answering questions about your perceptions of sex workers.
- Be a uniformed police officer or detective officer within [redacted]

Procedures

Once you have given consent to participant in the research, you will be asked to complete a 20-minute online survey.

Feedback

No feedback required.

Confidentiality and Data Protection

The following categories of personal data (as defined by the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)) will be processed:

- Name & contact details (For the purposes of identifying the research and in case the participant wishes to withdraw consent, names and contact details will not be processes as part of the research).
- Age (To identify any differences in perceptions and age)
- Gender (To identify any differences in perceptions and sex/gender)
- Occupation details (name of force, job role/rank, length of service etc) (To identify which force the participant works within and to identify any differences between perceptions and the work force, and/or length of service.)
- Personal views

Data can only be accessed by the researcher, Amy Laidler, and may also be accessed by supervisors Martin O'Neill and Katarina Ozcakir Mozova.

The identified period for the retention of personal data for this project will be until the research has been completed and the final mark has been obtained.

If you would like to obtain further information related to how your personal data is processed for this project please contact Amy Laidler by email: al530@canterbury.ac.uk.

You can read further information regarding how the University processes your personal data for research purposes at the following link: Research Privacy Notice - https://www.canterbury.ac.uk/university-solicitors-office/data-protection/privacy-notices/privacy-notices.aspx

Dissemination of results

If you would like a copy of the results, this will be available upon an email request.

Process for withdrawing consent to participate

You are free to withdraw your consent to participate in this research project from up to one month after participation, without having to give a reason. If you have not yet completed the survey or decide part way through completing the survey that you wish to no longer participant, please close the page for the survey and your data will not be submitted. If you have completed the online survey and wish to withdraw your consent, please contact the researcher, Amy Laidler, via the email address below and all your personal data will be destroyed and will no longer be processed as part of the research.

You may read further information on your rights relating to your personal data at the following link: Research Privacy Notice - https://www.canterbury.ac.uk/university-solicitors-office/data-protection/privacy-notices/privacy-notices.aspx

Any questions?

Please contact Amy Laidler - al530@canterbury.ac.uk.
Supervisors: Martin O'Neill - martin.oneill@canterbury.ac.uk & Katarina Ozcakir Mozova - katarina.mozova@canterbury.ac.uk

Department: Law, Policing and Criminal Justice
Canterbury Christ Church University, North Holmes Road, Canterbury, Kent CT1 1QU.

Appendix B: UK Survey

UK Survey

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Page 1: Participant Information

A research study is being conducted at Canterbury Christ Church University (CCCU) by Amy Laidler.

Background

The aim of this study is to find out how sex workers are perceived by police officers when they have been victims of crime and analyse the responses from English Police and Dutch Police. Previously studies showed that sex workers who have reported a crime to the police have often felt criminalized and the investigation focus has shifted to crimes relating to sex work, instead of the crime which was originally reported (Balfour and Allen, 2014). Therefore, sex workers have resorted to not reporting crime (Boff, 2012; Balfour and Allen, 2014). Studies show that sex workers are between 60 and 120 times more likely to be a victim of homicide and yet 56% of assaults on sex workers go unreported (Boff, 2012). There are many studies analysing how sex workers view the police. However, there is currently no current research analysing the perceptions police officers hold towards sex workers across different jurisdictions.

This research project is facilitated by Canterbury Christ Church University but is self-funded by the researcher.

What will you be required to do?

If you consent to take part in this research, you will be required to complete an online survey (no longer than 20 minutes). The online survey will ask you general questions about which force you work for and what rank you are currently working at to identify any differences between areas of work. You will also be asked to answer questions about your perceptions of sex workers.

To participate in this research, you must:

- Consent to answering questions about your perceptions of sex workers.
- Be a uniformed police officer or detective officer.

Procedures

Once you have given consent to participant in the research, you will be asked to complete a 20-minute online survey.

Confidentiality and Data Protection

The following categories of personal data (as defined by the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)) will be processed:

- Name & contact details (For the purposes of identifying the research and in case the participant wishes to withdraw consent, names and contact details will not be processes as part of the research).
- Age (To identify any differences in perceptions and age)
- Gender (To identify any differences in perceptions and sex/gender)
- Occupation details (name of force, job role/rank, length of service etc) (To identify which force the participant works within and to identify any differences between perceptions and the work force, and/or length of service.)
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- https://www.canterbury.ac.uk/university-solicitors-office/data-protection/privacy-notices/privacy-notices.aspx

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If you would like a copy of the results, this will be available upon an email request.

Process for withdrawing consent to participate

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Any questions?

Please contact Amy Laidler - al530@canterbury.ac.uk.

Supervisors: Martin O'Neill - martin.oneill@canterbury.ac.uk & Katarina Ozcakir Mozova - katarina.mozova@canterbury.ac.uk

Department: Law, Policing and Criminal Justice

Canterbury Christ Church University, North Holmes Road, Canterbury, Kent CT1 1QU

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UK Survey

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Page 2: Survey Introduction

This project is investigating the police perceptions of sex workers who report crime. Your responses are confidential. No personal information will be disclosed outside of the research team. If you have any questions, please contact Amy Laidler via al530@canterbury.ac.uk.

This survey contains 5 sections covering different themes. The 5 sections are as followed:

1. About you
2. Street-based Sex Workers
3. Street-based Sex Workers and Crime
4. Street Sex Workers and COVID-19
5. Additional Information

We would ask all participants to:

- Provide honest responses about their perceptions
- Not discuss their responses with other participants whilst completing the survey

CONSENT DETAILS

By completeing this survey, I agree to the following:

1. I confirm that I have read and understand the participant information for the above project and have had the opportunity to ask questions.
2. I understand that any perosnal infromation that I provide to the researchers will be kept strictly confidential and in line with the University Research Privacy Notice.
3. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw my participation at any time, without giving a reason.
4. I agree to take part in the above project.

1. Name:

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UK Survey

28% complete

Page 3: Section 1. About you

The following section asks some questions about you.

2. 1. a. Age:

3. 1. b. Gender:

4. 1. c. Please select an option from the following that best describes your ethnic group or background.

- Bangladeshi
- Chinese
- Indian
- Pakistani
- African
- Black British
- Caribbean
- Asian and white
- Black African and white
- Caribbean and white
- British, English, Northern Irish, Scottish or Welsh
- Irish
- Irish Traveller or Gypsy
- Arab
- Another Asian background
- Another Black background
- Another Mixed background
- Another White background
- Another ethnic background
- Prefer not to say

5. 1. d. Police Service:

6. 1. e. Rank:

7. 1. f. What is your department and role?

8. 1. g. Length of service:

9. 1. h. Are you aware of any policies your police service has in place for policing sex work?

- Yes
- No

10. 1. i. Are you aware of any strategies your police service has in place for managing sex work?

- Yes
- No

a. If yes, please explain.

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42% complete

Page 4: Section 2. Street-based Sex Workers

Definitions:

Sex Work – Sex work is the provision of sexual services for money or goods.

Sex Worker – Sex workers are adults who receive money or goods in exchange for sexual services.

Street-based Sex Worker – Street-based sex worker is someone who obtains work in a public place, commonly on a street.

The following questions are focused on street-based sex workers.

Below you will be presented with a number of statements about street-based sex workers. These questions ask you about your personal perspectives. There are no right or wrong answers. Please read each statement carefully and tick to what extent you agree or disagree with each statement on a scale of 1 to 5, 1 being 'Fully Disagree' to 5 being 'Fully Agree'.

This part of the survey uses a table of questions, view as separate questions instead?

11. 2.a. Most street-based sex workers are drug addicts

Please don't select more than 1 answer(s) per row.

	1. Fully Disagree	2. Disagree	3. Neutral	4. Agree	5. Fully Agree
1	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

This part of the survey uses a table of questions, view as separate questions instead?

12. 2. b. Street-based sex workers earn a lot of money

Please don't select more than 1 answer(s) per row.

	1. Fully Disagree	2. Disagree	3. Neutral	4. Agree	5. Fully Agree
1	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

This part of the survey uses a table of questions, view as separate questions instead?

13. 2. c. Most street-based sex workers are morally corrupt

Please don't select more than 1 answer(s) per row.

	1. Fully Disagree	2. Disagree	3. Neutral	4. Agree	5. Fully Agree
1	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

This part of the survey uses a table of questions, view as separate questions instead?

14. 2. d. Most street-based sex workers are ugly

Please don't select more than 1 answer(s) per row.

	1. Fully Disagree	2. Disagree	3. Neutral	4. Agree	5. Fully Agree
1	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

This part of the survey uses a table of questions, view as separate questions instead?

15. 2. e. Street-based sex workers spread AIDS

Please don't select more than 1 answer(s) per row.

	1. Fully Disagree	2. Disagree	3. Neutral	4. Agree	5. Fully Agree
1	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

This part of the survey uses a table of questions, view as separate questions instead?

16. 2. f. Street-based sex workers enjoy the controlling of men

Please don't select more than 1 answer(s) per row.

	1. Fully Disagree	2. Disagree	3. Neutral	4. Agree	5. Fully Agree
1	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

This part of the survey uses a table of questions, view as separate questions instead?

17. 2. g. Women become street-based sex workers because they were not properly educated

Please don't select more than 1 answer(s) per row.

	1. Fully Disagree	2. Disagree	3. Neutral	4. Agree	5. Fully Agree
1	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

This part of the survey uses a table of questions, view as separate questions instead?

18. 2. h. Street-based sex workers like sex

Please don't select more than 1 answer(s) per row.

	1. Fully Disagree	2. Disagree	3. Neutral	4. Agree	5. Fully Agree
1	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

This part of the survey uses a table of questions, view as separate questions instead?

19. 2. i. Many street-based sex workers are students who prefer a convenient, profitable job

Please don't select more than 1 answer(s) per row.

	1. Fully Disagree	2. Disagree	3. Neutral	4. Agree	5. Fully Agree
1	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

This part of the survey uses a table of questions, view as separate questions instead?

20. 2. j. Street-based sex workers are victims of drug abuse

Please don't select more than 1 answer(s) per row.

	1. Fully Disagree	2. Disagree	3. Neutral	4. Agree	5. Fully Agree
1	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

This part of the survey uses a table of questions, view as separate questions instead?

21. 2. k. Women choose to be street-based sex workers

Please don't select more than 1 answer(s) per row.

	1. Fully Disagree	2. Disagree	3. Neutral	4. Agree	5. Fully Agree
1	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

This part of the survey uses a table of questions, view as separate questions instead?

22. 2. l. Most street-based sex workers only work as sex workers for a few years to get settled financially

Please don't select more than 1 answer(s) per row.

	1. Fully Disagree	2. Disagree	3. Neutral	4. Agree	5. Fully Agree
1	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

This part of the survey uses a table of questions, view as separate questions instead?

23. 2. m. Street-based sex workers are unable to get out of the situation they are in

Please don't select more than 1 answer(s) per row.

	1. Fully Disagree	2. Disagree	3. Neutral	4. Agree	5. Fully Agree
1	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

This part of the survey uses a table of questions, view as separate questions instead?

24. 2. n. Through sex work, pretty girls can find a husband

Please don't select more than 1 answer(s) per row.

	1. Fully Disagree	2. Disagree	3. Neutral	4. Agree	5. Fully Agree
1	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

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UK Survey

57% complete

Page 5: Section 3. Street-based Sex Workers and Crime

Definitions:

Sex Work – Sex work is the provision of sexual services for money or goods.

Sex Worker – Sex workers are adults who receive money or goods in exchange for sexual services.

Street-based Sex Worker – Street-based sex worker is someone who obtains work in a public place, commonly on a street.

This section is focused on street-based sex workers as victims of crime.

The next few questions are focused on the **interactions between the police service and street-based sex workers**. Please read the following statement and tick to what extent you agree with the statement on a scale of 1 to 5, 1 being 'Strongly Disagree' and 5 being 'Strongly Agree'.

This part of the survey uses a table of questions, view as separate questions instead?

25. 3. a. A positive relationship between the police service and street-based sex workers would encourage them to report crimes committed against them.

Please don't select more than 1 answer(s) per row.

	1. Strongly Disagree	2. Disagree	3. Neutral	4. Agree	5. Strongly Agree
1	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

26. 3. b. Have you had any interactions with street-based sex workers?

- ○ Yes
- ○ No

a. 3. c. If yes, how would you describe the general response you receive from street-based sex workers when interacting with them? (e.g., compliant, friendly, aggressive etc).

b. 3. d. If yes to 3. b., what have been the reasons for your interactions with street-based sex workers? (e.g., reporting crime, general public engagement etc).

The following questions are focused on street-based sex workers **reporting a crime (as a victim).** Please read the following statement and tick to what extent you agree with the statement on a scale of 1 to 5, 1 being 'Strongly Disagree' and 5 being 'Strongly Agree'.

This part of the survey uses a table of questions, view as separate questions instead?

27. 3. e. A street-based sex worker should be treated like any other victim when reporting crime against themselves

Please don't select more than 1 answer(s) per row.

	1. Strongly Disagree	2. Disagree	3. Neutral	4. Agree	5. Strongly Agree
1	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

28. 3. f. What proportion of crimes do you think street-based sex workers report to the police in your area? (i.e. if, in your opinion they would report all crime, then your answer would be 100%, if you believe they would report none, then all the answers would be 0%. Choose what percentage you believe is applicable within that range).

The following questions are focused on **investigating crimes** reported by street-based sex workers. Please read the following statement and tick to what extent you agree with the statement on a scale of 1 to 5, 1 being 'Strongly Disagree' and 5 being 'Strongly Agree'.

This part of the survey uses a table of questions, view as separate questions instead?

29. 3. g. All reported crimes against street-based sex workers are treated seriously and investigated thoroughly

Please don't select more than 1 answer(s) per row.

	1. Strongly Disagree	2. Disagree	3. Neutral	4. Agree	5. Strongly Agree
1	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

30. 3. h. What key issues could police officers be faced with when investigating crimes against street-based sex workers, based around their sex work?

31. 3. i. This question is about all sex workers attitudes towards the police. Some research has shown that most sex workers willingness to report crime to the police service is low and many lack confidence that the police service will take their reports seriously. Why do you think many sex workers feel this way?

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UK Survey

71% complete

Page 6: Section 4. Street Sex Workers and Covid-19

Definitions:

Sex Work – Sex work is the provision of sexual services for money or goods.

Sex Worker – Sex workers are adults who receive money or goods in exchange for sexual services.

Street-based Sex Worker – Street-based sex worker is someone who obtains work in a public place, commonly on a street.

This section is about street-based sex workers and COVID-19.

The following questions are focused on **interactions** with street-based sex workers. Please the following statement and tick to what extent you agree with the frequency of the statement on a scale of 1 to 5, 1 being 'Decreased a lot' and 5 being 'Increased a lot'.

32. 4. a. Has sex work continued during the COVID-19 pandemic?

- ○ Yes
- ○ No

a. Please explain your answer, including how you think this has occurred.

This part of the survey uses a table of questions, view as separate questions instead?

33. 4. b. Since the COVID-19 pandemic started, has there been a change in the frequency of **interactions** you have with street-based sex workers whilst working?

Please don't select more than 1 answer(s) per row.

	1. Decreased a lot	2. Decreased slightly	3. No change	4. Increased slightly	5. Increased a lot
1	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

34. 4. c. Has there been a change in the types of interactions you have with street-based sex workers since the COVID-19 pandemic?

- ○ Yes
- ○ No

a. If yes, please state in what way.

The following questions are focused on street-based sex workers **reporting a crime (as a victim)**. Please read the following statement and tick to what extent you believe the frequency of reports has changed on a scale of 1 to 5, 1 being 'Decreased a lot' and 5 being 'Increased a lot'.

This part of the survey uses a table of questions, view as separate questions instead?

35. 4. d. Since the COVID-19 pandemic started, has there been a change in the frequency of street-based sex workers **reporting being a victim of crime** to the police?

Please don't select more than 1 answer(s) per row.

	1. Decreased a lot	2. Decreased slightly	3. No change	4. Increased slightly	5. Increased a lot
1	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

36. 4. e. Since the COVID-19 pandemic, have you noticed a change in the type of crimes street-based sex workers report?

- ○ Yes
- ○ No

a. If yes, please give specific examples.

UK Survey

85% complete

Page 7: Section 5. Additional Information

37. 5.a. Would you like to add any further information about your experience and/or views of street-based sex workers, policing sex work or dealing with crimes against street-based sex workers?

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Appendix C: Initial Ethics Approval and Amendment Approvals

Sent on **01 Jul 2021** by **Ping Zheng** Download as PDF...

Miss Amy Laidler

School Of Law, Policing And Social Sciences

Faculty of Science, Engineering and Social Sciences

1st July 2021

Dear Amy

Confirmation of ethics approval: A comparative analysis of the perceptions of sex workers, as victims of crime, between the UK and Dutch police.

Your ethics application complies fully with the requirements for ethical and governance review, as set out in this University's Research Ethics and Governance Procedures, and has been approved.

You are reminded that it is your responsibility to follow, as appropriate, the policies and procedures set out in the Research Governance Framework and any relevant academic or professional guidelines.

Any significant change in the question, design or conduct of the study over its course will require an amendment application, and may require a new application for ethics approval.

It is a condition of approval that you **must** inform ethics@canterbury.ac.uk once your research has completed.

Wishing you every success with your research.

On behalf of

Faculty of Science, Engineering and Social Sciences Ethics Panel

ping.zheng@canterbury.ac.uk

Sent on **10 Aug 2021** by **Ping Zheng** Download as PDF...

Miss Amy Laidler

School Of Law, Policing And Social Sciences

Faculty of Science, Engineering and Social Sciences

10th August 2021

Dear Amy

Confirmation of project amendment ethics approval: A comparative analysis of the perceptions of sex workers, as victims of crime, between the UK and Dutch police.

Your application to amend your research project has been reviewed and approved.

You are reminded that it is your responsibility to follow, as appropriate, the policies and procedures set out in the Research and Enterprise Integrity Governance Framework and any relevant academic or professional guidelines.

Any further significant change in the question, design or conduct of the study over its course will require an amendment application, and may require a new application for ethics review.

It is a condition of approval that you **must** inform Canterbury once your research has completed.

Wishing you continued success with your research.

On behalf of

Faculty of Science, Engineering and Social Sciences Ethics Panel

ping.zheng@canterbury.ac.uk

Appendix D: Data Sharing Agreement

Information agreement and data protection statement between Amy Laidler (MSc by Research Student, Canterbury Centre for Policing Research, Canterbury Christ Church University) and [redacted]

The purpose of this document is to outline the roles and responsibilities of parties involved in this research and to outline the data protection and data security arrangements to protect the personal data of those participating in research with Canterbury Christ Church University.

Project Title:
A Comparative analysis of Dutch and UK police officer perceptions of sex workers as victims of crime

Principle Researcher:
Amy Laidler

Research Supervisor(s):
Dr Martin O'Neill, Dr Katarina Ozcakic Mozova

Data Subjects:
Police Constables and Detective officers from [redacted]

Data Controller:
Canterbury Christ Church University

Data Processor:
Amy Laidler

Data Protection Officer:
Robert Melville
Assistant University Secretary
Canterbury Christ Church University
Rochester House
St George's Place
Canterbury
CT1 1UT

E-mail: dp.officer@canterbury.ac.uk
Telephone: 01227 767700

Legal Basis of data collection:
Legitimate interest

Methodology:

Background

The aim of this study is to find out how sex workers are perceived by police officers when they have been victims of crime and analyse the responses from English Police and Dutch Police. Previously studies showed that sex workers who have reported a crime to the police have often felt criminalized and the investigation focus has shifted to crimes relating to sex work, instead of the crime which was originally reported (Balfour and Allen, 2014). Therefore, sex workers have resorted to not reporting crime (Boff, 2012; Balfour and Allen, 2014). Studies show that sex workers are between 60 and 120 times more likely to be a victim of homicide and yet 56% of assaults on sex workers go unreported (Boff, 2012). There are many studies analysing how sex workers view the police. However, there is currently no current research analysing the perceptions police officers hold towards sex workers across different jurisdictions.

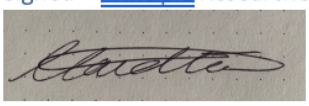
Participants

All participants will be adults over 18. Police Officers and investigators in three of the areas identified will be asked to partake in the study. Anticipated responses are maximum 100 from each of the areas. Participants will be provided with a password to an online survey and asked to complete it.

Details of Data Security and Data Handling to ensure GDPR Compliance:

- Informed consent will be gained from all participants via an information sheet which participants can retain and the signed consent forms. No person will be allowed to participate in the survey unless they have signed and returned the consent form via e mail.
- Data Processor(s) is familiar with university GDPR policies.
- Force will be provided with details of Data Protection Policies on request [redacted]
- CCCU will be the only agency outside of [redacted] to receive the information, and only the staff from within CCCU's School of Law, Policing & Social sciences actively involved in the research shall have access to the information.
- Information received will be stored directly onto the online survey (formerly Bristol online) secure website. If data is downloaded it will be immediately uploaded to the secure CCCU computer system., without the need for it to be in physical form.
- The data will not be stored for longer than is needed for the research project and will be destroyed/deleted in accordance with University Confidential Waste Policy.
- If electronic data needs to be physically transported between locations an encrypted USB stick will be used. This is unlikely to occur
- Consent forms and surveys will be coded to allow any data subject to withdraw their data a any time. Consent forms will be uploaded onto the secure computer system at CCCU, but in a separate folder to the coded materials and the key code (GDPR requirement)
- An auditable log will be kept of data access and processing.
- University data protection policies will be strictly complied with.

Signed – Principle Researcher



Name: Amy Laidler

Date: 21/04/2021

Signed on Behalf of CCCU

Name: Dr Dominic Wood

Date: 22.04.21

Signed on Behalf of [redacted]

Name:

Position:

Date:

Signed: