

# The PE:ER Project

## *Prostitution Exiting: Engaging through Research*

### EXITING PROSTITUTION: RESEARCH & PRACTICE

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**The PE:ER Project Prostitution Exiting: Engaging through Research**

*Assessing and developing interventions for women*

Approximately 80-100,000 women and 600 children involved in prostitution in England and Wales

Growing indoor trade

Increasingly vulnerable women on-street due to drugs

Prostitution legal but various behaviours illegal

Street prostitution focus of enforcement, while indoor prostitution is tolerated

Ambivalent policy response and divided academy

Recent focus on demand and trafficking

# WHAT IS THE PEER PROJECT?

- Joint research project - Eaves and LSBU;
- 2-year grant from Big Lottery Fund;
- Multiple ethical approvals;
- Feminist research methodology and practice;
- Largest study of its kind.

# METHODOLOGY

KEY RESEARCH AIMS

RESEARCH METHODS

PARTICIPANT CRITERIA

RESEARCH AIMS

Highlight participants views about exiting;

Enhance women's support engagement;

Track the process of change over time.

## SERVICE PROVIDERS

- Health services (6%)
- Drug services (14%)
- Hostels (9%)
- Exiting services (48%)
- Diversion schemes (17%)
- Women's drop-in services (6%)

## SELF-REFERRAL

- Targeted publicity
- Snowballing / word of mouth
- Classified print adverts
- Escort agencies
- Buyer websites

## THE PE:ER SAMPLE

114+ first round interviews;

50 second round interviews;

35 stakeholder interviews;

7 research sites across England;

3000 community surveys (3 sites).

# PROFILE OF WOMEN PARTICIPANTS

Women aged 19 – 55 years old;

On-street (62%), off-street (31%), trafficked (6%);

Age of entry into prostitution: 6 – 40 years old;

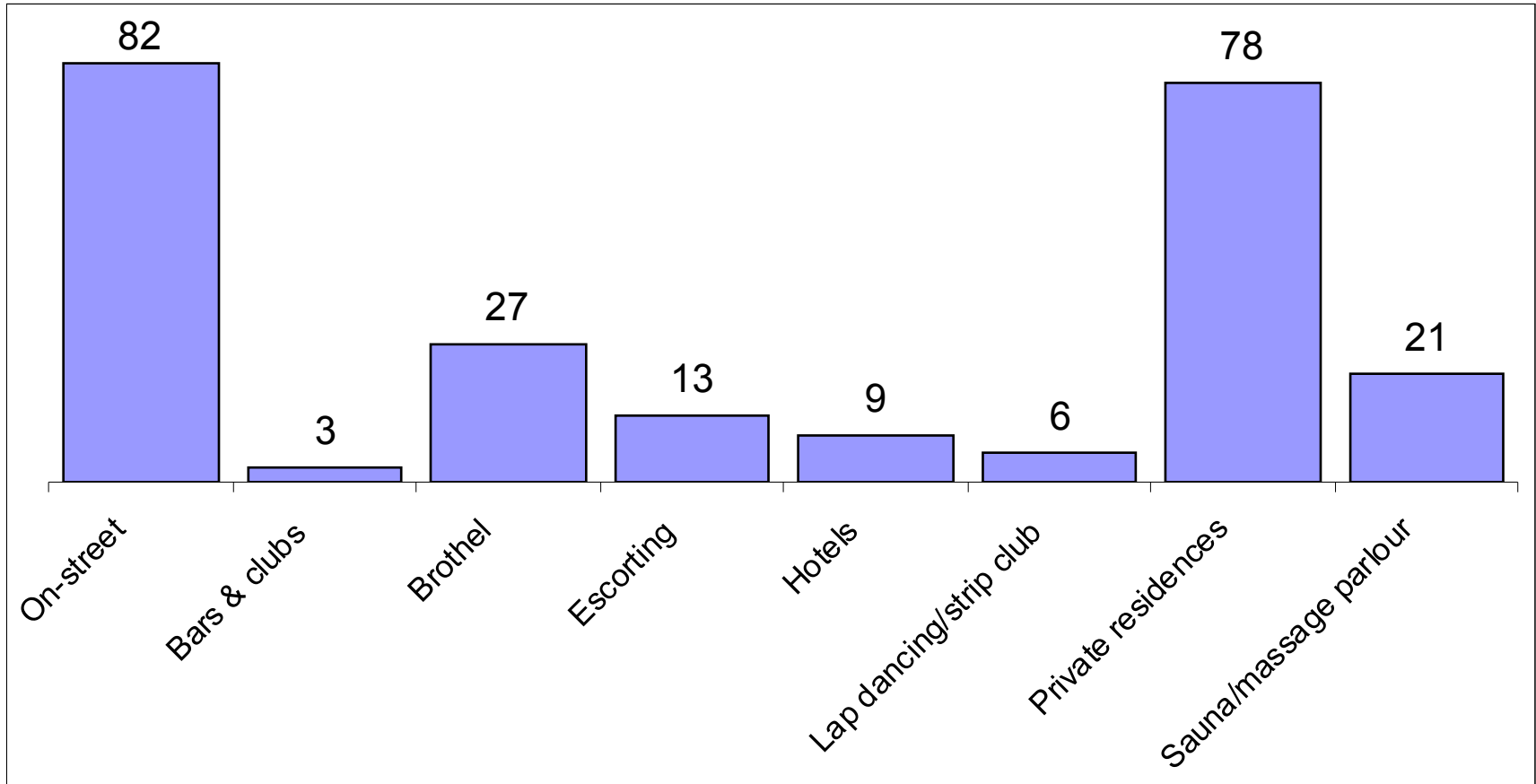
Multiple physical / mental / sexual health issues;

Almost two-thirds (64%) suffered childhood abuse;

9 out of 10 (91%) used drugs / alcohol during prostitution;

(45%) currently involved; (55%) exiting or exited.

# PLACES OF INVOLVEMENT





## KEY FINDINGS

To discuss two emerging themes:

Trapping in prostitution

Exiting stages model

Relevant to exiting practice including examples from our study

Workshop will expand the stages model.

*‘The evidence shows that young people become involved in prostitution through a series of complex and interrelated variables that are almost impossible to disentangle.’  
(Hester and Westmarland, 2004)*

# TRAPPING FACTORS

Childhood violence (emotional, physical, verbal, sexual);

Coercion (partner, relative, other);

Lifestyle / entrenchment;

Housing;

Disposable cash;

Criminal record.

Drug dependency;

Physical and / or mental health issues;

Age of entry into prostitution;

No qualifications or training;

Trafficked;

Debts.

# FREQUENCY OF EACH TRAP



# NUMBER OF TRAPS



# TRAPS ACCORDING TO WOMEN'S INVOLVEMENT

## COMBINATIONS AND INTERACTIONS OF TRAPS

Trapping factor	High number of traps (n=7)	Low number of traps (n=29)
Physical or mental health issues	100%	52%
Debt	100%	34%
No qualifications	29%	17%
Criminal record	100%	10%
Entrenchment	100%	10%
Coercion	100%	3%
Age of entry	100%	7%
Drug or alcohol dependency	86%	45%
Experienced childhood violence	86%	41%
Housing	86%	34%
Disposable cash	43%	38%
Trafficked	14%	10%

# STAGES OF CHANGE

A number of exiting models have been developed however none have provided the specific focus required for exiting

Stages allow both women and practitioners to identify and measure change and to manage the process of reversal inherent in this process

A staged model allows targeting of interventions where they will have the best results



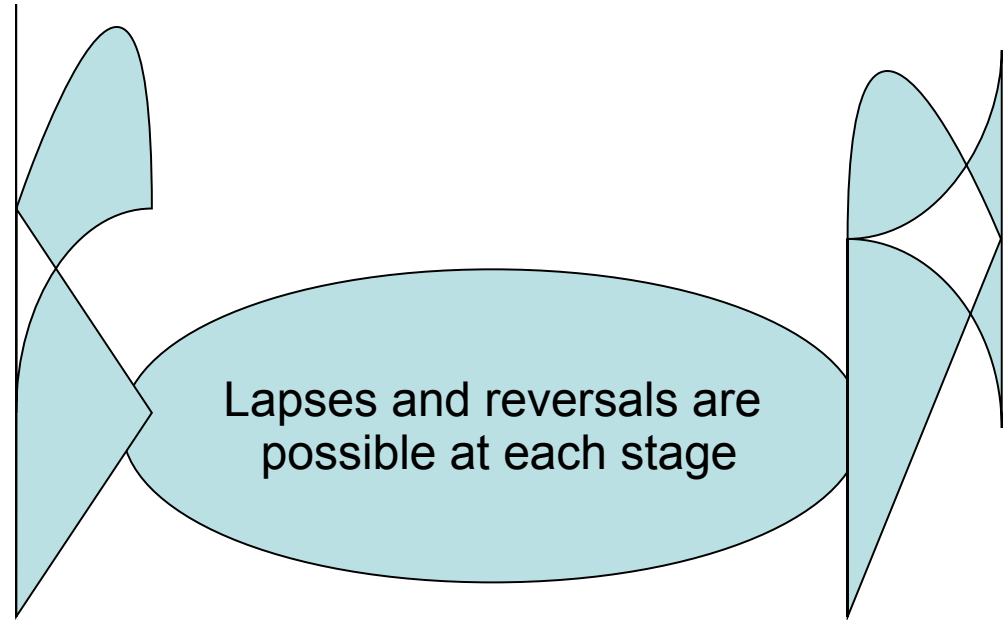
Stage 1- Interest and awareness of exiting

Stage 2 – Action / Engagement

Stage 3 – Transition

Stage 4 - Rebuilding

Stage 5 – New Identity



# APPLYING STAGES TO THE SAMPLE

53 women reported they had “stopped” their involvement in prostitution

At this stage of analysis “stopped” could be anything from 2 weeks to 2+ years

Some at stage 2 more suddenly without the need for a stage 3 transition

Some at stage 4 gradually going through the stages in sequence and taking all the support available.

34 women had stopped at stage 2

*“I just stopped as soon as I had my baby was born. I just saw her face and I just stopped then.” (29 years old)*

19 women had stopped at stage 4.

*“I got that taste of freedom, there was no going back.... I got to the stage, where you can walk down the road, there's no fear in me no more.” (40 years old)*

## FURTHER ANALYSIS

What are the profiles of women who go through all the stages and those who don't?

Does stopping at stage 2 increase the risk of lapse or reversal?  
And does a stage 5 exit decrease the risk of lapse or reversal?

What happens for women to enable a stage 5 exit?

## FURTHER ANALYSIS

- Limitations of a drug or CJS centred model
- Models of support and service provision
- Relationship between routes into prostitution and exiting strategies
- Longitudinal examination of exiting (Proposal submitted)

## FUTURE PLANS

Project due for completion end of June 2011

Findings disseminated after this date

Research report on Eaves website

Academic publications to follow

Follow on funding being sought

## CONTACT DETAILS

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