

Cross-Party Group on Commercial Sexual Exploitation

1st June 2022 from 18.00-20.00.

Minute

Present

MSPs

MSPs

Ruth Maguire	MSP SNP: Co-convener
Rhoda Grant	MSP Scottish Labour: Co-convener
John Mason	MSP SNP

Non-MSP Group Members

Jacci Stoyle	Individual: Secretariat
Anna	Nordic Model Now
Lily	Nordic Model Now
Susan McKellar	Scottish Women's Convention
Chris Hall	Not for Sale Scotland
Ann Hall	Not for Sale Scotland
Aileen Fleming	SOHTIS
Christine Cosh	individual
Beverley Johnston	Individual
Steve Rawbone	Individual
Agnes Martony	Individual
Janice Wilson	Soroptimist Scotland (North region).
Janet Warren	Individual
Anne Martin	Individual
Diane Martin	A Model for Scotland

Agenda item 1

Welcome and apologies for absence

Jeremy Balfour	MSP Scottish Conservative
Elena Whitman	MSP SNP

Linda Thompson	Women's Support Project
Agnes Tolmie	Scottish Women's Convention
Michael Veitch	CARE for Scotland
Carolann Nesbitt	Community Safety Glasgow (TARA)
Elaine Smith	Individual
Alison Raybould	Salvation Army
Chris Ringland	Evangelical Alliance
Teresa Little	Individual
Bryan Little	Individual

Agenda item 2

Ruth Maguire (RM) told the group that Bill Kidd MSP had secured a members' debate in the Scottish Parliament on Thursday 9th June on ***Making Scotland Hostile to Trafficking and a Safe Place for Ukrainian Refugees.***

Rhoda Grant (RG) told the group that she had recently taken part in a UN Drugs and Crime Agency Conference on trafficking, and together with Sweden and France, stressed the importance of dealing with demand when considering trafficking for sexual exploitation.

Agenda item 3

Presentation by **Nordic Model Now (NMN)** on the grooming of students for the sex industry.

An Overview presented by **Anna**

Grooming for the sex industry:

- Sexual abuse is often a prerequisite to entering the sex industry
- Exposure to brutal, misogynistic pornography is child abuse and universal today
- Consequently, porn is normal and therefore catastrophic
- Young women are now at risk from entering the sex industry
- Many are facing poverty and this toxic mix is at the heart of the issue

Universities

- The sex industry lobby have been successful in infiltrating academia and left-wing politics
- Young women do not have access to the feminist analysis which would give them the tools to challenge this culture which fits so well with 'the air they breathe'
- NMN were devastated when they went to the launch of the University of Leicester's Student Sex Worker Policy and Toolkit funded by the ESRC
- They gained access to the sex work toolkit's training material and critiqued it to be fundamentally biased, misleading, and blatant propaganda for the sex trade
- NMN decided to create their own toolkit to challenge this
- Their approach was to meet students where they were, rather than use terms that might alienate them; the handbook can be obtained here <http://nordicmodelnow.org/shop>
- Creating the NMN handbook was an inspired, strategic approach which provided a concrete challenge to the toolkit and resulted in the ESRC pulling out of funding it
- NMN will be starting a TikTok channel and are holding a conference in London and webinar 'Students for sale Tools for Resistance' 15th October.

Emily's Story about her devastating experience of prostitution, whilst at university was played.

Supporting Students; one of the sections in Nordic Model Now's Handbook. Exploring the alternative to the Leicester University Handbook.

presented by **Lily**

- In our culture now sex work is now seen as normal and sex workers as a protected category.
- Consequently, it becomes difficult to support sex workers without legitimising and normalising the inherent abuse and violence that traps them
- What does being non-judgemental really mean?

- Acceptance and non-judgement do not mean losing your ethical compass
- Dos and don'ts of supporting students
- Paying attention to the incongruence of students playing down their trauma, and affirming the importance of boundaries, are both significant issues
- We must offer alternative voices than those of the sex industry and change the narrative
- Presentation ends

RG convened questions and comments from the members.

RM suggested an action coming from this meeting, that she and **RG** might write to the Scottish universities and ask them what they are doing with the NMN handbook and if there was any feedback. This was warmly received by **Anna** and the group.

Agenda item 4

AOB

RG asked for AOB: **Jacci Stoyle (JS)** gave a short update on the Festival of Politics event, which is due to take place in August.

RG asked about the date and topic for the next meeting.

JS said the next meeting would be the AGM and therefore would need to take place in September.

RG and **RM** would check their diaries and return to the group asap with a date. The topic would be finalised then.