



Keeping Safe

UKNSWP

The UK Network of Sex Work Projects (UK NSWP) is a non-profit, voluntary association of agencies and individuals working with sex workers.

The aim of the UK NSWP is:

To promote the health, safety, civil and human rights of sex workers, including their rights to live free from violence, intimidation, coercion or exploitation, to engage in the work as safely as possible, and to receive high quality health and other services in conditions of trust and confidentiality, without discrimination on the grounds of gender, sexual orientation, disability, race, culture or religion.

The UK NSWP recognises and supports the rights of individual sex workers to self-determination. This includes the right to remain in sex work or leave sex work.

UKNetwork of SexWork Projects

info@uknswp.org.uk www.uknswp.org

Keeping Safe

SAFETY ADVICE FOR SEX WORKERS IN THE UK

UK NETWORK OF SEX WORK PROJECTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Over the years many UK sex work support projects have worked with sex workers to produce personal safety information and advice to share with other sex workers. We have drawn on these materials in this resource. We particularly acknowledge: SCOTPEP for use of material in 'Protect Yourself', GENESIS for 'Safety First', SW5 for 'Escorts: Safety & Abuse' and HOOK for the 'Male Sex Work Handbook'.

Special thanks to the working group of members who came together to produce this safety resource, including Rosie Campbell (Armistead Centre and UK NSWP Board), Del Campbell (SW5), Alison Cook (SAFE Project), Mel Fulton (associate member) and Justin Gaffney (SohoBoyz and UK NSWP Board). Thanks also to Shelley Stoops (Armistead Centre) and Jane Ayres (Praed Street Project).

Disclaimer : As in all lines of work, safety can never be guaranteed. If you are aware of the safety advice included in the booklet then you can be reassured that you are doing the best you can to stay safe. Throughout this booklet there are quotations from individual sex workers about their experiences of safety; these are not necessarily representative and you may have had different experiences.

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Proof reading by Nine Davidson (SCOT- PEP)
Design by Mitch Cosgrove (www.cosgrovedesign.co.uk)
Illustration by Will Barras (www.scrawlcollective.co.uk)

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Introduction

This booklet has been written for women, men and transgender people working in the UK sex industry. It contains information and advice about keeping safe when working, whether on the streets, in establishments, in your own working flat/home, or escorting to homes or hotels. Much of the advice comes from those who know best – sex workers. It contains tips and strategies which some sex workers use to protect their personal safety. We hope that you will find some useful tips which you might not have thought of.

If you already know the safety advice in this booklet, then you can be reassured that you are doing the best you can to stay safe.

The booklet contains advice about what to do if things go wrong, and points you to agencies which can help. It also provides information about reporting crimes to the police and others.

If you are concerned about your personal safety, contact your local sex worker support project. It can provide you with support, advice and personal attack alarms. If you don't know about projects in your area contact the UK NSWP. You can also go to the UK NSWP website (www.uknswp.org) which has an online directory of UK sex work support projects.



NB: This guide gives advice on what you should ideally do to stay safe whilst working. However, in the current climate of policing and management, some suggestions may be difficult to apply in some work situations. You need to adapt the advice to your particular working situation. You can talk through any of the advice with your local support project.

**VIOLENCE AGAINST SEX WORKERS
IS A CRIME AND IS UNACCEPTABLE.**



General safety advice

Always trust your instinct/gut feelings. If you feel uncertain about someone, then there is a good reason for it. It's not worth ignoring your instinct and later wishing you hadn't.

Appearances can be deceptive. Don't assume someone is OK just because they look 'respectable'. The same goes for 'regulars'.

When talking to a client, keep a confident look on your face and be assertive, strong and in control.

Stick to your prices and limits. There is no negotiation when it comes to a contract you make with yourself. Before meeting with a client, decide what you are and are not willing to do.

Be friendly but firm when negotiating services with a client and explain your limits. Remember to say what services you provide, where you will go for business and how much you charge.

Be willing to turn down a client, a particular request or offers of payment below your standards.

Carry a personal safety alarm or a whistle, and don't be afraid to use it. Keep it handy, somewhere you can get it quickly. The bottom of your bag is not handy! Pockets are better!

If you have one, carry a mobile phone. You can programme it to speed dial a number at the press of one button. Make this the number of the police or one of your friends, so you can get help quickly. You could also put your local sex work project's number in.



Plan your exits. Wherever you work, always be aware of escape routes and don't let a client get between you and the nearest exit.

Avoid working when high, stoned or drunk. See more on alcohol and drugs on page 7.

Keep focused on the behaviour of the client and keep your eyes on your client and their hands at all times.

**BEING STREETWISE DOES NOT GUARANTEE
YOUR SAFETY. IF IN DOUBT, GET OUT!**



Getting ready for work

It is important to think about your personal safety and to plan before you go to work.

Always tell someone when you are going out to work, where you are going and when you expect to be back. Ideally, agree what they will do if you don't return, and who you want them to contact. It might be helpful for this person to have the number of the local sex work project.

Take your mobile phone, charged and with credit; or a phone card; or some money if you don't have a mobile. Remember, you don't need cash or credit to call 999 from a mobile or landline.

Take your personal safety alarm.

Take a pen/pencil and some paper.

Have a small amount of cash with you in case you don't make any money, or get dumped by a client and you need to use a payphone or get transport home.

Read the latest 'ugly mugs/dodgy punter' info or check the web alerts.

Dress for safety. Your local sex work project can advise you on dressing safely for work. See pages 28 to 31 for information on dressing safely.

Try to be rested and alert. If you use drugs or alcohol, avoid taking them when you are working, if you can (see page 7 for more on drugs and alcohol).



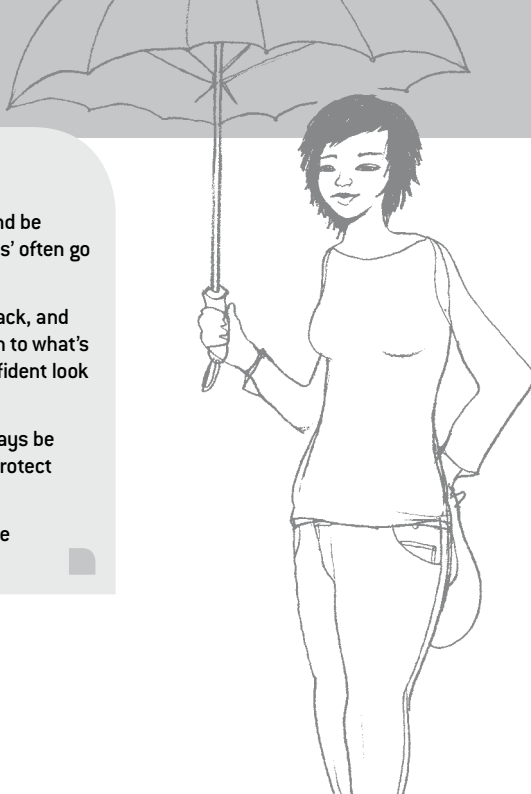
Posture and attitude

Be aware. Walk tall, act confident and be assertive. 'Ugly mugs/dodgy punters' often go for people who look vulnerable.

Keep your head up and shoulders back, and take purposeful steps. Pay attention to what's happening around you. Adopt a confident look even if you feel nervous.

Keep at least one arm free, and always be ready, mentally and physically, to protect yourself.

Remember **no one** has the right to be abusive towards you or to hurt you.



Alcohol and drugs

Alcohol and drugs can affect your awareness and ability to recognise and act on your instinct. They can also prevent you using your safety strategies to best effect.

You are much more at risk if you are under the influence of drink or drugs. Try not to use when you are working.

If you do use when you are working, try to use an amount that keeps you stable. Use just enough so you are not withdrawing but not so much that you are 'drunk', 'gouching' or 'off your head'. If you are in any of these states, you may be less likely to use your safety strategies effectively, and might be targeted by some people.

Letting customers know you use drugs gives them more opportunity to take advantage of you. It can allow them to tempt you with drugs rather than cash, which means you might lose out on the cash you need.

Spiked drink, drugs and food

If your client offers you a drink in private, ask for an unopened can or bottle, or serve yourself. Don't take any drink you haven't seen prepared from start to finish. Make sure your client is happy to drink from the same bottle or glass as you.

If your client offers you food in private, don't accept it unless it's pre-packed and still in its sealed wrapper, or you have seen it prepared from start to finish. Make sure your client is happy to eat the same food.

Avoid accepting drugs from or taking drugs with clients; you can never be sure what they are or what they have been cut with.

Working on the street

Know your beat!

Study a map of the area. Get to know the area well, especially the safest escape routes, police stations, pubs, shops and garages. Know the bus routes and where to get a taxi. Also get to know where the 'sensitive' locations are such as nurseries, schools and places of worship and, if you can, avoid these. Your local sex work project will have information on these locations.

Avoid pubs and clubs at closing time as you may be subjected to drunken abuse.

If possible, have a clear idea of where you're going. If you can, tell someone the route you're planning, and arrange to meet up with or phone them at agreed times while you are out working. Get them to call you if you haven't made contact at the agreed time. Ideally, agree what they

should do if you don't return and who they should contact. It might be helpful for them to have the number of the local support project.

Be aware of your surroundings and familiarise yourself with new areas before you work in them. Never work in areas you don't know.

Avoid working in areas with no easy escape routes.

Try to work near a busy road and stay on the same side as oncoming traffic. If a car pulls up and you think that something is not quite right, walk quickly in the opposite direction to the traffic.

Avoid working in secluded areas. But if you have to, make sure you are as familiar with your surroundings as possible.

At night, try to work in fairly busy, well-lit areas. Also be aware of local policing activities. Try to be respectful of residents and others living and working in the area.

Ask your local project for guidance.



“*Just a word to the wise...
Don't go for a place that is
isolated. There is safety in
numbers. It is hard to hear a
scream when there is no one
nearby to react.*”



Work together whenever possible

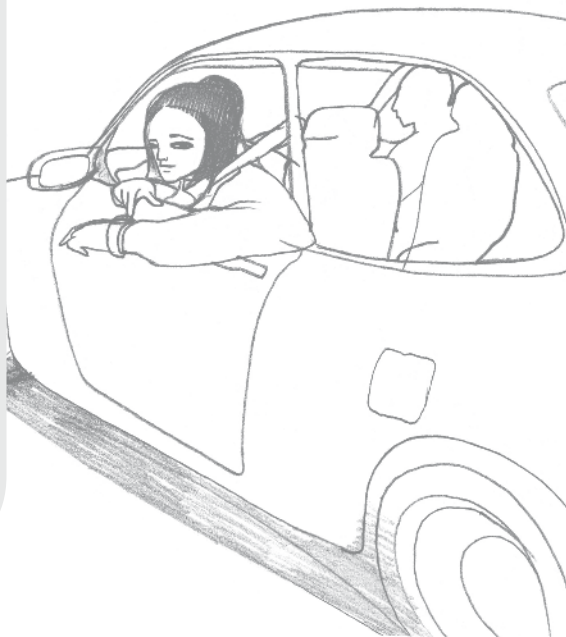
Whenever you can, work in twos or threes. The others can take the registration numbers of your clients' vehicles, and you can take the numbers of theirs. Sticking together makes it safer!

Take care and look out for each other, especially newcomers.

Let each other know where you usually take your clients.

Agree a sign to give each other if you are not happy with a client or situation, so they can help you.

When going away from a client, wave to the others (or pretend to if you are on your own) and shout out your expected return time.





Check out the client and the vehicle

Approach a vehicle or walker with caution. Keep enough distance to avoid being grabbed or assaulted – at least an arm's length.

If you are able, make the client aware that you are taking the vehicle's registration number.

Look for potential weapons lying around the vehicle. Even everyday objects can be used against you. If there are blankets etc, check under them.

Ideally, make a full circle of the car.

Don't get into a vehicle on your own if there's more than one person in it. Check how many people are in the vehicle. Check for people hiding in the back. If it's a van, remember that there might be others in the back and check it if possible. Think very carefully before agreeing to get in. >>>

Business in vehicles

BEFORE YOU GET IN

Does his appearance or the details of the vehicle ring a bell from 'ugly mugs/dodgy punters' or from information passed on to you by other workers?

Be clear about the services you are prepared to provide and your prices.

Follow your instinct. If you are uncertain or have a bad feeling about the client or the situation, do not get in under any circumstances.

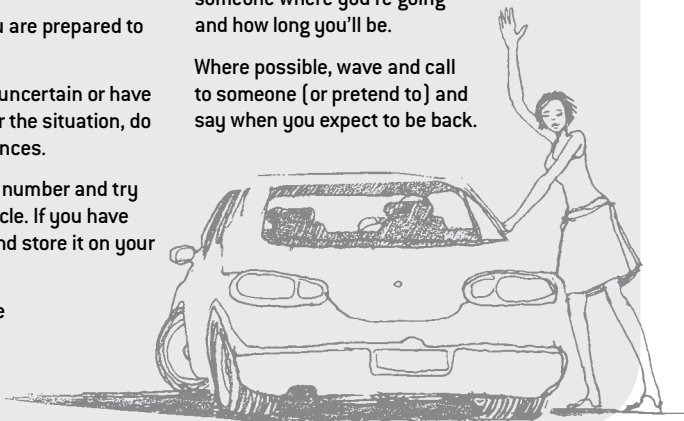
Make a note of the registration number and try to memorise details of the vehicle. If you have time, write down the number and store it on your phone.

Try to arrange the price, service and location outside the car.

You suggest where to go to do business, so you can be sure

it's somewhere safe. If the client doesn't agree, ask him where he wants to go. If you don't like the sound of it, don't get in. If the place he suggests seems OK, make sure you tell someone where you're going and how long you'll be.

Where possible, wave and call to someone (or pretend to) and say when you expect to be back.



ONCE YOU'RE IN

Get paid first, and put the money in a different place from where you keep your other cash. Keep your money well out of sight and put money a client gives you in a different place from other cash. Try not to keep it somewhere obvious like your bag or back pocket. Think of another place, e.g. your shoes. Split up your money and put it in different places.

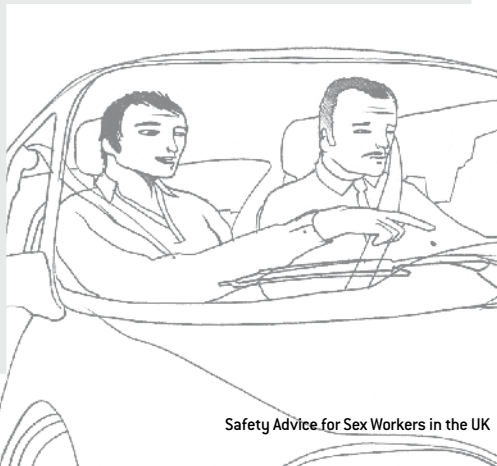
Most modern cars have central locking so be aware of this. Ask the driver to keep your window wound down; you could say you suffer from asthma or car sickness.

Try to make sure the client doesn't park with the passenger door close to a wall or other obstacle that would make opening the car door difficult. If he does, give him a reason to move it, for example you saw a police car or other people can see you.

Once the vehicle is parked, try to leave the door slightly open, particularly if it has central locking.

In two-door cars insist on staying in the front seat; escaping from the back is very difficult.

Keep on as much clothing as possible, in case you have to run.



Business with walkers

Do any of his details ring a bell from previous 'ugly mugs/dodgy punters'?

Follow your instinct. If you are uncertain or have a bad feeling about the client or the situation do not go with him under any circumstances.

Try to memorise information about the client.

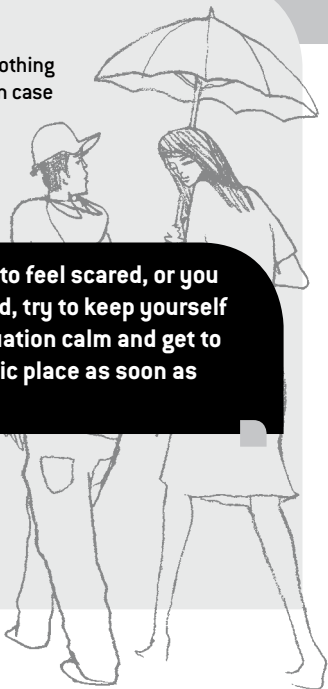
Be clear about the services you are prepared to provide and your prices.

You suggest where to go to do business, so you can be sure it's somewhere safe. If the client doesn't agree, ask him where he wants to go. If you don't like the sound of it don't go. If the place he suggests seems OK, make sure you tell someone where you're going and how long you'll be.

Get paid first, and put the money in a different place from where you keep your other cash.

Keep as much clothing on as possible, in case you have to run.

If you start to feel scared, or you are attacked, try to keep yourself and the situation calm and get to a busy public place as soon as possible.



Working in establishments

Avoid working on your own in any establishment as violent clients are more likely to attack if you are on your own.

NB: If you are unsure of the legality of how you work, contact your local sex work project which can advise you.

Ask your local sex work project for 'ugly mugs/dodgy punters' newsletters/alerts and keep these somewhere where all workers can find them.

Agree to make contact with other premises, for example to share 'ugly mugs/dodgy punters' via text messaging to ensure this information is relayed ASAP to prevent possible further attacks.



The management of many establishments is there for your safety and will generally support you if you decide to refuse services to clients you don't feel comfortable with. Always check out the support and safety measures managers/receptionists offer before starting work. When looking for work, if possible look for premises with operational CCTV and other security measures.

If you are working in an establishment where the management pressurises you to do things you don't want to, and you don't think your safety is important to them, you may want to discuss these concerns with your local sex work project.

Have a plan ready in case a client attacks you. Know the escape routes to a safe place in the building.

Always take an alarm into the room with you. If the establishment does not have these fitted,

ask them to consider doing so or supplying workers with personal alarms. If they do not agree, you can get one from your local sex work project.

If the doors in the rooms have locks, always know how to open them quickly. Never leave a key in the door as you could be locked in.

If you are not entirely comfortable with the client, do not lock the door.

If you are not entirely comfortable with a client in the room, ensure the other workers know, and agree a time for them to check on you.

If there are mirrors or reflective surfaces, use them to keep an eye on what the client is up to.

Be clear about the services you are prepared to provide and your prices.

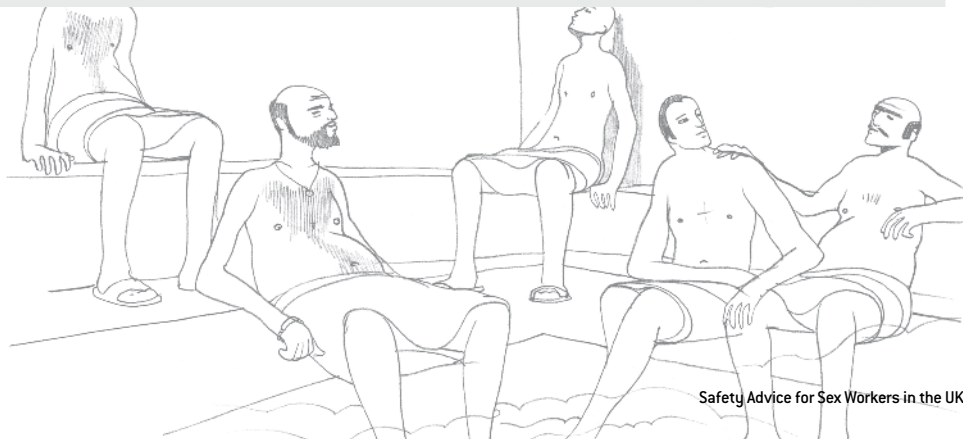
If you work in a parlour where you get paid cash directly, get paid before you provide

any service. If you work in a parlour where the money is managed by the receptionist/manager, check with the other people working in the venue what the rates are for additional services and what the agreement is on condom use.

Always be careful about where you keep your cash. For example, try not to keep it in pockets when having a shower. Use lockers if provided

or request a secure place. Talk to other sex workers or project staff about tips for keeping your money safe.

If you start to feel scared, or if you are attacked, try to keep yourself and the situation calm and get out of the room to a safe place as quickly as you can. Don't be too embarrassed to run out of the room with no clothes on if you have to.



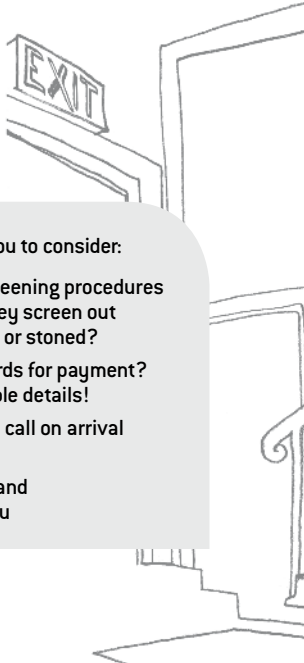
Escorting and outcalls

Agency escorting and outcalls

Agencies work in different ways. Do your research before you choose an agency, and find out how they work and what they will do for your safety. It is best to avoid paying large joining or registration fees. You can check if they are a registered business by contacting Companies House, the official register of UK companies, by phoning 0870 33 33 636 or online at www.companieshouse.gov.uk

Here are some things for you to consider:

- Find out what kind of screening procedures they have in place: do they screen out clients who sound drunk or stoned?
- Do they accept credit cards for payment? They have lots of traceable details!
- Ensure they allow you to call on arrival and departure
- Some provide transport and a driver who waits for you





Independent escort outcall

Always try to speak to the client yourself so you can suss the client out, find out exactly what the client wants before you go out, and make sure you're comfortable with it. Be clear about the cost of the service. Ask for a brief description so you can recognise him.

If the client sounds drunk or stoned, consider not taking the job. You have the right to refuse a client.

Get the client's room number and name of the hotel, and arrange to phone the client back. If he is not happy for you to do that, don't go, as he has something to hide. Get the telephone number of the hotel from Directory Enquiries. Don't accept any number he has given you.

Only after you have confirmed the hotel phone number, phone the client back and arrange to meet him.



Always try to meet first-time clients in a public place, such as the hotel bar, particularly if you haven't managed to speak with the client yourself. This may be difficult if the client wants complete discretion.

If it's an outcall to the client's home, get the address and the landline number, and then phone Directory Enquiries to check that this information is correct. If the client does not want to give you the information, he has something to hide. Don't go on a home visit if you can't confirm a landline contact number.

Tell someone where you're going and when you expect to be back. Get them to call you if you haven't checked in, and to notify the police if they can't contact you after an agreed length of time.



Outcalls to hotels or a client's home or work

Pay attention to the area around the outcall location; potential points of safety; and escape routes such as bus routes, busy streets, open shops, pubs, garages and phone boxes.

Memorise the layout of the hotel and note escape routes from the bedroom or suite. If you are at a client's home, memorise the way to the door. You could ask to use the bathroom. On your way, you can get a better idea of the layout.

If visiting a client's home or workplace, check to see if there are lights on in nearby properties or any signs that neighbours may be home. It's important to have an idea of how isolated (or not) you are.

How many cars are parked outside the property or in the driveway? Are there more than you'd expect? It might not be safe if there are.

If you are going to a home, pay close attention to which way the door opens and locks. If the door gets locked behind you, note where the key is kept.

How many floors up are you? This will affect potential escape routes.

If visiting a hotel or home, pay attention to details in the room(s) such as pictures, decor, layout, furniture, appliances, and personal effects lying around, so you can positively identify the room/property.

Watch out for any cameras which may be concealed in the room, including on the client's mobile phone.

Keep as much clothing on as possible, in case you have to run.



If you are uncertain or have a bad feeling about the client or the situation, leave immediately.

You could ask the client to have a shower and shower with them. This will give you a chance to assess the client's genitalia (for example, for warts) and ensure they are clean.

If you are not with an agency which provides a driver, get to know and use a local reliable taxi company. Keep their number in your phone.

If you start to feel scared, or you are attacked, try to keep yourself and the situation calm and get to a busy public place as soon as possible. Try to leave a small personal object in the location, such as an earring, bangle, a wrapped condom (make sure it's in the wrapper and you know the brand name), a couple of your hairs, or anything that you could positively identify if you decide to report the incident to the police.



“ I think the key to this one is weighing up the risks against a loss of custom. I have always been super strict about my appointments (never accepting an in-call without an email address and a mobile number, and refusing to see the client if he will not display his number or uses a different number after this has been explained). No doubt this has lost me numerous harmless clients who feel that it isn't worth the risk to them for a working girl to have these details about them, and that's fair play from my point of view. I have also lost bookings because I refuse to do an outcall without a) calling the hotel to make sure that the client is booked in under the name he has given me and b) calling the room number before I leave to make sure the client is there and indeed booked in that room under that name. Again, I don't hold anything against anyone who isn't comfortable with this. I have also opened the door after receiving all of these details, got a bad feeling and cancelled the appointment on the spot with an excuse rather than go against my instincts (and again I would hold nothing against a client if he did the same). ”

Working independently

Working from home

Separate a space for sex work if you are working from your home, even if it is just using a different cover on your bed and changing the pillows to the opposite end from where you sleep.

Move your personal things out of the way of prying eyes.

Move anything that could be used as a weapon against you such as large ornaments or scarves.

Think about other rooms if you are working from your home. Some clients may ask to use your bathroom. Decide whether you are OK with this. If you are, move personal things out of the way before clients arrive. It is OK to say no.

Meet the client at a designated spot, and then walk them to your home so that they do

not knock at a neighbour's house by mistake (although your neighbours may see you walking yet another man into your home).

Once inside, take the money up front and say you are giving this to your boyfriend/friend, and that he is in the other room. Go and put the money somewhere safe, and talk out loud so that the client thinks someone else is there.

Where possible, make sure you stay nearest the exit/door, so if you need to get out quickly you can.

Have a buddy system. Let someone know when you're starting work and finishing. Have a plan if you do not make contact.

If you work from home and have children, be careful to ensure their safety and wellbeing by not working when they are home.



Online working

If you make contact with clients on line you need to screen them. Sex workers use the following methods for screening:

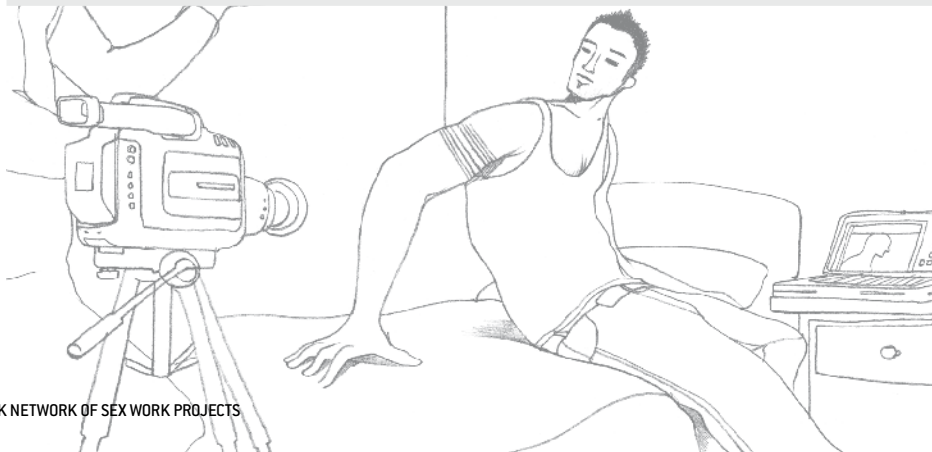
- Check the time it takes for them to respond to messages
- Check for typing errors if in relay chat – lots of errors can be a sign of being drunk or stoned
- Consider carefully whether or not you will send a picture and the nature of the picture. Pictures can be misused
- If you are doing cam shows, clients may have recording facilities which could mean wider distribution of film images. You may want to invest in specialist software which can stop people doing this
- Arrangements to meet via email can be complex and clients may not deliver on all that they have promised. Read through the guidance for outcalls on pages 18 to 22



Adult porn industry

The market place for the adult porn industry is increasingly for bareback sex, despite recent high profile media issues about STI and HIV outbreaks in pockets of the industry. Men and women working as models on these productions are under immense pressure to do bareback filming in order to get the

work, especially in gay porn. Some people do both. Codes of conduct are emerging to cover frequency and types of STIs and HIV screening, and disclosure of other 'high risk' activities off the film set. See the industry website GAIKISS for further information and an example of a code of good practice www.gaikiss.org.uk



Lap dancing, pole dancing and private gentleman's clubs

If you work in these sectors of adult entertainment, we recommend that you contact the International Union of Sex Workers (IUSW), which has a branch in the national trade union GMB. It can negotiate to ensure adherence to health and safety at work statutory regulations within the workplace.

See online at www.iusw.org or email: branch_secretary@iusw.org



Dressing for work

Keep clothing simple: the fewer pieces of clothing you have, the fewer items to keep track of, have stolen or lose. Also the fewer items to be grabbed if you need to leave quickly. Check that your clothing is 'straightjacket proof' and can't be pulled over your shoulders to lock arms.



If possible, wear clothing that doesn't have to be removed to have sex, or that is easy to put on and take off.

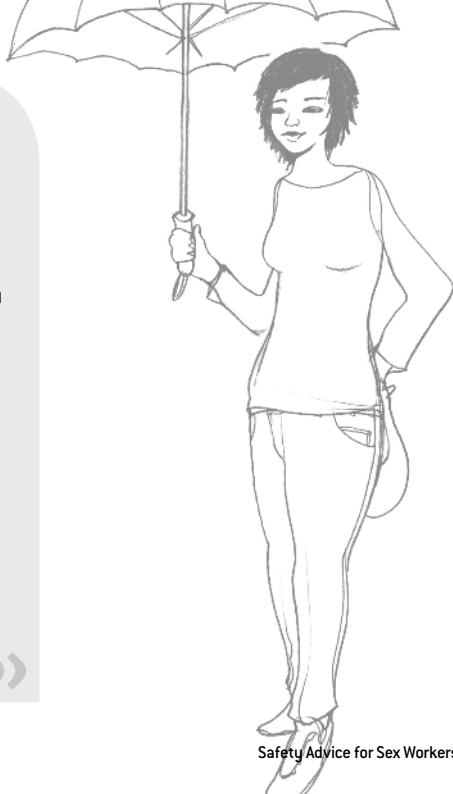
If you work the streets, wear clothes that make you visible at night.

Wear comfortable shoes that come off easily but allow you to run. It's best to make sure you can run in whatever shoes you wear to work. Avoid tight skirts as these will slow you down.

Wear trousers with easy access especially if you go with clients in cars.

If you are wearing trousers/jeans and need to take them off for business, remove them completely if possible. You can't run with them around your knees, and they will slow you down.

Don't wear expensive looking jewellery, watches, accessories, or designer labels when working as you may get robbed/mugged. >>>



It's best to avoid jewellery, but if you choose to wear necklaces or earrings make sure they are small, come off easily and that you don't mind losing them in an emergency or if the client tries to rip you off. Clip-on jewellery and thin necklaces with loose clasps are best. Avoid large hoop or dangling earrings which someone could grab and pull off (unless they are clip-ons). Avoid heavy or thick necklaces. Be careful of crosses or charms which could be used as weapons if taken from you.

Avoid sharp jewellery which can damage condoms.

Remove body piercings before meeting with clients: the jewellery can be grabbed and ripped out. If piercings are a selling point, be clear with clients about proper play so they don't cut their mouths or accidentally injure you during a session.

Don't wear a scarf or other item round your neck as someone could grab it, possibly from a car, and choke you. That feather boa may look great but...

Be aware that over-the-shoulder bags and backpacks are a risk. Their straps can be used to hold or choke you, and can also get trapped in car doors.



Think about the positioning of your bag and how visible it is. Some people feel it is safer on their shoulder, so it can't be used to choke or restrain them if someone grabs it. It is best to avoid putting your bag strap around or near your neck or shoulders.

If you don't carry necessary items (condoms, lube, safety alarm, phone) in your bag, leave it at home or in a locker.

Stash keys and other important personal items where they can be safe. Pockets are useful.

If you have long hair, tie it up.

If you need glasses or contact lenses, wear them.

Be careful getting in and out of cars! Long skirts/coats, flares, oversized belts and bags can get trapped.

If you are transgender, think carefully about how you want to present yourself and whether you will disclose your gender. Be aware of how clients might react (see also pages 34 to 35).

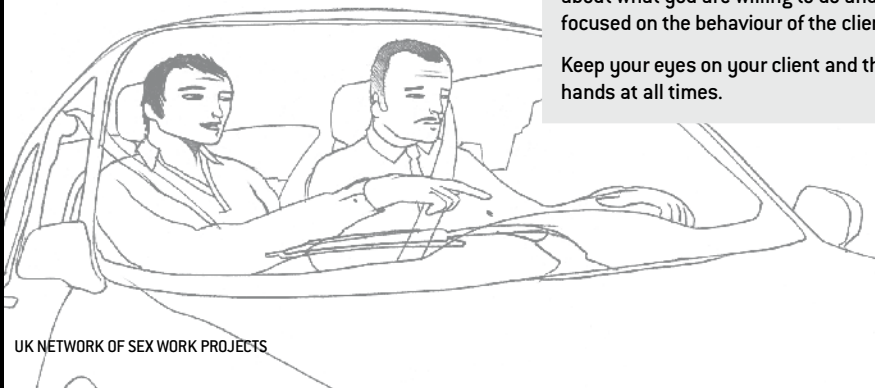


Sexual positioning: stay on top in every way!

It is important to let your client know from the start that you are confident and in control of what happens between you. Be clear before you start about any sexual positions or activities that you do not offer.

Be aware of body language. Suggest confidence and control by using eye contact, direct language about what you are comfortable doing with the clients, and watching their hands. State clear limits about what you are willing to do and stay focused on the behaviour of the client.

Keep your eyes on your client and their hands at all times.



Many sex workers recommend sitting astride (on top of) their customer for vaginal or anal sex as this gives you the best position for control; you have your hands free and your customer is lying below you. In this position, you can sit on your knees for penetrative sex and guide how much the penis enters you, particularly useful for large boys and when you are sore!

Try to avoid the customer being behind you (doggy style) as you can't see what they are doing. Many sex workers who work indoors, use a room with a large mirror so they can see their customer at all times.

If a particular position starts to feel sore or uncomfortable try to offer an alternative by suggesting that something else would really 'turn me on...' etc!

Avoid long necklaces and earrings as these can be grabbed or get caught somewhere nasty! (See pages 28 to 31 for advice on dressing for work.)



Tips for transgender sex workers

Many of the safety issues which pre- and post-op trans people face when selling sex are similar to those outlined already. However, this group may find themselves more marginalised. SW5 and Gender Trust can provide support.

Some male to female pre-op trans sex workers have reported problems with disclosure. Should they tell their clients their gender of origin? Others find that there is a market for pre-op MTF trans people, as clients want 'chick with a dick' type workers. Some trans workers have reported that these clients can become aggressive if confused about their own sexuality.

It is also known for some female to male trans people to sell sex, and again, the issue of disclosure may arise.

Street-based trans sex workers may also find themselves in vulnerable situations and open to abuse by clients and the public. The safety guidelines in this booklet apply here, especially getting to know your area. Some towns/cities have a place where trans sex workers are more likely to be safe selling. Your local sex worker project can guide you on this.

Some male sex workers, who would not otherwise identify as trans and have no intention of transitioning, cross-dress to secure more clients. These workers – often with no intention of passing (looking female) – should think carefully about the places in which they sell their services.



SW5 provides specialist advice and support for transgender sex workers on 0207 370 0406 www.sw5.info. It is London based but can support you by phone or email.

The Gender Trust runs a national helpline and welcomes calls from sex workers: 0845 231 0505.

Check also with your local sex work project to see if it or other local agencies can offer any specialist advice or support.



Reporting and sharing information about difficult or violent people

Tell other workers about potentially difficult or aggressive or violent clients and other individuals!

Seriously consider reporting incidents to the police. Most police forces now have liaison officers for people involved in the sex industry. If you wish to report to the police, you can talk it through first with your local sex work support project and they can support you to report if you wish. You have the right to report violence and other crimes and have these investigated like any other person!



Ugly mugs/dodgy punters

Report all difficult clients and other attackers to your local sex work project. Many sex work projects, particularly those for female sex workers, operate ugly mug/dodgy punter schemes where you can report violent and abusive clients/individuals to warn others of potentially dangerous people. They should have alerts, newsletters or bulletin boards which have descriptions of people who have recently attacked sex workers. Many projects have arrangements where they can pass information about attackers to the police, with your permission, and if you wish to make a formal report to the police they can offer you support to do this.

Some projects supporting male sex workers operate such schemes. They can put you in touch with peer support networks and websites run by people in the sex industry to share information about clients including aggressive clients and non-payers.

Phone your local sex work support project for details about their or other schemes.

In some areas there are 'remote reporting schemes', these allow a victim of crime to report the matter to a third party agency, that in turn forwards the report to the police. The third party agency may be able to offer support and advice to victims or 'signpost' them to agencies who can act as a link between them and the police. Ask your local sex work project, or lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) support project about such schemes in your area.

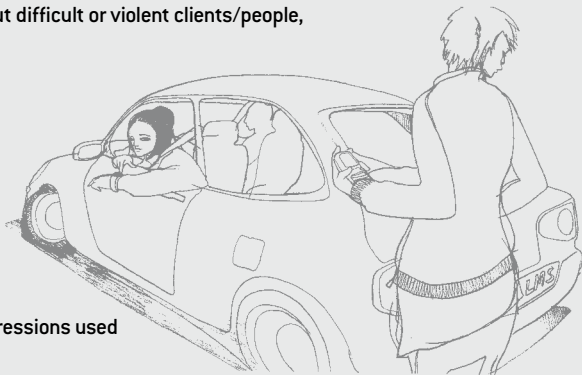
Crimestoppers have a free phone line where you can anonymously report ugly mugs/dodgy punters. They have been part of a 'Stop Ugly Mugs' campaign. The number to call is 0800 555 111.



Memorise as much as you can about difficult or violent clients/people, their vehicles and homes/rooms.

Get details such as:

- Hair colour, style, length
- Build, height, age, skin tone
- Earrings, chains, rings, watches
- Distinguishing features such as scarring, spots, facial hair, tattoos, piercings
- Eye colour, glasses
- Accent, speech impediment, expressions used
- Aftershave, body odour
- Physical disabilities
- Clothing and footwear: style, brand name labels, rips/tears, badges
- Vehicle: make, model, colour, registration plate, bumps/scrapes, items inside, stickers
- House/flat: address, area, type of property, door colour, features in rooms, photographs
- Any other information that would help other workers/police identify them
- Remember there may be CCTV cameras where you were attacked which may help identify attackers
- Remember the date and time of the incident



It's also useful to use ADVOKAT as a prompt. The police use this when speaking to victims of crime:

- A** amount of time the attacker was in vision
- D** distance from the attacker
- V** visibility, weather, time of day, lighting
- O** obstructions e.g. was the attacker wearing any masks?
- K** is the person/s known to you, did you recognise them?
- A** anything outstanding or specific you remember
- T** time, how long the incident lasted and when you last saw the suspect

Write these things down as soon as you can!

Use the following pages to take notes on ugly mugs/dodgy punters.

If you have to get away from somebody who is attacking or threatening you, try to leave a small personal object behind – something like an earring, bangle or an unused condom (make sure it's in its wrapper and you know the brand name), a couple of your hairs or anything that you could positively identify if you decide to report the incident to the police. This ties you to that scene.

Keeping notes on ugly mugs/dodgy punters

Date of incident

Time

Place

DESCRIPTION OF ATTACKER

Age

Height

Build

Hair

Facial hair

Eyes/glasses

Clothing

Accent

Ethnicity

Other information

VEHICLE

Colour

Type

Reg.

Other information

PROPERTY/ROOM

Address

Room number

Other information

WHAT HAPPENED?

Keeping notes on ugly mugs/dodgy punters

Date of incident

Time

Place

DESCRIPTION OF ATTACKER

Age

Height

Build

Hair

Facial hair

Eyes/glasses

Clothing

Accent

Ethnicity

Other information

VEHICLE

Colour

Type

Reg.

Other information

PROPERTY/ROOM

Address

Room number

Other information

WHAT HAPPENED?

If things go wrong

If you are followed:

- Cross the road, maybe twice, to be sure that the person is following you
- If they are, head for the nearest pub, police station, garage or open shop as quickly as you can. Go the most public route to the most public place
- Try to keep yourself composed and your thoughts rational. Pay attention to what someone is actually doing, rather than what you think they might do
- Don't add to your fear by letting your imagination take over. Be positive and confident about your actions. Focus on the fact that you are heading to a safe place, where you will be with other people
- Do not head for home, even if someone is waiting for you there. When you get to a public place such as a pub, if the stalker follows

you in and takes a position where they can observe you, try to socialise with other people in the venue to give the impression that you are meeting friends. If you have a mobile, phone a trusted colleague or friend who could come and meet you at the venue. If you do not have anyone you can call, and you feel genuinely threatened, then you should contact the police. It's safer to go to a public place than to let a stranger know where you live

- If the stalker leaves the venue, wait a good 20 to 30 minutes before planning your exit to ensure they do not return and are not waiting outside. Either wait to be collected by your friend, or if it feels safe to do so, leave the venue at the same time as other people
- If you think you need to, cause a commotion. Make lots of noise and fuss to attract attention and to deter the person following you
- Consider giving an 'ugly mug/dodgy punter' report about the stalker

If someone becomes aggressive:

- If they want your money or bag, decide if it is really worth the fight and potential risk to your life to hang onto it
- Stay calm – try to calm the person and talk them out of it:
 - » Use open-handed gestures
 - » Speak in a low, quiet tone and don't raise your voice or shout
 - » Use friendly, sensitive language
 - » Try to show understanding and sympathy
- Keep thinking about how you will get out of the situation. Don't allow fear, panic or anger to take over
- Tell them someone knows where you are, is meeting you, expecting you home soon or waiting for you

- Cry hysterically – even if you have to pretend
- Pretend you are feeling sick and about to vomit
- Don't carry weapons which could be used against you
- Consider giving an 'ugly mug/dodgy punter' report about the incident

Some local support projects run workshops on de-escalation techniques so you can learn how to calm a person down; how to talk them out of attacking you; and how to get away from an attacker.



If you are attacked:

- Make as much noise as possible by shouting, screaming or yelling
- If you have an alarm, use it. If you can, hold it near the attacker's ear or throw the cord so they can't take it off you to turn it off
- Use your mobile to phone for help
- If you are in a car, hit the horn or flash the lights to attract attention

DECISION TIME – although this is a difficult one, you may have to submit in order to preserve your life. Men are often physically stronger than women. **DO NOT** try to fight a man unless you are certain you can win or you are convinced he intends to kill you. If you decide to submit, cut your thoughts to concentrate on the fact that the attack will end and you will hold on for that moment and then get help. If you decide to fight back to escape, you must be confident that you are going to be able to immobilise your attacker. If you don't know proper self-defence, aim for the eyes, throat, groin or chest.



What you can do after an attack

Remember that the attack is not your fault.

Find a safe place away from the attacker. Ask a friend or a project worker to stay with you.

Seriously consider reporting the attack to the police and a local support organisation. They are there to help you. See pages 36 to 39 on reporting crime.

If you are considering reporting the attack to the police, preserve the evidence. Don't bathe, shower, brush your teeth or change your clothes. If you do change your clothes, don't wash the ones you were wearing at the time of the attack. Put them into a carrier bag and tie it closed. This will help to avoid contaminating the evidence. If the attack happened at home, do not disturb the scene as there might be vital evidence there.

If you are considering reporting the attack to the police and/or putting in an 'ugly mug/dodgy punter' report write down all the details you remember about the attack. What did they do? What did they look like? What did they say?

In some areas you can go to a Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC) where they will examine you, preserve the evidence, offer you counselling and support, and help you to decide if you want to report to the police. You can have all these services even if you choose not to involve the police.

Some sex work support projects have 'visual evidence schemes' where they take photos of any injuries you have, in case you want to report to the police at a later date.

Give the police all the details about the attack, however intimate, including anything unusual you noticed about the attacker.



Show police any external bruises or injuries, however minor, resulting from the attack.

Remember that the police may need to take your clothes as evidence.

Get medical attention. Even if you have no physical injuries, it is important to get checked for sexually transmitted infections and pregnancy, and to obtain any forensic evidence left by the attack. Sex work support projects, Sexual Assault Referral Centres (SARCs) or Rape Crisis can help you with this. You can go to your local GUM service for free sexual health screening and testing and post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP). All these are confidential services which will not pass information to the police unless you want them to.

Tell the police if you remember anything else later on. Things sometimes come back days or weeks after a traumatic event.

Recognise that healing from this kind of attack takes time. Give yourself all the time you need.

Think about phoning your local support project, Rape Crisis or Victim Support.

Learn self-defence to help prevent future attacks. This will help you to feel more confident and in control.



How to help a friend who has been attacked

Listen and be there for your friend.

Encourage your friend to consider reporting the attack to the police and their local project. It might help your friend to contact your local support project or Rape Crisis for further support when making a decision about this.

Try to discourage your friend from taking a bath or shower if they are thinking about reporting the attack. They may be desperate to wash, so gently explain why it's important that they don't.

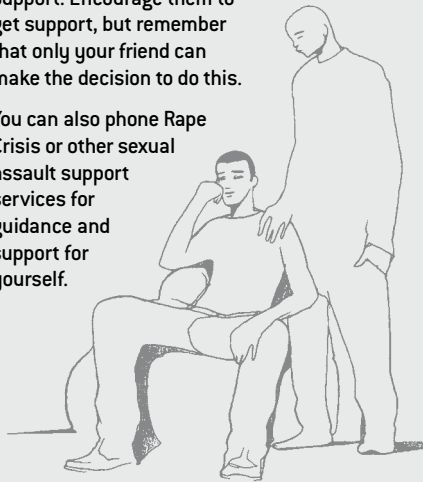
Support your friend to get medical help.

Encourage them to write down the details of the attack. If your friend is shaky, you might be able to help to write things down for them.

Be patient. Remember, it will take your friend some time to deal with the attack.

Let your friend know that help is available from the local support project, Rape Crisis and Victim Support. Encourage them to get support, but remember that only your friend can make the decision to do this.

You can also phone Rape Crisis or other sexual assault support services for guidance and support for yourself.



Useful contacts

For information about sex work projects in your area, see the UK NSWP Directory of Services which you can download from www.uknswp.org. As well as the websites and phone numbers already given in this booklet, other useful resources are:

POLICE EMERGENCY

T: 999

CRIMESTOPPERS

T: 0800 555 111

You can report information about crimes committed against you or other sex workers to this number.

UK NETWORK OF SEX WORK PROJECTS

(UK NSWP)

info@uknswp.org.uk

www.uknswp.org

UK NSWP can direct you to your local sex work support project. They can tell you about other safety resources and where you can get personal safety advice and alarms. They will let you know about projects that have specialist expertise in giving personal safety information and advice to female sex workers, male sex workers and transgender people involved in the sex industry.

INTERNATIONAL UNION OF SEX WORKERS

(IUSW)

branch_secretary@iusw.org

www.iusw.org

RAPE CRISIS ENGLAND AND WALES

www.rapecrisis.org.uk

Can provide you with contact details
for your local rape crisis service.

RAPE CRISIS SCOTLAND

Free helpline: 08088 010302

www.rapecrisisscotland.org.uk

**RAPE CRISIS AND SEXUAL ABUSE CENTRE
NORTHERN IRELAND**

24-hour crisis helpline: 028 9032 9002

www.rapecrisisni.com

NATIONAL WOMEN'S AID ENGLAND

T: 0117 944 4411

24-hour domestic violence

helpline: 0808 2000 247

www.womensaid.org.uk

Information about support services for
women experiencing domestic violence.

**NORTHERN IRELAND WOMEN'S AID
FEDERATION**

T: 028 90 249041

24-hour domestic violence

helpline: 0800 917 1414

www.niwaf.org

Information about support services for
women experiencing domestic violence.

SCOTTISH WOMEN'S AID

T: 0131 226 6606

24-hour domestic abuse

helpline: 0800 027 1234

www.scottishwomensaid.org.uk

Information about support services for
women experiencing domestic violence.

WELSH WOMEN'S AID

T: 02920 390 874

24-hour domestic abuse

helpline: 0808 80 10 800

www.welshwomensaid.org

Information about support services for women experiencing domestic violence.

THE SURVIVORS TRUST

www.thesurvivorstrust.org

Provides information about support services in the UK working with women, men and children who are victims/survivors of rape, sexual violence and childhood sexual abuse.

HOME OFFICE

www.homeoffice.gov.uk/crime-victims/reducing-crime/sexual-offences/sexual-assault-referral-centres/referral-centre-locations/

Link with list of all Sexual Assault Referral Centres in England and Wales.

SUZY LAMPLUGH TRUST

T: 020 7091 0014

www.suzylamplugh.org

Raises awareness about personal safety and provides safety resources including personal safety alarms (for sale).

SW5

T: 020 7370 0406

www.sw5.info

Works with men and transgender people who sell sex.

THE GENDER TRUST

Helpline: 0845 231 0505

www.gendertrust.org.uk

Information, counselling and support to transgender people

SOHOBBOYZ

T: 020 7362 2309

info@sohoboyz.org.uk

www.sohoboyz.org.uk

SohoBoyz is a not-for-profit organisation working with guys in the sex industry to promote rights, choices and safety.

SEXUAL HEALTH INFORMATION LINE

24-hour free sexual health
information line: 0800 567 123

Can provide information about your nearest sexual health/GUM clinic if you want screening for sexually transmitted infection, post-exposure prophylaxis or sexual health information.

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

www.condomessentialwear.com

Sexual health website.

LOCAL HEALTH SERVICE INFORMATION

England: www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk/find/results/index.aspx

Northern Ireland: www.n-i.nhs.uk

Scotland: www.show.scot.nhs.uk

Wales: www.wales.nhs.uk/directory.cfm

These websites can provide you with information about health services in your area, for general health care and if you have been a victim of crime.

NHS DIRECT/24

NHS Direct England and Wales: 0845 46 47

NHS 24 Scotland: 08454 24 24 24

You can call these numbers for health advice and to find local health services in your area.



UK Network of Sex Work Projects

info@uknswp.org.uk

www.uknswp.org



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