



Considering the Future of Prostitution in the UK: Supporting sex workers and exploring the question of decriminalisation

A Public Policy Exchange Symposium

Thursday 28th September 2017

10:15am – 4:30pm

Strand Palace Hotel, London

Public Policy Exchange holds regular interactive seminars which provide an invaluable interface for policy discussion, debate and networking. These special events offer local practitioners, civil servants and other stakeholders not only an insight into current policy thinking, but also the opportunity to feed into future development across all areas of public policy.



Considering the Future of Prostitution in the UK: Supporting sex workers and exploring the question of decriminalisation

Overview

On July 1, 2016, the Home Affairs Select Committee (HASC) on UK prostitution submitted their third report to Government, detailing the findings of their inquiry. Among the findings, the report advised that the Home Office should, at the earliest opportunity, 'change existing legislation so that soliciting is no longer an offence and so that brothel-keeping provisions allow sex workers to share premises, without losing the ability to prosecute those who use brothels to control or exploit sex workers'. The report also encouraged the introduction of legislation for the deletion of previous convictions and cautions for prostitution from the record of sex workers by amending the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act. Upon review, the UK Government chose not to implement the Committee's recommendations. However, the final HASC report is scheduled for June 2017.

The HASC's rationale behind their recommendations is to create a framework to enable the better protection of sex workers, who, through their occupation, are often subject to abuse, harm and exploitation. 49% of sex workers interviewed in a survey cited in the HASC report claimed that they were worried about their safety. Many organisations corroborate this idea, arguing that decriminalisation will bring the sex industry out of the shadows and allow it to be more carefully regulated. There are, however, clear splits within these groups regarding the desired extent of decriminalisation and how best to implement reform.

These policy disagreements have arisen at local, national and international levels. European Parliament, for example, is an advocate of the Sex Buyer Law (Nordic Model), which legalises soliciting but criminalises purchasing. The World Health Organisation and Amnesty International, on the other hand, support the introduction of a complete legalisation of prostitution. These divides are similarly present throughout UK society. Of the regions in the UK, only Northern Ireland has implemented the Sex Buyer Law. However, in March 2017 the Scottish National Party also announced its support for the introduction of the legislation. The Green Party, in contrast to this, declared in the build-up to the 2017 General Election that it would support the complete legalisation of prostitution in the UK. These developments have once again brought prostitution to the forefront of the UK policy agenda and highlighted the polarising nature of the issue.

Recognising the need for further deliberation on the future of prostitution in the UK, this timely Public Policy Exchange conference is a unique opportunity for local authorities, the police, women's organisations and other stakeholders to examine the latest policy developments and discuss the way forward.



'The views on the legal approach to prostitution are strongly held and highly polarised. The different viewpoints often arise from moral values and people's reactions are frequently emotive.'

House of Commons Home Affairs Select Committee: Prostitution, Third Report of Session, 1 July 2016

Accommodation

Through our partnership with HotelMap, we are able to offer our delegates heavily discounted hotel rates at a wide range of London hotels. To view hotel availability and rates and to book online, visit www.HotelMap.com/M5NUZ/



Why Attend?

- ✓ Consider the recommendations made in the June 1st 2016 Home Affairs Select Committee report on prostitution and make suggestions for future policy recommendations
- ✓ Debate the merits of the legalisation and decriminalisation of prostitution in the UK and consider the implications of both
- ✓ Strengthen understanding of the relationship between prostitution and sex trafficking
- ✓ Review best practice for policing prostitution and safeguarding vulnerable groups
- ✓ Explore the issue of drug abuse among sex workers and develop methods to effectively support victims
- ✓ Determine how best to implement effective outreach and engagement strategies to best support vulnerable sex workers
- ✓ Develop strategies to ensure the prevention and protection of under-age children becoming involved in prostitution
- ✓ Promote effective multi-agency partnership working to ensure sex workers receive the support they need

Who Should Attend?

- Local Authorities
- Adult Safeguarding Boards
- Children Safeguarding Boards
- Anti-Human Trafficking Teams
- Sex Workers
- Sex Workers Rights Activists
- Women Rights' Organisations
- Independent Sexual Advisors and ISVAs
- Immigration Teams
- Drugs and Alcohol Services
- Vulnerable Persons Coordinators
- Missing Persons Units
- Rape and Sexual Assault Support Centres and Specialists
- Social Workers and Social Services Officers
- Housing Officers
- Community Safety Partnerships
- Police Service
- Serious and Organised Crime Units
- Sexual Health Practitioners

Considering the Future of Prostitution in the UK: Supporting sex workers and exploring the question of decriminalisation

Programme

- 09:30** Registration and Morning Refreshments
-
- 10:15** Chair's Welcome and Introduction
-
- 10:30** **Panel Session One:**
The Legal Framework for Prostitution: Examining the national outlook and moving towards more effective legislation
- Reviewing the recommendations made in the June 1st 2016 Home Affairs Select Committee report on prostitution
 - Exploring Decriminalisation - the New Zealand Model: Assessing the implications of for people involved in prostitution and local communities in the UK
 - Exploring Decriminalisation and the Sex Buyer's Law: Assessing the application and effectiveness of the sex buyer's law (Nordic model)
 - Case study: The 'managed area for prostitution' approach: discussing the key findings from its implementation in Leeds and the outcomes for the local community and the people involved in prostitution
 - Sex Trafficking and Prostitution: Exploring the relationship between sex trafficking and prostitution – Identifying how prostitution laws influence levels of trafficking
-
- 11:15** Morning Refreshments
-
- 11:30** **Open Floor Discussion and Debate with Panel One**
-
- 12:30** Networking Lunch
-
- 13:30** **Panel Session Two:**
Protecting Sex Worker's Health, Safety and Human Rights: Developing methods and approaches to effectively safeguard and support sex workers
- Protecting Sex Workers through Effective Policing: Reviewing and supporting the work of chief constables and their staff in dealing with prostitution, related exploitation and social consequences in their areas
 - Promoting Multi-Agency Approaches: Developing effective partnership working, multi-agency cooperation, and intelligence sharing initiatives
 - Safeguarding Minors: Identifying precursors and pathways into prostitution and ensuring the protection of vulnerable children and young adults
 - Addressing the issue of alcohol and drug abuse among sex workers - Working with health agencies and rehabilitation centres to engage with people involved in prostitution
 - Developing Effective Outreach and Engagement Strategies: Strengthening the role outreach and engagement programmes play in supporting vulnerable individuals
-
- 14:15** Afternoon Refreshments
-
- 14:30** **Open Floor Discussion and Debate with Panel Two**
-
- 15:30** Chair's Summary and Closing Comments
-
- 15:40** Networking Reception
-

Marketing and Exhibition Opportunities

We offer a range of opportunities to enable your organisation to raise its profile and communicate with key decision makers in the public sector.

For further information please contact us on **020 3137 8630** or email info@publicpolicyexchange.co.uk

Event Details

Date: Thursday 28th September 2017
Time: 10:15am – 4:30pm
Venue: Strand Palace Hotel

Forthcoming Events

Safeguarding Against Extremism in Higher Education: Preventing Hate and Protecting Freedoms
5th September 2017



Pandemics and Infection Control: Addressing contemporary challenges and strengthening pandemic preparedness
6th September 2017

Tackling Potholes and Improving Road Maintenance: Developing a Sustainable Strategy to Address Potholes on UK Roads
7th September 2017

Promoting Growth through a Strong Intellectual Property Policy: Supporting UK Research, Development and Innovation
12th September 2017

Working in Partnership to End Forced Marriage and Honour Based Violence
13th September 2017

Combating Human Trafficking and Modern Slavery: Developing a Stronger Multi-Agency Response for the Identification of and Support for Victims of Trafficking
14th September 2017

Young Runaways and Missing Children: Enhancing Prevention, Protection and Provision in Every Local Area
19th September 2017

Improving Child Health and Wellbeing: Developing Practical Solutions to Combat Rising Levels of Childhood Obesity
20th September 2017

Providing Support in Periods of Transition for Children and Adolescents with Autism
21st September 2017

Putting Victims First: Supporting Victims of Crime in their Journey through the Criminal Justice System
26th September 2017

Testing Times for Animal Welfare: Raising Standards at the Time of Slaughter or Killing
27th September 2017

Putting Children First: Working in Partnership to Safeguard Children from Child Sexual Exploitation
3rd October 2017