



**Home Office**

BUILDING A SAFE, JUST  
AND TOLERANT SOCIETY

Police Research Series  
Paper 134

---

# **For Love or Money: Pimps and the management of sex work**

*Tiggey May  
Alex Harocopos  
Michael Hough*

Police Research Series  
Paper 134

**For Love or Money:  
Pimps and the management  
of sex work**

*Tiggey May  
Alex Harocopos  
Michael Hough*

*Editor: Carole F. Willis  
Home Office  
Policing and Reducing Crime Unit  
Research, Development and Statistics Directorate  
Clive House, Petty France  
London, SW1H 9HD*

© Crown Copyright 2000  
First Published 2000

### **Policing and Reducing Crime Unit: Police Research Series**

The Policing and Reducing Crime Unit (PRC Unit) is part of the Research, Development and Statistics Directorate of the Home Office. The PRC Unit carries out and commissions research in the social and management sciences on policing and crime reduction.

The Police Research Series presents research material on crime prevention and detection as well as police management and organisation issues.

*"The views expressed in this report are those of the authors, not necessarily those of the Home Office (nor do they reflect Government policy)."*

**ISBN 1-84082-544-8**

*Copies of this publication can be made available in formats accessible to the visually impaired on request.*

## Foreword

'Pimping' is an offence which rarely attracts the attention of the criminal justice system. For example, only 188 people were prosecuted for 'pimping' in 1997. Yet research evidence suggests that sex workers are being subjected to brutality at the hands of pimps and coerced into entering or staying in this work. The extent of this problem and the nature of the pimp/sex worker relationship were not clear from earlier studies. This research was commissioned to fill some of the gaps in our knowledge.

This study found that only a minority of sex workers are 'run' by pimps but those who are pimped are at risk of physical and emotional abuse from their pimp. Many sex workers are self-managed and often support partners, but these partners are less likely than pimps to deploy violence. Those who work 'street sex' markets and young sex workers are more likely to be pimped. While pimps undoubtedly play a part in drawing people into sex work, they do not provide the only route into it. They do, however, play a large part in locking sex workers into sex work.

The report explores the various options for policing sex markets and underlines the need to balance police activity between on street and off street markets. The need for preventative work both for sex workers and pimps is stressed in this report. A particularly important finding is the need for close working relationships between the police and specialist agencies in the provision of services for sex workers. This report should be of value to the police and any agency developing strategies to tackle the problems that result from sex markets, particularly those involved with pimped sex workers.

**Carole F. Willis**  
*Head of Policing and Reducing Crime Unit*  
*Research, Development and Statistics Directorate*  
*Home Office*  
*November 2000*

## Acknowledgements

Studies of this nature can only be made possible through the dedication and commitment of many individuals. To preserve the anonymity of the sites and respondents, however, the many agencies that gave us help have to remain nameless.

We would like to express our gratitude to many professionals for their commitment and hard work throughout the lifetime of this project. Those to whom we would like to express special thanks include: Marie Queenan, Sue Johnson, Maureen McDonald, Tina Matthew, Katherine Fraser, Carolyn Henham, Joan Brown, Sarah Chapple, Julia Cosgrove, Ira Cox, Gayle James and Carol Hodgekiss.

Many police officers provided us with invaluable insights, a great deal of their time and access to their statistics: Sergeant Parchment, Inspector Walker, Superintendent Duffin, Sergeant Whitehouse, Detective Chief Inspector Doherty, Sergeant Harrison, Sergeant Jowett, WPC Grundy, Superintendent Warren, Detective Inspector Norman, and Superintendent Thomas.

Others who helped in numerous ways who we would also like to thank are: Sue Gregory, the staff at the Metropolitan Police Library, Inspector Bill Shackleton, Inspector Paul Holmes, Steve Jones, Honor Pringle, Liz Kelly, and the National Addiction Centre for allowing us to adapt the Maudsley Addiction Profile (MAP) instrument when designing our questionnaire. Mike Morgan-Rowe was a great help in providing, and in steering us through the intricacies of, Home Office statistics relating to prostitution. We are grateful to Claire Harvey for her help during the initial stages of fieldwork. We would like to thank the Home Office Policing and Reducing Crime Unit for funding the study, and Ann Deehan, Esther Saville, Cressy Bridgeman, Emma Marshall, Helen McCulloch and Dr. Julie Taylor-Browne for their help and support throughout the project.

Finally, we would like to thank all the respondents who gave up their own time and provided the information which enabled this project to be undertaken.

Tiggey May  
Alex Harocopos  
Michael Hough

## **The authors**

Michael Hough is Professor of Social Policy and Director of the Criminal Policy Research Unit at South Bank University where Tiggey May and Alex Harocopos are Research Fellows.

PRC would like to thank Professor Neil McKeganey from the Centre for Drug Misuse Research at the University of Glasgow for acting as independent assessor for this report.

## Executive summary

This study has examined pimping and other forms of sex work management in four British cities. Our findings are based on interviews with pimps, sex workers, partners of sex workers and managers of massage parlours; we have also canvassed the views of police officers in each site. The main findings about the nature of pimping are as follows:

- Far from all sex workers are 'run' by pimps.
- Those who are pimped are significantly at risk of physical and emotional abuse from their pimp.
- Many are self-managed, often supporting partners.
- Whilst partners are in breach of the law on pimping, they are less likely than pimps to deploy instrumental or coercive violence.
- Street workers are more likely than those working off-street to have a pimp, but a large minority – possibly a majority – do not.
- Younger sex workers are more likely to be pimped than older ones.
- Pimps undoubtedly play a part in drawing people into sex work, but do not provide the only route into it; they probably play a larger part in locking people into sex work.

The role pimps play in drawing people into sex work is hard to establish with certainty. Seven out of the thirty-six we interviewed (whether pimped or partnered) said that a pimp had drawn them into the business. There will be others who having initially got involved for other reasons find themselves locked into sex work after meeting a pimp. For example, two of our respondents said that they started sex working with the help and encouragement of a friend, and shortly afterwards started working for a pimp. Others will have had similar experiences.

We found some striking differences between different forms of sex work management:

- Pimps running street workers tended to have a diverse repertoire of offending styles.
- They had long criminal histories and did not necessarily define themselves as pimps.
- The majority had pimped juveniles at some stage.
- They routinely used violence, often using or threatening the use of guns, in the furtherance both of pimping and of other crimes.
- Many were heavily involved in drug dealing, and most had significant drug habits.
- Drug dependence often substituted for violence as the means of coercing compliance from sex workers.

- Whilst pimps had extensive contact with the criminal justice system, only a very small proportion of their offending came to police attention.
- In this study managers of off-street sex work tended to be women, without significant involvement in other forms of crime.
- Their relationships with sex workers were contractual rather than coercive.
- There were pressures on this group of managers to avoid working with juveniles and to minimise drug use on their premises.

On the policing of sex work and its managers, we found that specialisation, in the form of vice squads, brought several benefits:

- Clear 'ownership' of the issues.
- This sometimes bordered on campaigning commitment to take effective action.
- Detailed knowledge of the legislation.
- Good working links with the Crown Prosecution Service.

As a consequence, the areas with specialist vice squads tended to be much more active in the prosecution of sex work managers than the other sites, and much more successful in securing convictions.

### **The pimping legislation**

At the time of writing, 'Setting the Boundaries: Reforming the Law on Sex Offences' was published containing recommendations to the Government by the Sex Offences Review Team. This paper contains proposals for reforming the law on pimping offences but it remains to be seen if the recommendations will be accepted by the Government. Those officers familiar with the pimping legislation viewed it as adequate for its needs, and did not generally favour substantial revision. However, they viewed sentencing levels as too lenient. In our view, the case for reform turns largely on whether current sentencing is regarded as adequate. If so, it must be a fairly low legislative priority to "tidy up" the law on pimping. If there is a case for tougher sentencing, then the law has to be revised, to specify more clearly the precise nature of the harm that needs to be punished heavily. The case for tougher sentencing is strongest in relation to the pimping of juveniles. We see considerable advantage in amendments to the legislation along the lines proposed by the Criminal Law Revision Committee, but making explicit reference to the pimping of juveniles and to coercive forms of control as aggravating factors.

In our view any review of the sex offender legislation should consider recommending abolition of the legal distinctions between pimping by men and by women, and those between pimping of men and of women. It is anachronistic to distinguish between the sexes for this offence.

## **Policing pimps**

One of the clearest findings to emerge from this study is that effective police action against pimps is helped by specialisation. We are not in a position to assess the drawbacks and costs of specialisation, but the benefits are clear:

- A specialist unit develops clear 'ownership' of pimping as a problem.
- It builds up specialist knowledge of the relevant legislation.
- It can establish relationships of trust with sex workers, who are likely to be key witnesses.
- It can develop working links with corresponding specialists within the CPS.

There are considerable attractions in policies which aim to tightly control and regulate off-street establishments, whilst focusing enforcement efforts on street markets. Ensuring that sex markets take the least unacceptable form is a more realistic policy goal than eradicating them. We also think that if off-street establishments are tightly regulated there is a good chance of preventing their colonisation by highly criminal operators who manage sex workers through coercive violence. An off-street market should not, however, be neglected or allowed to operate unregulated, as the result could be an increase in the numbers of trafficked women in some types of parlour. Kelly and Regan (PRS paper 125, 2000) suggest that clear policy statements need to be drawn up and adhered to by key agencies concerned in the eradication of trafficking women.

## **Sex workers, the criminal justice system and specialist services**

Sex workers and police spoke of the lengthy delays and lack of protection offered by the criminal justice system when reporting pimps. Officers felt that cases involving a juvenile or vulnerable adult need to be fast tracked through the criminal justice system, and be given the status of vulnerable witnesses. We support this argument.

In areas where specialist sex services exist, the support offered to sex workers is invaluable. An effective relationship between specialist services and the police can be of considerable value in securing convictions against coercive pimps. Agencies can provide counselling, support and encouragement to help witnesses handle the ordeal of giving evidence against people who have exercised coercive control over them.

## **Prevention**

Finally some thought should be given to primary and secondary prevention. Pimps are products of their circumstances no less than their victims. It is important to search for creative ways of stopping the development of pimping careers. Many of

our respondents had started their criminal careers in their early teens or before; all had spent time at Young Offender Institutions. Youth Offender Teams could play an important part in early identification of those at risk, and in early intervention. Agencies beyond the criminal justice system also have a role to play. Many of our respondents grew up in sex working areas in local authority accommodation, many were exposed to pimps and drug dealers in their formative years, and many had either been excluded from school or were frequent truants. Education authorities, local housing authorities and youth groups can all offer guidance and support in an effort to reduce the incidence of young people believing their only opportunities exist in the illegal economy. Where primary prevention fails, punishment needs to be followed by constructive work to help offenders find alternatives to pimping.

## Contents

	Page
Foreword	(iii)
Acknowledgements	(iv)
Executive summary	(vi)
List of tables	(xi)
<b>1. Introduction</b>	<b>1</b>
Definitions	2
Research methods	3
Structure of report	4
<b>2. The management of sex work</b>	<b>5</b>
Managing sex work: the legislation	5
Research on the management of sex work	6
<b>3. Five perspectives on the management of sex work</b>	<b>10</b>
‘Classic pimps’ (Group A)	10
Partners of sex workers (Group B)	14
Sex workers with pimps (Group C)	17
Sex workers with partners (Group D)	21
Sauna and massage parlour managers (Group E)	25
<b>4. The police response</b>	<b>28</b>
The organisation of vice policing in the four areas	28
The prevalence of pimping: police estimates	32
Attitudes to the pimping legislation	33
Sex workers’ views of the police	34
<b>5. Summary and conclusions</b>	<b>36</b>
What sort of harm does pimping impose?	37
Tackling pimping	38
References	45
<b>Appendix A: 1997 cautions and convictions for vice offences</b>	<b>48</b>
<b>Appendix B: Cedric: Life on the beat (a case study)</b>	<b>49</b>
Recent PRC publications	53

## List of tables

Table No.	Caption	Page
1	Profile of pimps (Group A)	10
2	Criminal careers of sixteen pimps	13
3	Profile of partners of sex workers (Group B)	15
4	Partners in crime (n=15)	16
5	Partner's drug use (n=13)	17
6	Profile of sex workers with pimps (Group C)	17
7	The criminal careers of pimped sex workers (n=19)	20
8	Profile of sex workers with partners (Group D)	21
9	Criminal careers of partnered sex workers (n=17)	24
10	Criminal careers of parlour managers (n=10)	27
11	Persons charged or cautioned for various vice offences in 1997	29





## 1. Introduction

'Pimping' is an offence that rarely attracts the attention of the criminal justice system. In 1997, 188 people were prosecuted in England and Wales under Sections 30 and 31 of the 1956 Sexual Offences Act ('living on the earnings of a prostitute or exercising control over a prostitute'). Other vice-related prosecution figures are equally low – with the exception of soliciting. In 1997, there were 11,459 cautions or prosecutions for the offence<sup>1</sup>. These statistics raise several policy questions, perhaps the nub being to what extent are vulnerable people manipulated into sex work, and maintained in it by coercion. Other policy considerations include:

<sup>1</sup> Figures supplied by the Home Office Research, Development and Statistics Directorate.

- Do the numbers of prosecutions reflect policing priorities?
- Or do they indicate the difficulty of securing convictions under existing legislation?
- Do the activities of pimps play a large part in shaping sex work?
- Is pimping still prominent in sex markets?

One issue we wanted to address was why some force areas have much higher levels of arrests – and convictions – for living off or exercising control. Does this simply reflect different charging strategies in relation to offenders who are substantially involved in a range of crimes including pimping? In other words, do some forces opt for pimping charges, whilst others pursue charges of wounding, drug dealing or possession or firearms offences? Or are some forces better at assembling evidence of pimping than others? Or is pimping a problem only in some forces?

There is a consensus that some people are coerced into sex work, and coerced into staying in the business. Teenagers tend to be more vulnerable to this than older women. Some are exposed to appalling brutality, and the direct or indirect consequences can be tragic (cf. Ivison, 1997). There is less agreement about how widespread a phenomenon this is, and how characteristic of different sorts of sex work. During an earlier study of drug and sex markets (May et al. 1999) we interviewed problem drug users who were involved in prostitution. Few admitted to being managed by a pimp, though we suspected that several were. Work by Barnardos (1998) and various police forces has suggested that women involved in prostitution are often managed coercively, with a considerable degree of manipulation and/or violence. Few studies have examined the nature of pimping and other related criminal activities pimps may be committing. This study set out to examine the extent and nature of pimping and has concentrated on various aspects of sex work management including:

- entry into, and working practices of, dominant forms of pimps;
- exploring the links between pimping and other forms of criminal activity;

- reviewing strategies for tackling pimping employed by various police forces; and
- identifying the main factors which limit effectiveness.

### Definitions

Throughout this report – as in previous work - we shall use the term ‘sex work’ to refer to prostitution, and ‘sex worker’ to refer to those engaged in prostitution. Some may regard this as mere political correctness. We think that it is worth using terms which are free of the complex connotations of ‘prostitution’ and thus help develop a fresh perspective on the issues<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>2</sup> We have suggested previously (May et al., 1999) that the term ‘prostitution’ would hardly have been regarded as plain English when it finally managed to displace its Anglo-Saxon predecessor, ‘whoring’, in the nineteenth century.

Whilst the labels used to refer to prostitution and those involved in it are matters largely of convention, defining pimps and pimping is more complex. People are involved in the management of sex work in many different capacities, many of which would not generally be regarded as pimping. In the first place, the concept is gendered, both in law (see Section 2) and in popular parlance. Pimping is almost always thought of as a male activity. Although there are women who fill precisely the same role as men in managing sex workers, few would regard them as pimps. And when prosecuted for managing sex workers, women are charged with different offences to men.

Secondly the popular conception of a pimp is much narrower than the legal definition. In specifying the offence of pimping as living on the earnings of prostitution, the legislation obviously embraces a diverse range of people. In particular, any sex worker’s partner who benefits from the income of sex work is theoretically – and sometimes in practice – swept up by the pimping legislation. According to popular conceptions of pimping, however, partners would not count as pimps – unless they occupied a controlling or coercive role. Control is central to the popular idea of pimping. O’Connell Davidson (1998) defines pimps as follows:

“... a pimp [is] an individual who plays an active and identifiable role in the daily reproduction of one or more person’s prostitution, and pimping as the activities carried out in pursuit of that end. Pimping can thus involve... activities which amount to little more than systematic extortion”.

As we shall see, many who benefit from their partner’s sex working income exercise little or no control over them. Partners who ‘live off immoral earnings’ can be placed on a continuum. At one end are those who grudgingly acquiesce to sex work and the money it provides; this shades into more positive support, for example in providing a degree of protection against violence (usually from clients). At the other end of the spectrum are those who manage or direct their partner’s sex work and

control her (or his) income. These differ only from 'classic pimps' in that they control only one sex worker – their partner. We have followed popular usage rather than legal definitions in defining pimps as men who control the activities of one or more sex workers, and whose motivation in doing so is largely one of profit. Those partners who undoubtedly 'lived off' the earnings of sex work without necessarily exercising any control are simply called partners in this report.

The report also distinguishes pimps from the – largely female – managers of sex work in saunas and massage parlours. Sauna/parlour managers are more likely than pimps to have a contractual rather than coercive relationship with their workers, and as we shall see, are unlikely to be involved in other forms of criminality. Although they tend not to be considered as pimps, functionally their work differs little from that of the coercive pimp – though their style of operation obviously does.

### Research Methods<sup>3</sup>

The study looked at five groups involved in sex work. Respondents were drawn from four separate geographical areas, all selected because they had open street sex markets, coupled with differing police structures and initiatives.

The findings have been presented by group as there was little difference between the four areas. All of the sites have been anonymised to avoid reinforcing their reputations as areas where sex markets exist, and to respect the privacy of the respondents. We conducted 79 interviews with people involved in sex markets. Respondents came from the following groups:

- pimps – men who managed sex workers coercively (Group A);
- domestic partners of sex workers (Group B);
- sex workers managed by pimps (Group C);
- sex workers with domestic partners (Group D); and
- massage/sauna managers (Group E).

Different questionnaires were used for each group. We allowed respondents to choose their own status as pimp or partner, on the one hand, and as 'pimped' or 'partnered' on the other. We thought that this was preferable to subjective categorisation by researchers. We explained what we meant by each category before inviting the respondents to make their choice. In our judgement, no respondent needed to be recategorised after the interview. To gauge reliability, certain questions were repeated in slightly different ways throughout the interview.

<sup>3</sup> Details of the methodology, including the survey instrument and the personal protection guidelines followed by interviewers, are available on request from the authors at South Bank University.

## INTRODUCTION

---

The sample was located partly via specialist agencies providing assistance for sex workers, partly via the police and health services and thereafter through snowballing techniques. Interviews took place in voluntary agencies, drop-in services, prisons and semi-public locations. The interview schedules combined both structured and semi-structured questions. One respondent also wrote his life history, which is summarised in Appendix B.

As well as those involved in sex work, we also interviewed people from various agencies: 35 police constables and sergeants completed structured questionnaires, and we supplemented this with four informal interviews with senior officers. In-depth interviews were conducted with sex and drug professionals in all four sites. All fieldwork was carried out between July 1998 and November 1998. We assembled police statistics relating to arrests for:

- living off the earnings of a sex worker (S.30 Sexual Offences Act 1956);
- directing and exercising control over a sex worker (S.31 Sexual Offences Act 1956);
- keeping a disorderly house (S.33 Sexual Offences Act 1956);
- kerb crawling (S.1 Sexual Offences Act 1985);
- soliciting (S.1 Street Offences Act 1959); and
- juvenile statistics for sex working (S.1 Street Offences Act 1959).

### Structure of report

Section 2 summarises the legislation on the management of sex work, and then considers previous research on the topic. Section 3 presents the findings from our interviews with pimps, partners, other managers and sex workers. Section 4 examines the different police responses. Finally, Section 5 summarises our findings and considers their policy implications.

## 2. The management of sex work

This section summarises the main legislation on sex work and its management, and then considers previous research on pimping and other forms of sex work management.

### Managing sex work: the legislation

The main legislation against pimping is contained in the Sexual Offences Acts 1956 and 1967. The pimping offences popularly referred to as “living off immoral earnings” are specified in three separate sections. Pimping of women by men is outlawed under section 30 of the Sexual Offences Act (1956). The act states that it is an offence for a man “knowingly to live wholly or in part on the earnings of prostitution”. If he lives with or is habitually in the company of a prostitute, or exercises control, direction or influence over her movements in a way which shows he is aiding, abetting, or compelling her prostitution, he is presumed under S.30(2) to be knowingly living off immoral earnings, unless he proves to the contrary.

The corresponding offence for women managing female sex workers is defined under section 31, where it is an offence for a woman “to exercise control, direction or influence over a prostitute’s movements” for the purposes of gain. A person of either sex managing male sex workers constitutes a further separate offence if he or she “knowingly lives ... on the earnings of the prostitution of another man” (section 5 of the Sexual Offences Act (1967)). Presumably the legislators of the day saw good reason to make the tortuous distinctions between the sexes; the Criminal Law Revision Committee (1985) speculated that the women’s offence might have been framed specifically to exclude ‘maids’. All three offences are triable either way, carrying a maximum penalty of seven years imprisonment.

### *Keeping a brothel*

Section 33 of the Sexual Offences Act (1956) specifies that “it is an offence for a person to keep a brothel, or to manage, or act or assist in the management of a brothel”. A brothel has no statutory definition but case law has established that any premises qualify where two or more women practice sex work or where a number of sex workers occupy the same building with some common management. This could be in the form of a private home or commercial premises like a massage parlour/sauna. Anyone involved with the running of a brothel, for example, sex workers, maids and cleaners, can be prosecuted for assisting in the running of the brothel. Additionally, men could be charged under section 30 (“living off”) and women under their equivalent offence (section 31). There is also a common law offence of keeping a disorderly house which can be used if, for example, only one sex worker is working from a premises. It is also an offence for landlords to allow their premises to be used as a brothel.

### *Causing prostitution of others*

Although rarely used, under section 22 of the Sexual Offences Act (1956) it is an offence for a person to procure a woman to become a sex worker or to leave her usual home intending her to work or to frequent a brothel. It is not an offence to procure a woman who is a sex worker to commit acts of prostitution although the provision relating to brothels may apply. Under section 23 it is an offence for a person to procure a girl under the age of twenty-one to have unlawful (outside of marriage) sexual intercourse with a third person. It is also an offence under Section 13 of the Sexual Offences Act (1956) and section 4 (1) of the 1967 Act for a man to procure a homosexual act between two other men.

### **Research on the management of sex work**

Research on the nature and extent of pimping in Britain is sparse. What work there is has been done in the context of studies of sex workers, particularly from Europe and the US. There is little consensus as to the proportion of sex workers who are pimped, or indeed the numbers of currently active sex workers and pimps. Benson and Matthews (1995) conducted a 'National Vice Squad Survey' and found from 27 squads in a twelve month period 82 pimps had been arrested. Clearly the number of active pimps will be a lot higher than this. Matthews (1997) also conducted an audit of sex work in London and estimated that there were 5,255 women working in the sex industry<sup>4</sup> who he classed as active. Some studies have found that most operate independently (Pheterson, 1996; McKeganey & Barnard, 1996; Sharpe, 1998). Others have suggested – not necessarily inconsistently – that the majority of sex workers have been managed by pimps at some time in their career. Barry (1995) reported the figure could be as high as 95%<sup>5</sup>. Giobbe (1987) found in her US study that 53% of her sample of sex workers were introduced to sex work by a pimp. Several researchers have observed how ambiguous the relationship between sex worker and manager can be. Whatever the police or other agencies may think, the claimed subjective experience of pimped sex workers is often one of a close emotional tie. For example, Miller's (1986) study found that they were reluctant to use the term 'pimp', talking instead of "my man".

<sup>4</sup> This figure includes those working on the street, from private premises, massage and sauna parlours, escort agencies and hostess clubs.

<sup>5</sup> This figure was calculated by collating estimates from organisations concerned with the exploitation of women. The figure ranged from 80 – 95%.

### *Who pimps?*

Previous research suggests that pimps are exclusively male. We encountered no research documenting the involvement of any women in the management of street sex workers. Obviously there is no reason in logic why women should not pimp, and we learnt of some such cases in the course of this study.

A consistent finding is that pimps have a wide repertoire of offending, and the demographic profile to match extensive criminal involvement – such as low educational attainment and high levels of unemployment (Hoigard and Finstad, 1992; Hodgson, 1997; McLeod, 1982; Shackleton, 1997).

Several studies of street-level pimping in American, Canadian and British cities have noted a tendency for pimps to be black (McLeod, 1982; Barry, 1984; Hodgson, 1997; Reynolds, 1986). Hodgson's explanation for this was that involvement in illicit economies was a response to limited opportunities within legitimate employment markets. However, Pheterson (1996) criticised the stereotypical portrayal of pimps as 'black intimidators'. Sex workers in her study strongly objected to the view that all pimps are 'black and mean', and that all sex workers are 'battered and drug addicted'. Whatever the case for street sex work, this is not to say that white pimps do not exist.

### *Recruiting and modus operandi*

As previously noted, the nub of the policy issue about pimping is the extent to which vulnerable people are manipulated into sex work, and maintained in it by coercion. Barry (1995) found that pimps targeted individuals who were vulnerable and in need of friendship, thus creating emotional dependency. Hodgson (1997) identified how a small gesture of generosity can have a marked effect on a vulnerable person. Initially, a new recruit may be happy to hand over her income, but it is often not long before the relationship becomes demanding and abusive (Shackleton, 1997). In the same tradition, Barnardos (1998) identified four stages through which young people are subjected to manipulation and eventual domination:

- ensnaring – of vulnerable, socially isolated teenagers;
- establishing dependency – by displays of affection and generosity;
- taking control – establishing a sexual relationship, introducing the idea of sex work; and
- total dominance – sustained by physical coercion.

Several studies have commented on the pervasiveness of physical abuse and on the arbitrariness of its use. Hodgson (1997) found that 85% of respondents had experienced physical assaults by pimps. Acts of brutal violence have been reported including beatings, kicking, knife wounds, rape, and murder (Hoigard & Finstad, 1992; Faugier & Sargeant, 1997). A sex worker may be disciplined for failing to hand over the required amount of money, or simply for showing a lack of respect (McLeod 1982).

Hoigard and Finstad (1992) found that sex workers' relationships with men varied and often failed to fit into the stereotypical image of a violent, exploitative power relationship. Pheterson's (1996) work is also a useful counterbalance to the dominant perspective on sex workers as victims. She argues the possibility of rational choice within sex work, reminding us that not all women have pimps and some actually hire the services of pimps. Viewing some sex workers as rational decision-makers in the face of poverty or other forms of social inequality is supported by other studies, especially concerning workers who operate from off-street locations (cf. McLeod, 1982; O'Neill, 1997).

### *The changing nature of pimping*

The biggest change to the organisation of sex work over the last twenty-five years is probably the growth of dependent drug use. American studies suggest that the fortunes of the "dealer/pimp" have waxed as those of the traditional coercive pimp waned. In a sense drug dependence has tended to replace physical coercion as the process by which people are locked into sex work. O'Connell Davidson (1998) also comments that pimps will keep women involved in sex work through non-violent means such as supplying drugs. Inciardi and his colleagues (1993) described how the ready availability of crack in American cities led pimps to diversify into drug-dealing, maximising their incomes from two illicit markets simultaneously. Similarly Miller (1995) argued that despite the perceived decline in traditional pimping, women on the street had not acquired any greater autonomy. Rather their exploitation continued, as a result of their reliance on a largely male-dominated drug scene. In effect the end result had hardly changed, with street sex workers continuing to hand over the majority of their earnings to men who exercised financial and sexual control over them.

Maher (1997) suggested that the demise of the traditional pimp in Brooklyn led to 'situational pimping'. Informal partnerships were being struck between sex workers and men, whereby a 'watchful eye' was being kept out in exchange for money and/or shared drugs. As will emerge, some of our 'partner' respondents had established precisely such contracts. Maher argued – surprisingly, given the threat they pose of coercive violence – that sex workers have suffered from the disappearance of the classic pimp, as the obligation to protect 'their' women is no longer there.

### *Juveniles and pimps*

Juvenile involvement in sex work is a contentious issue. Home Office figures, based on those cautioned and prosecuted, imply that the number of young people involved in sex work is relatively low. However, a large proportion of sex workers begin their careers whilst juveniles (cf. Taylor-Browne, in press); and in one city

alone Barnardos (1997) made contact with 84 girls, 80 of whom were 17 or under. Similar figures have been reported in other areas (ACPO Guidelines, 1998). Some researchers have suggested that pimps tend actively to target and recruit minors (Campagna & Poffenberger, 1985; Hodgson, 1997); others report that pimps will try to avoid juveniles for fear of the trouble such an association may cause (Pheterson, 1996).

### *Massage parlours, saunas and escort agencies*

It is not only street pimps who profit from sex workers. Off-street establishments such as massage parlours and saunas flourish in some areas (see Matthews, 1997, for some London estimates). Although it is illegal for such premises to offer sexual services<sup>6</sup>, police regulation is generally minimal and intervention will occur only in response to a public complaint. A recent case in the South West saw a judge throw out pimping charges against several massage parlours on the grounds that there was an 'unwritten rule' that parlours would only be prosecuted if a complaint had been made against them – leading to a reasonable expectation that a well-run operation would not attract police attention.

Shackleton (1997) reports that 'madams' generally have a contractual rather than coercive relationship with sex workers. There tend to be well-established and well-observed agreements about rental or capitation fees per client to be paid by sex workers to their managers. Sex workers who provide services from massage parlours operate on a 'self-employed' basis which allows owners to distance themselves from the nature of the services offered (Matthews, 1997).

Escort agencies operate on a different basis again. The true nature of the operation in this country is masked by operators' claims that any contract established between escort and client is a private matter, and of no interest to the agency (Matthews, 1997). If owners or managers of escort agencies do indeed advertise and provide only legal services, and play no part in their escorts' private arrangements, their operation falls within the law.

<sup>6</sup> *The illegality would lie either in soliciting, or in brothel-keeping, or in living off immoral earnings. A 'sole trader' who provided sexual services without soliciting would be within the law.*

### 3. Five perspectives on the management of sex work

We interviewed five groups of respondents who were either “living off immoral earnings” or providing these earnings:

- pimps;
- partners of sex workers;
- ‘pimped’ sex workers;
- sex workers with partners rather than pimps; and
- managers of massage/sauna parlours.

#### ‘Classic pimps’ (Group A)

Nineteen pimps were approached for interview; two individuals declined to be interviewed, one currently serving a prison sentence and one in the community. One respondent’s questionnaire was omitted due to unusable data. Sixteen classic pimps, eight in prison and eight in the community, were eventually included in the analysis.

All of those interviewed were male<sup>7</sup>. Five described themselves as pimps. Of these, three were clearly ‘specialists’; their criminal involvement stretched beyond “living off immoral earnings”, but was always related directly to pimping – such as the use of coercive violence against sex workers. The two others had a broader criminal repertoire, committing a range of unrelated – and lucrative – acquisitive crimes. The remaining eleven recognised that they were pimps (in that they fitted the definition used in pages 2 and 3), but were unhappy to be explicitly labelled as such. All of this group were ‘generalists’, committing a variety of crimes as well as pimping.

<sup>7</sup> There were reportedly a few female street pimps in each area. Anecdotal accounts from pimps, police and street sex workers suggest that some of these were no less coercive than their male counterparts.

<sup>8</sup> When referring to averages, we present the mean, unless a small number of respondents skew the data. In such cases we have shown the median – the mid point score – as the appropriate measure of central tendency.

Average <sup>8</sup> age at interview	34 years
Average age at first arrest	14 years
Average age at first sexual encounter	13 years
Average age at first drug use	14 years
Average age at onset of pimping	22 years

#### Working lives of pimps

Respondents exerted a considerable degree of power on the lives of sex workers, deciding almost every aspect of their work. Three ran their businesses from flats,

and 13 from the street. Only four allowed their workers to choose where they worked. The number of workers each managed ranged from one to nine; fourteen worked with more than one woman. None disclosed working with boys or men. The ages of those working for them ranged from 14 to 27. Earnings ranged from £500 to £7,000 per week, and only three claimed to split earnings equally with their workers.

Eleven of the sixteen pimps had worked with one or more juvenile sex workers. For three the first meeting occurred in a nightclub. Others directly targeted bus stations; two had previously sold drugs to the juvenile, and two met through mutual friends. All of the juveniles worked on the street. One respondent claimed he 'trained' juveniles on the street before moving them off-street. Outside of the formal questionnaire three respondents claimed they actually targeted juveniles to work for them.

Adult sex workers were recruited in a variety of ways. Just over a third met prospective workers either on the street (already working) or through the drug scene. The remainder met through social settings - for example, in clubs, at parties or through friends.

Respondents were asked why they chose to work with sex workers. Six attributed this to growing up in a sex working area and knowing no different. Eight made a deliberate choice owing to the lucrative nature of the work, and lack of effort involved. The remainder stated that the women they lived with started to work without any pressure or encouragement from them. Many learnt the tricks of their trade by watching others:

*"When I was kicked out of home I started to live with one [sex worker]. She showed me the ropes and introduced me to the money."*

*"I started to work with them to make a raise [money]. I saw other people doing it and thought I'd have a piece of that."*

*"It was a way of life when I first started. I grew up in the neighbourhood and there were prostitutes all around. It just seemed natural to me."*

All of those interviewed knew of other pimps working in their area. Estimates of numbers ranged from ten to thirty, with little variation across the four areas.

Twelve of those interviewed felt there were benefits for sex workers in having a pimp, some due to the credibility it gives women and others because of the

protection they provide. Three stated they provided easy access to a drug supply. This rosy picture of their contribution to the quality of sex workers' lives was not shared by the latter. Two thirds of the pimped sex workers whom we interviewed saw no benefits. Few felt protected, none spoke of credibility and most already had easy access to a drug supply.

Group A were asked what they liked and disliked about their work:

*"I like the money, not having to do very much and no-one pisses around with me. I have status. There is very little I dislike about the work."*

*"I like the power, money and respect which is something I have never had. At the end of the day though I sometimes have to hit my women because they disobey me. I don't really like doing it, it's just that I have to slap them sometimes."*

Of the sixteen interviewed, nine believed they would continue to pimp, three had definitely decided to give up, and four were unsure about their future. Not surprisingly, perhaps, those with doubts tended to be in prison.

As Table 2 shows, individuals in this group had a long relationship with the criminal justice system. Two thirds had served a sentence at a Young Offenders Institute and all had served at least one prison sentence. The average (median) number of self-reported previous convictions was thirteen. Half believed they started to commit crime purely for money. Others stated that the lack of opportunities available to them were a significant factor in turning to crime. Responses included:

*"I had no money and money problems. I had one or two friends that were pimps - it looked like good money"*

Table 2 shows how diverse pimps' criminal involvement tends to be. Respondents reported involvement in a wide range and number of serious offences, very few of which had resulted in convictions. The sex workers we interviewed confirmed the impression that pimps tend to be involved in a wide range of criminal activities, including drug dealing, firearm possession and acquisitive crimes. The average age of entry into pimping was 24 – coinciding with that of firearm supply. This points to an important feature of pimping – that establishing a reputation as a 'hard man' is a key to success. It was also clear to us that respondents took a great deal of satisfaction in the resultant criminal kudos.

Table 2: Criminal careers of sixteen pimps

Offence	No. committed offence	No. convicted	Average age <sup>9</sup> first committed	No. respondents committing offence in last 6 months
Shoplifting	11	2	12	3
Possession of drugs <sup>10</sup>	16	9	14	16
ABH	16	12	15	13
Burglary	13	7	15	3
Criminal damage	8	1	15	4
GBH	16	8	17	7
Robbery	12	7	17	10
Drug supply	14	5	18	12
Fraud	10	3	18	3
Arson	4	1	20	0
False imprisonment	7	4	21	2
Possession firearm	12	4	22	10
Supply firearm	8	0	24	1

<sup>9</sup> The median has been used for all average ages.

<sup>10</sup> This includes all classes of illegal drugs

### *Pimping and drug use*

Drug use figured prominently in the lives of the sixteen pimps. Fifteen had a drug of choice, nine of whom considered their use to be problematic. All purchased their drugs in the sex market they worked from. Five of those interviewed labelled themselves as dealers, although twelve had sold drugs in the last six months. All were able to buy drugs on credit, reflecting their status as trusted and valued customers. The average spend per week of those having to buy their drugs was £550. From this group, three stated their dealer was also a pimp; one was unsure.

The relationship between dealers and pimps is a complex one. One respondent who was interviewed in-depth for the study spoke at length about the interaction between dealers and pimps. For a dealer to minimise the risk of arrest s/he needs to find a group of customers who pose little or no threat. Sex workers fit this ideal, but those who manage sex workers must be built into the equation. A dealer must have a 'good' working relationship with a pimp in order to be able to sell drugs to sex workers. There must be mutual benefits for each participant to want to enter into

the transaction. Often a dealer will only sell to a pimp, who will then sell onto his/her sex workers. The benefit for the dealer is that risk is minimised because s/he need only sell to one individual. The benefit for the pimp is twofold: his/her drug use is paid for, and by selling on to sex workers further profit is made. Sex workers will often, however, use other dealers if the opportunity arises whilst they are working, or if a dealer is selling at a lower price than their pimp. Eight respondents sold drugs to the clients of sex workers, again illustrating the symbiotic relationship between dealers and pimps.

Finally, respondents who were interviewed in prison were asked why they felt they had been caught. Nearly all attributed the fact to the women they worked with. Some of the latter had reported their pimp (to the police) because of other crimes that had been committed against them and others; usually juveniles were unaware of the potential consequences of disclosing involvement with a pimp to the police. In no cases had the police initiated investigations responsible for the arrest without first receiving information from a third party – usually a sex worker. This supports evidence from both sex workers with pimps and the police themselves who rarely charge an individual without a statement from the sex worker.

*"She was too young to keep her mouth shut."*

*"I didn't commit an offence. She was a sex worker missing from care (14). I feel the police coerced her into saying a lot of things."*

Of those who were interviewed in the community many felt they were "untouchable" because sex workers were either too scared to approach the police, or dependent on class A drugs which they supplied. Others felt that they had not been arrested due to policing priorities.

*"My women wouldn't make statements. I supply their drugs."*

*"They can't be bothered doing me with living off. They get me for other things instead."*

### **Partners of sex workers (Group B)**

Fifteen partners of sex workers were interviewed for the study, fourteen of whom were men. None of the respondents regarded themselves as a pimp, primarily because they did not involve themselves with more than one sex worker, and they too worked upon the stereotypical definition of pimps. All agreed, however, they could plausibly be arrested and charged with living off immoral earnings. Partners

differed from coercive managers in a variety of ways. Perhaps the most significant was the level and nature of their criminal activity and how they viewed their personal relationships with their sex working partners. Table 3 profiles the partners we interviewed.

Table 3: Profile of partners of sex workers (Group B)	
Average age at interview	25 years
Average age at first arrest	14 years
Average age at first drug use	13 years
Average length of time partner sex working	4 years
Average length of relationship	3 years

#### *Involvement and impressions of their partner's working lives*

Respondents in this group were more active than coercive managers in supporting their partner's work, which was predominantly street based. Over half claimed to keep a watchful eye on their partners whilst they were working. This usually involved taking down numberplates, and maintaining contact by mobile phone. Almost three-quarters believed their partners felt safer when they were around. In contrast to the pimps, only one decided his/her partner's work place. Just under half had previously had a relationship with another sex worker, indicating that this group, as with the coercive managers, move between sex working partners.

In an average (6 day) working week their partner's earnings amounted to £700. When asked how the money was divided, eleven reported their partner bought everything, three believed the earnings were split equally, and one claimed his partner kept it all. Only two respondents actually liked the work their partner did, although over half said that the money made the situation more agreeable. Two also stated that they had been able to cut down on their own criminal activity as a result of these earnings. Negative aspects included the potential danger, and five disliked their partners having sex with strangers. Eleven considered that they were only temporarily 'living off immoral earnings'.

#### *Knowledge of coercive pimping*

All of the partners in this group were aware of pimps working in their area. When asked how many individuals they knew of, the figure ranged from one to seventeen. Most pimps seemed to enjoy a reputation that guaranteed them protection against informants for all but the most serious of crimes.

## FIVE PERSPECTIVES ON THE MANAGEMENT OF SEX WORK

*"There are just some things you don't do, if anyone [informed]... about half the pimps around here ... you would eventually be found dead. It's not the pimping, it's everything else they are up to."*

Six stated that their partner had worked for a pimp at some time, two were unsure, and seven believed not. When asked if they felt there were any benefits in having a pimp, eight suggested a pimp might provide some form of protection. Four believed there were no benefits.

Table 4 shows partners' involvement in crime. There are obvious differences between this group and the pimps in the types and level of crime being committed. Partners report committing less robbery, GBH, possession of firearms, and drug supply; but far more shoplifting and slightly more burglary. Their offending patterns, with an emphasis on acquisitive crimes, are those of problem drug users and suggest they are driven by the need to fund their habit (cf. Edmunds et al., 1998, 1999). The average age of first arrest was 14, and the average age of first conviction 16. Eight had spent time in a Young Offenders Institute, and nine had served a prison sentence. One had been convicted of living off immoral earnings and had received a suspended sentence at the Crown Court. At the time of interview seven had pending court cases; nearly all were for acquisitive crimes.

<sup>11</sup> Median used for average age first committed.

Offence	No. committed offence	No. convicted	Average age <sup>11</sup> first committed	No. respondents committing offence in last 6 months
Shoplifting	14	9	12	11
Possession (all classes)	14	9	14	14
Burglary	13	12	14	5
ABH	11	8	15	8
Criminal damage	11	5	15	5
Robbery	8	6	16	1
Drug supply	11	3	17	7
Fraud	9	2	17	4
Possession firearm	6	0	17	2
GBH	7	3	19	2

*Drug use*

Partners were more dependent on class A drugs than pimps. Twelve believed their use to be problematic<sup>12</sup>. Table 5 below illustrates the drug use for the 13 class A drug users.

**Table 5: Drug use (n=13)**

Drug of choice (n = 13)	Number using month before interview (n=13)	Number using daily	Route of administration
Heroin (6)	11	9	9 inject; 2 smoke/chase
Crack (3)	13	4	3 inject; 10 smoke/chase
Heroin/crack (4)	11	2	3 inject; 2 smoke/chase: 6 combination

Most had started to use their drug of choice by the age of seventeen, although this ranged from 12 to 26. All twelve problematic users had their drugs paid for by their partner, the average weekly cost of which was £500. All said that they tolerated their partner's work because of their dependency. Before beginning the relationship with their partner, almost half funded their drug use through high rates of acquisitive crime. Other activities included selling drugs and begging. Most partners we interviewed were aware of the current "three strikes" legislation for the sentencing of drug dealers and most were aware if this was extended to include burglary they could face a lengthy custodial sentence if re-arrested<sup>13</sup>.

**Sex workers with pimps (Group C)**

We interviewed nineteen 'pimped' sex workers, sixteen of whom were female. Table 6 offers a profile. Seventeen worked primarily on the street. Nearly all were uneasy

**Table 6: Profile of sex workers with pimps (Group C)**

Average age at interview	26 years
Average age at first arrest	15 years
Average age at first sexual encounter	10 years
Average age at first drug use	15 years
Average age first sex working	16 years
Average length sex working	9 years

<sup>12</sup> Following the ACMD (1982, 1988), we define problem users as those who experience social, psychological, legal or physical problems related to their drug use.

<sup>13</sup> At the time of fieldwork, the provisions in the Crime (Sentences) Act 1996 for mandatory sentences at the third conviction were in force for offences of drug trafficking and supply, but not for burglary.

about our use of the term 'pimp' during the interview, but it was clear from all the interviews that they were managed for profit, and that this management frequently involved coercion. Table 6 provides demographic details of pimped sex workers.

### *Working lives*

The average age of entry into sex working for this group was 16. Sex workers with partners started working on average four years later (see below). Respondents were asked why they began to sex work. Six attributed the fact directly to coercion by men. Four stated they needed to fund their drug use, and nine began work for financial reasons (this figure included those who were too young to claim benefit and unable to find a job.) Sex workers had worked for their current pimp for an average (median) of 2 years.

The majority (13) had childcare responsibilities. Ten workers left their children with other family members whilst they were at work. The remainder were either over 16 or looked after by school or trusted neighbours.

In the week before interview, the group each earned on average £600, with an average weekly number of clients of 27. Two-thirds (13) estimated that the average amount they were able to keep for themselves was £125. The remainder (6) were dependent drug users, who were unable to put a figure on it. All had drug expenditures over £500 per week. All six stated they had to also fund their pimp's drug use. We also asked this group of respondents to describe the role their pimp took in their working lives. Some specifically mentioned that he stipulated where they should work. Two said that their pimp occasionally dropped by whilst they were working. Ten workers had a proportion of their clients found for them by their pimp.

### *Violence from pimps*

Sex workers in this group spoke of various levels of violence from their pimps. All 19 had experienced physical abuse from their current pimp ranging from 'slaps' to injuries that led to them being hospitalised. Ten workers said that they had been raped by their pimp or otherwise sexually abused. Some had experienced extreme violence:

*"One day he wanted more money, he owed someone. I was ill and didn't want to go out. I got a fractured skull for that one."*

*"I call it domestic violence. He beat me up and hospitalised me, but I dropped the case. I had a broken foot, a black eye, a punctured ear drum, a cut throat and I lost my baby - I was five months pregnant at the time."*

Despite the level of violence suffered, only four had ever reported their pimp to the police. Eight claimed that they would be prepared to give statements if effective protection was given by the criminal justice system. When asked what would be needed before they could discontinue sex working, eight said that 'getting rid' of their pimp would be a significant factor.

### *The relationship between pimps and sex workers*

Sex workers' relationships with their pimps were complex and ambivalent. Nearly all the respondents we spoke to began the association with their pimp in an amicable way. For some the change to a coercive and violent relationship was quick to follow. Only five stated they met their current pimp whilst they were working. Most (10) had their first contact in a social setting. Over half those interviewed had previously worked for another pimp:

*"I've had a couple of pimps. It seems as soon as I get rid of one I get another."*

*"I've had about four pimps. I've been working since I was 12 though."*

Movement of sex workers between pimps and partners was commonplace (see above). There was no single reason why women moved from one pimp to another. Respondents were asked why they felt they had ended up in their situation. Most felt that initially they were exercising free choice:

*"They like to make you think there are benefits but there are none, unless you like being scared to death and beaten up."*

*"I started to give him money for things and he then started to expect it. I was just trying to buy his love."*

None of the sex workers in this group thought their pimp would be happy if they decided to give up work.

The sample of pimps gave somewhat different explanations as to why the women had ended up in these 'relationships'. Many stressed the protection and security which pimps conferred on them. Some believed sex workers were seeking love and intimacy, and others felt that women had no choice in the matter if a pimp had decided he wanted her, for example;

*"Women don't choose to be managed, it just happens. I see potential and I grasp it - if you know what I mean."*

## FIVE PERSPECTIVES ON THE MANAGEMENT OF SEX WORK

### *Pimped sex workers and crime*

This group first became involved with the criminal justice system at the age of 15; this ranged from 11 to 19. Some were still heavily engaged in various forms of offending – much more so than the group of partnered sex workers considered below. Respondents gave varied reasons as to why they began to commit crime. Some attributed their behaviour to “following the crowd” (4); others linked their offending to problematic drug use, and four stated financial reasons. The average number of self-reported previous convictions (excluding soliciting) was seven. Three had served a custodial sentence as a juvenile, and almost two-thirds (11) had served at least one prison sentence. For seven respondents their first arrest was for acquisitive crimes, five were first arrested for sex working, and two were arrested for supplying drugs. Table 7 illustrates pimped sex workers’ involvement with criminal activity.

The average (median) number of sex working arrests was 50, with most workers (10) receiving a fine of around £50 at court. Almost half had a backlog of fines, the average (median) total being £600. Given the nature of their financial arrangements, many had served a prison sentence for fine default, and many could expect to do so in the future.

**Table 7: The criminal careers of pimped sex workers (n = 19)**

Offence	No. committed offence	No. convicted	Average age <sup>14</sup> first committed	No. respondents committing offence in last 6 months
ABH	15	5	13	11
Shoplifting	16	11	14	7
Possession (any class)	18	8	15	17
Criminal damage	12	6	15	2
Burglary	10	4	17	2
Fraud	12	7	17	5
GBH	9	4	17	3
Robbery (not including Clients)	7	5	18	2
Drug supply	10	5	20	7
Possession firearm	5	0	20	2

<sup>14</sup> The median has been used for all average ages.

For many of the respondents criminal activity has always been a part of their lives. Many spoke of the limited life choices available to them because of their criminal records, which in part served to keep them in the situation they were in at the time of interview.

### *Pimped sex workers and drug use*

Fifteen sex workers discussed their drug use during the course of the interview. None of the male sex workers described their drug use as problematic, but all stated that drug dealers were becoming more of a feature in their sex working area.

Eleven of the fifteen viewed their drug use as problematic; all stated they used either heroin and/or crack on a regular basis. The average cost per week of the problematic users amounted to £600. Workers stated that their using behaviour had changed since their association with their current pimp; almost half claimed it had gone up. This may suggest that many pimps initiate, or increase a dependency on an illicit substance, thus increasing the dependency on themselves. All stated that they had to fund their pimp's drug use. Seven pimped workers were also both buying for, and using with, their clients.

Three reported their dealer was also their pimp. We suspect the number may be higher; even when sex workers handed over money to their pimp in exchange for drugs, they seemed not to regard him as a real dealer, but as someone who had bought drugs from a dealer on their behalf. Thus the distinctions between dealers and pimps were often blurred.

### **Sex workers with partners (Group D)**

We interviewed seventeen females between the ages of 15 and 35. They regarded neither their partner nor anyone else as their pimp. They were marginally older than Group C (the pimped sex workers) and had started sex working four years, on average, after Group C. Table 8 offers a profile.

Average age at interview	27 years
Average age at first sexual encounter	11 years
Average age at first arrest	16 years (n=16)
Average age at first drug use	17 years (n=16)
Average age first sex working	20 years
Average length sex working	7 years

### *Working lives*

Workers earned £450 in an average week, rather less than the £600 earned by pimped workers. They worked five days a week, with an average (median) of 14 clients a week, compared with 27 for pimped workers. In other words, they had fewer clients and charged rather more for their services. They showed considerably more autonomy in their working lives. All chose their own work place, none of their partners recruited clients, and all were very sure of their independence as workers.

Respondents were asked how their working money was divided within the relationship. Most had control over their finances. Only one said she kept “very little”. Most told their partner where they were working. Almost half of their partners kept a watchful eye out whilst they conducted business, which created a greater feeling of safety. In contrast, when a pimp was asked what he actually did whilst others were working for him, he stated: “very little, but if you are a good pimp you keep your fingers in a few other pies and keep your reputation going”.

Thirteen women from this group had been approached to work for someone, usually a known pimp on their street scene. All thought that pimps were active in their area, and that they routinely coerced their workers into compliance.

Only two in this group believed their work to be long-term. The rest were either unsure (3), or convinced that it was a stop-gap for them. Nearly all believed their partner would be happy if they decided to give up work.

### *Violence from partners*

Group D did not experience the same intensity of violence from their partners as Group C did from their pimps. Nevertheless, violence was a routine feature of their personal lives. Almost three-quarters had experienced physical abuse from their partner. Nine disclosed violence that had resulted in a broken bone, or a stay in hospital, or both. The remaining three experienced violence which they described as minor:

*“We have fights, we are both as bad as each other. I’ve had black eyes and bruising.”*

*“I get slapped for answering back, he says it’s because of my mouth – he’s a crack user though.”*

Alarming though the levels of violence sometimes were, three-quarters of those who disclosed physical abuse at the hands of their partner nevertheless described their

relationship in positive terms. This was in sharp contrast to Group C. The acts of violence that were described to us seemed more expressive than instrumental. This group reported less sexual abuse than Group C. Only one mentioned sexual abuse from her partner – she said his crack use was the cause.

Three workers had reported the violence they had sustained from their partner to the police. We can only speculate about the reasons for the low reporting rate, but feel that the lack of confidence in the police and anxiety about drawing attention to their own or their partner's criminal involvement may both feature, as well as factors which often contribute to under-reporting in other forms of domestic violence (cf. Mirrlees-Black, 1999). Fear of retribution did not seem as salient as it was for the group of pimped sex workers.

### *The relationship between sex workers and their partners*

Group D viewed their relationships in a different light to sex workers with pimps, and the dynamics of their daily life were markedly different. Although nearly all partners and pimps were formally unemployed, few partners were happy for the situation to remain that way.

Partners tended to be a little older than sex workers – two years on average, compared with an eight year age-gap between pimps and sex workers. Nearly all respondents spoke of their relationship in positive terms, regarding their job and their drug use rather than their partner as the source of their problems:

*"It is very loving as long as we've got money and we are comfortable."*

*"It's good, strong and open. We have our ups and downs, but basically it's good."*

In contrast, below are quotes from Group C when asked the same question regarding their pimp:

*"He is my drug dealer and he does protect me to a certain extent."*

*"I'm scared of him. He supplies my drugs though."*

*"I'm just money and a punch bag to him."*

### *Partnered sex workers' involvement in crime*

Table 9 summarises Group D's criminal careers. They tended to commit offences earlier than Group C, but the number of individuals who have committed offences

## FIVE PERSPECTIVES ON THE MANAGEMENT OF SEX WORK

in the last 6 months is significantly lower. The average age of first arrest was 16. When respondents were asked why they began to commit crime the most frequent response was financial reasons (6). Three workers also spoke of the need to fund a drug dependency from an early age. Four had served a sentence as a juvenile and eight had spent time in prison. The average (median) number of sex working arrests was 22, which is significantly lower than the 50 reported by Group C. A possible reason for this is that those with coercive pimps may be obliged to earn a certain amount and therefore have to work longer hours, thus increasing the chance of arrest. Fines for sex working were usually between £50 – 100. Seven workers had a backlog of fines. The average (median) total was £230, again much lower than Group C. At the time of interview, six individuals had an outstanding court case. Nearly all were for acquisitive crimes.

The majority of the partners of this group were currently committing criminal offences. Only four offences were mentioned: possession of drugs, possession with intent to supply drugs, shoplifting and robbery (both street and armed).

**Table 9: Criminal careers of partnered sex workers (n = 17)**

Offence	No. committed offence	No. convicted	Average age <sup>15</sup> first committed	No. respondents committing offence in last 6 months
Shoplifting	14	9	12	8
ABH	9	6	14	4
Criminal damage	7	3	14	1
Possession	15	2	15	13
Robbery (not including clients)	5	3	15	1
Fraud	11	7	17	3
Burglary	3	0	19	0
Drug supply	7	0	22	3
GBH	6	4	22	1
Possession firearm	3	0	23	2

<sup>15</sup> Median has been used for average ages.

### *Drug use by partnered sex workers*

Nine workers classed themselves as dependent class A drug users. Four stated their drug of choice to be heroin, three crack cocaine, and two were dual heroin/crack

users. The cost of their drug use per week was £455. Their partners' drug use, which many helped to finance, was £500. Five of this group believed their drug use had directly led them to sex working.

### Sauna and massage parlour managers (Group E)

We interviewed managers or owners of ten massage parlours/saunas. Nine were female and all were over the age of 24, with an average age of 39. The most experienced had been doing the job for thirty years, and the least experienced for two. In all ten parlours the sex workers were exclusively women. We were unable to locate any respondents for Area 3, which had very few parlours.

All the parlours we visited offered sexual services, and all the managers were aware that they were breaking the law in doing so. Whether this could be readily proved in a court of law is another matter, of course. If charged with "living off", some might succeed in mounting a plausible defence that their involvement did not stretch beyond the provision of perfectly legal and licensed services<sup>16</sup>.

Whilst parlour managers profit no less than pimps from sex work, their mode of operation is substantially different. In these interviews we asked in detail about the workings of parlours, along with parlour rules and economics.

### Working lives

The working lives of parlour managers were totally different to the pimps in Group A. The average number of workers in a parlour was 10 (range 4–20). Opening hours tended to be from 10.00 until 22.30. None of the ten parlours had ever been raided. The age range of working women was 18 – 50 (one parlour was known as the 'granny parlour'). All recruited their workers either by word of mouth, or by advertising. No parlours were in residential areas and most blended into their surroundings. We asked respondents to describe what they liked and disliked about their work. Most viewed their work as a legitimate and unfairly stigmatised occupation:

*"I enjoy it. It is a safe environment for the women, and the clients respect them more."*

*"It should be legalised if it is safer for the women and there is no funny business. I like my work, we provide a valid service."*

We asked managers about their roles and working relationships with their sex workers. Answers focused on people management and administration, providing a sharp contrast to Groups A and B:

<sup>16</sup> Though a manager of an escort agency could mount this defence more convincingly.

## FIVE PERSPECTIVES ON THE MANAGEMENT OF SEX WORK

---

*"I am their boss. I am also there if they need me or need some advice. I am a bit like a mother hen."*

*"I hire them, pay them, manage them and decide who works and when."*

All the parlours had rules that were non-negotiable. All stated that no juvenile workers or drugs were allowed on the premises. For many these were the two 'golden rules' to staying in business. None wanted bad reputations or unwanted attention from the police. Managers were asked if they had at any time intentionally or unintentionally worked with sex workers aged under 18. Five said that they had. Most, however, said that they found out within a few days and 'sacked' the worker. Avoiding employing anyone under the age of 18 was presented to us as something of a preoccupation. Most stated they could tell by looks or demeanour. Some asked for benefit books; one asked for birth certificates.

There can be little doubt that some juveniles do work in some parlours and other off-street establishments; where this occurs, managers are unlikely to admit it. The managers we interviewed, however, genuinely wished to avoid working with juveniles, and the important factor behind this was the belief that their operation was tolerated by the police as long as they worked only with people over 18. Other rules managers in this group enforced on their premises included:

- no anal sex;
- condoms always to be used;
- no partners allowed in the workplace;
- no rudeness or unpunctuality;
- no overcharging;
- no drunkenness; and
- no clients under the age of 18.

If a worker disobeyed any of the rules they were usually told not to come back.

The parlours ranged from small businesses to medium-sized and highly profitable operations. All of the parlours we visited charged a door entry. The average was £7.00. The lowest price for sexual services was around £25. Few managers could say with confidence what the top price was, as negotiation between sex workers and clients was behind closed doors.

The precise financial arrangements between manager and sex workers varied. Managers usually kept the door money and took a percentage from each sex worker, for example £10 a head for the first four clients and a lesser amount thereafter. The

## FIVE PERSPECTIVES ON THE MANAGEMENT OF SEX WORK

average (median) throughput of clients was 60 a week, implying a weekly turnover for the business of around £1,000, though the better organised were much more lucrative. One manager said that the parlour owner, who ran eight other parlours, had a very substantial six-figure income.

Most managers worked a five-day week and earned on average (median) £400; owners earned considerably more. All paid rent on their premises, which averaged around £300 per week, and was above the 'going rate' in all areas. In all of the areas landlords were aware of the work being conducted from their premises. Due to the amount charged per week, it could be suggested that landlords are also making a considerable profit from the work of sex workers.

### *Parlour managers' involvement in crime*

In comparison to pimps, partners and sex workers, parlour managers had very little contact with the criminal justice system. Only one respondent had spent time as a juvenile in prison; none had done so as an adult. None had any outstanding court cases at the time of interview. Half had been convicted of a criminal offence (excluding any soliciting charges). The only criminal offence that all respondents had committed was possession, although only two had done so in the last six months. Drug use amongst this group was now negligible and none reported using class A drugs in the month before interview. Table 10 illustrates parlour managers' criminal careers.

**Table 10: Criminal careers of parlour managers (n = 10)**

Offence	No. committed offence	No. convicted	Average age <sup>17</sup> first committed	No. respondents committing offence in last 6 months
Shoplifting	8	1	15	0
ABH	7	0	15	2
GBH	2	2	16	0
Possession	10	2	20	2
Drug supply	3	1	21	0
Fraud	3	0	21	0
Robbery	1	0	23	0
Possession firearm	1	0	25	0

<sup>17</sup> The median has been used for all average ages.

## 4. The police response

<sup>18</sup> In 1997 there were 11,459 cautions and convictions for soliciting and/or loitering.

The policing of sex markets has traditionally focused upon the offence of soliciting. Numerically, arrests and prosecutions for this offence have predominated<sup>18</sup>. Proceedings for pimping have always been rare. In England and Wales in 1997 there were 193 cases resulting in cautions or convictions (see Appendix A for all vice-related statistics).

Benson and Matthews (1995) surveyed a number of vice squads and identified a variety of obstacles to the prosecution of pimps:

- evidential problems of proving living off immoral earnings;
- a lack of resources and manpower needed to secure successful prosecutions;
- inadequate court sentences;
- witnesses are fearful and unprotected by the criminal justice system; and
- variations in CPS practice across areas.

This section details the policing response to pimping in the four police forces hosting the research, and aims to weigh up the relative importance of the obstacles identified by Benson and Matthews. The findings in this section are based largely on structured interviews with 35 constables and sergeants across the four sites, but also draw on the interviews with pimps, partners, parlour managers and sex workers.

We asked police officers various questions about sex work, its management and its policing, including:

- the structure and organisation of vice policing;
- estimates on the numbers of women and men selling sex and being managed;
- perceptions of the law and its operation; and
- any appropriate changes in existing legislation.

### The organisation of vice policing in the four areas

Table 11 presents statistics at force level for the four forces that hosted the research. All four forces had both street and off-street sex markets; our sites comprised a significant proportion – but not the totality of – sex markets in each force. It is clear from Table 11 that levels of police activity varied substantially across the sites. To anticipate one of our main arguments, the difficulties identified by Benson and Matthews tended to be regarded as insurmountable only in areas where sex markets were policed by non-specialist uniformed officers. In Area 1 uniformed officers dealt with all vice matters. In Area 2 vice-related issues were dealt with by two units – a vice squad in one division and in a neighbouring area, a divisional patrol unit. In the last two areas specialist vice squads existed.

Table 11: Persons charged or cautioned for various vice offences in 1997

Offence	Area 1	Area 2a	Area 2b	Area 3	Area 4
Living off/exercising control (S.30 Sexual Offences Act 1956)	0	0	1	11	18
Living on earnings of male prostitution (S.5(1) Sexual Offences Act 1967)	0	0	0	0	0
Brothel Keeping (S.33 Sexual Offences Act 1956)	0	0	1	1 caution	18
Procuration (S. 22(1)(a) Sexual Offences Act 1956)	0	0	0	2	0
Unlawful sexual intercourse (under 16) (S. 6(1) Sexual Offences Act 1956)	0	0	0	0	0
Loitering/soliciting (S.1(1) Street Offence Act 1959)	110	68	34	1085	687
Man soliciting woman(S.1(1) Sexual Offence Act 1985)	27	0	6	50	108
Juvenile initiatives <sup>19</sup>	3 caution: 1 charged	0	2 charged	[66]	[85]

<sup>19</sup> Areas 3 and 4 operated a policy of diverting juveniles from formal criminal proceedings. Figures in square brackets show numbers diverted, rather than those charged or cautioned.

The above statistics illustrate that where dedicated vice units exist the number of arrests increase considerably. We are not in a position to say whether Area 4 are better at assembling evidence or that pimping is more of a problem in their area. It would appear, however, that where dedicated units do exist there is a form of ownership that is missing from areas without specialist squads.

*Area 1: the response by non-specialist uniformed officers*

In Area 1 we interviewed ten police officers; one held the vice liaison officer post and worked from the intelligence unit, and the rest were community beat officers. The area has three sex work markets – two female and one male – policed by two divisions. The strategy for policing sex workers in Area 1 has three elements:

- toleration of off-street saunas and parlours;
- proactive policing of street-level sex workers; and
- referral of arrested sex workers to voluntary/statutory agencies.

The referral function was undertaken by a WPC with specific responsibilities for dealing with, and liaising with, sex workers. Her role was to provide some continuity and consistency in prosecutions against sex workers, whilst offering them a degree of

support. She carried out referral work to appropriate agencies, and alongside processing sex workers through the criminal justice system, she was the first point of police contact when workers had been the victims of assault or sexual offences, accompanying them to court if they needed support as a witness. She also played an informal inspection role in relation to off-street saunas and parlours.

Table 11 shows that the most frequent arrests were for soliciting, but clearly taking action against pimps was not a priority. The explanation lies in the organisation of vice policing. Like many other cities Area 1 disbanded its vice squad over five years ago, relocating its responsibilities with uniformed officers. There are obviously arguments in favour of this “generic” option – not least greater flexibility to respond to crime problems. Police respondents in Area 1 emphasised the arguments against, however. All felt there was a need to re-establish a vice squad. They believed there was no ‘ownership’ from other units which was detrimental to both local communities and sex workers. They felt ill-equipped to deal with the intricacies of the legislation relating to sex work. Indeed of three ex-CID officers only one had ever received any kind of investigative training.

### *Area 2: two vice squads and a problem of geography*

In Area 2 we interviewed two sergeants and nine constables. Area 2 suffered from a geographical problem when policing vice. Two squads tackled the issues, each feeling the tensions of joint ownership and the problems it created. The long-established vice squad was operated only in one division. Its role had evolved over time, prompted partly by the relocation of some sex workers to an adjacent division. It now functioned quite largely as a robbery squad, whilst also providing back-up support for the CID team. A Divisional Patrol Unit had been established in the adjacent division; whilst this covered a range of offences besides vice, action against soliciting was one of its priorities. As with Area 1, this organisational structure resulted in proceedings almost exclusively for soliciting. All our police respondents felt there needed to be one unit dealing with all vice-related issues rather than the present fragmented system. Nearly all thought that the lack of ownership was an important factor in the lack of convictions for pimping.

Officers in Site 2 kept track of parlours working in their area; off-street businesses were largely tolerated, but there were no arrangements for inspections to ensure that practice was actually acceptable.

Area 2 had in the past had problems with voluntary agencies over issues of confidentiality. The police felt that if agencies were aware of the names of coercive individuals they should pass them onto the police. The agencies, however, felt

gaining the trust of a sex worker who had accessed their services was of greater importance, and if they were seen to be colluding with police officers they would not be trusted by their clients. There was still some scepticism from both the police and some specialist services, although the issues were gradually being addressed.

### *Area 3: focused vice policing*

During the research a specialist vice squad existed in Area 3. The unit was staffed by a sergeant and six constables. All of the team worked on a variety of cases with no-one having particular responsibility for any individual area. The OCU commander – and the squad – attached very high priority to tackling problems associated with juvenile sex workers. The team were highly committed to the welfare of juveniles involved in sex work, but had few specialist child agencies within the city to which they could either refer or with which they could work in partnership.

As Table 11 shows, the squad were successful both in initiating proceedings against a large number of (adult) sex workers for soliciting, and in taking action against pimps. The latter were largely involved in the running of juveniles. At the time of the research the squad was able to call on the services of a specialist CPS adviser which the sergeant regarded as invaluable assistance. Unlike Area 1, Area 3 practised a policy of zero tolerance concerning saunas and massage parlours – although we were told by sex workers and managers that a small number were nonetheless in operation.

After fieldwork was completed, however, the vice unit was effectively disbanded and vice issues transferred to uniformed officers organised for sector policing. Responsibility for loitering and soliciting was taken on by uniformed officers, juvenile sex worker issues transferred to the vulnerable persons unit (VPU) and serious vice issues such as pimping handled by CID officers. All of the officers on the squad doubted that the momentum of their work would be maintained. One senior officer, however, commented that although the expert knowledge of officers in specialist units could be invaluable, such officers were themselves poorly placed to weigh up the pros and cons of specialisation. He thought that as members of specialist units they would inevitably advocate specialisation, and that they would tend to be suspicious of, and opposed to, any organisational shift away from specialisation. His view was that the survival of specialist vice units was neither desirable nor likely. Ironically, the reorganisation occurred at the same time as specialist voluntary services began work in the city, providing a solution to the problems of partnership which they had previously encountered<sup>20</sup>. Officers believed the work with juveniles would continue as the VPU are a specialist unit.

<sup>20</sup> One senior officer commented that the partnership work between the police and the specialist voluntary organisation has, since completion of fieldwork, been 'instrumental in making enforcement activity successful.'

### *Area 4: a comprehensive approach*

Police in Area 4 had the most comprehensive approach to vice issues. It operated a vice unit, comprising an inspector, a sergeant, and six constables. Each had specific areas of expertise for which they were responsible. These included: male sex workers; parlours and saunas; juvenile sex workers; intelligence gathering; pimps; adult female sex workers and computer pornography. They had established a close working relationship with both social services and voluntary agencies within the city. The police and these agencies had successfully ironed out problems of confidentiality that often undermine such partnerships. Officers believe one of their main problems was the lack of a permanent female officer that they believed would obviously be advantageous for issues such as rape.

Area 4 was particularly successful in prosecuting pimps and had a specialist CPS worker who dealt with all vice cases and provided advice to the unit. Like Area 3, it operated a policy of zero tolerance with parlours and saunas. It had the highest prosecution rate for brothel keeping. At the time of research it had just started placing bail conditions on sex workers to prevent further offences being committed when they were arrested for soliciting. Conditions included not to work on the streets of Area 4. Other measures were considered but rejected. Officers stated they only placed conditions on workers if they continually re-offended whilst on bail.

### **The prevalence of pimping: police estimates**

Although each force had a different approach to the policing of sex work, we found little variation either in attitudes towards the relevant legislation or in estimates of the prevalence of pimps and pimping. We have not, therefore, broken these findings down by area.

The average number of women working on the street at any one time was estimated to be between 30 and 40 in each of the areas. The off-street estimate was much higher at around 100. Police officers believed that around half of the street women were managed coercively by pimps; the proportion dropped to around thirteen percent when discussing off-street workers.

Male street sex workers were apparent in all sites except Area 3 but only officers in Site 4 seemed to have a full knowledge of this. Most of those in the other areas were reluctant to offer any estimates of numbers. Of the fifteen (across all sites) who answered, the average street number was ten, with around a quarter being coercively pimped.

### Attitudes to the pimping legislation

Officers were divided upon the effectiveness of the existing legislation. Where vice units existed officers were far more inclined to believe the Street Offences Act (1956) needed little more than tweaking. Non-specialist officers were far more dissatisfied with the legislation. Comments from officers who favoured revision mainly centred around the reliance of evidence from sex workers. Sex workers were regarded as vulnerable witnesses on the one hand, and as having limited credibility, on the other:

*"It is so difficult due to sex workers fearing violence. Statements are difficult to obtain and one on one in court is never any good. Sex workers are unreliable as witnesses. It is the length of time from charge to court, it's too long."*

*"At the moment the main way to get a conviction is the word of a working girl. In most cases women won't assist through fear of reprisals etc. Should be some other way to get convictions without their testimony."*

Only two officers believed the gender distinctions in the legislation should remain. The remainder felt these created needless complications. We asked whether domestic partners should be liable to prosecution for "living off". Twenty-six stated they should, but most drew attention to the practical problems in actually securing a conviction. Most officers thought that partners should be left alone by the law – unless a complaint was received or there were other pressing reasons for action.

Almost three-quarters favoured the creation of a separate offence carrying a harsher sentence for living off the earnings of a juvenile sex worker. The remainder felt the legislation should remain as it was and felt the maximum sentence of seven years was sufficient for sentencing. They believed creating a new offence would only complicate matters.

Twenty officers had recent experience of a pimping case, but only seven had resulted in the defendant receiving a custodial sentence – all seven were from Areas 3 and 4 (operating specialist vice units). Where there were no arrests or convictions for pimping, officers believed the length of time it took to investigate and the likelihood of securing a conviction were the main reasons.

*"It's a question of priority. We can't get convictions for pimps or kerb-crawlers so we leave them – it's not good for the numbers. Takes up too much time and there's no guarantee at the end of a conviction, and while you're doing it the number of prostitute arrests is down as well."*

Few officers felt sentences were adequate – no defendant had received a sentence over four and a half years, and no officer could ever remember any defendant receiving the maximum sentence for either procuration or living off. Many officers felt a considerable disillusionment with the sentencing of defendants in pimping cases and felt there was little to deter individuals from re-offending.

In summary police officers generally felt the following needed to be addressed:

- pimping legislation to be gender neutral;
- a new offence to be created for pimping juveniles;
- dedicated vice units to deal with vice matters.

Other suggestions made by some officers included treating sex workers cases as vulnerable witnesses when giving evidence in court against pimps, and using powers of asset seizure when pimps are convicted. Officers in Area 3 rarely found assets to seize, believing that most of the money pimps had was spent on drugs. They did, however, report pimps to the Inland Revenue if they believed they had assets over £10,000 – the threshold which force policy demanded. Area 4 operated a similar policy but with a slightly lower threshold<sup>21</sup>.

<sup>21</sup> At the time of fieldwork Area 4 had just seized assets from one individual in the region of £16,000.

### Sex workers' views of the police

Of the 36 sex workers interviewed, only seven had never been approached by the police to provide information on others. Nearly all had been asked for information on either drug dealers or pimps – and nearly all said that they had refused. Just over half of the pimped sex workers (Group C) stated they would be unwilling to report their current pimp to the police.

*"Why would I? I value my life and the lives of my kids."*

Of those who had reported a pimp few continued with the case:

*"I made a complaint because I was fed up of being beaten up. They arrested him [pimp] but I had to drop the case, he threatened to kill me and he meant it. I mean who would miss me?"*

Thirteen sex workers had at some time reported a pimp to the police. Of those currently being pimped nine believed they would report their current pimp, although from this group three had already dropped a previous complaint due to fear of reprisals from their manager. Of the remaining ten in this group four stated

they would be unwilling to report their current pimp due to fear, two believed it was wrong to report their own partner regardless of the circumstances (as they stood) and one claimed he could 'look after himself'. Sex workers generally felt the criminal justice system failed them when reporting violent men. Six workers spoke specifically about the lack of protection that was offered:

*"If there had been better protection I would have probably gone through with it."*

The majority (10) held positive views regarding the police. In areas where a vice squad existed, the views were often more favourable. Negative responses focused on the lack of respect from the police and the excessive arresting. Police in Area 4 had the most positive relationship with Group C; only one respondent discussed them in a negative manner. The following is a typical response:

*"I try to keep out of their way but it's difficult. I think they do try and protect the girls. Uniform are worse than useless – they haven't got a clue about what we do, or why. I trust vice though which is really saying something."*

The relationship between sex workers and police officers is often difficult; officers in Area 4 worked particularly hard at fostering good relations with workers and to some degree had the trust and respect of both the male and female sex workers. No one in Area 1 spoke positively about the uniformed officers, although the WPC liaison officer was welcomed by most women and felt to be a positive step forward – again reinforcing the value of specialist vice staff. As with any specialist squad, senior management must put measures in place to protect officers from false allegations and equally to protect potential defendants from corrupt police officers. Matthews (1996) examined two police responses to armed robbery and highlighted a number of disadvantages that can arise from specialist units. He pointed out that some units have a restrictive remit that results in limited effectiveness and interventions. He also stated that specialist officers can distance themselves from other officers thus creating resentment and poor working relations. This distance can also lead to corruption. Since 1996 the police service have implemented several measures in an attempt to stem corruption, including introducing tenure periods in specialist units, the creation in the Metropolitan force of the Complaints Investigation Bureau, and a confidential phone line for officers to disclose the bad or criminal practices of colleagues.

### 5. Summary and conclusions

This study has examined pimping and other forms of sex work management in four British cities. Our findings are based on interviews with pimps, sex workers, partners and managers of massage parlours; we have also canvassed the views of police officers in each site. Our samples are small and obviously we cannot claim to provide a comprehensive description of pimping in England and Wales. However, drawing on both our own findings and the results of previous research we believe that we can make some fairly robust generalisations:

- Far from all sex workers are 'run' by pimps.
- Those who are pimped are significantly at risk of physical and emotional abuse from their pimp.
- Many are self-managed, often supporting partners.
- Though partners are pimps in the eyes of the law, they did not routinely use the same sort of instrumental or coercive violence deployed by pimps.
- Street workers are more likely than those working off-street to have a pimp, but a large minority – possibly a majority – do not.
- Younger sex workers are more likely to be pimped than older ones.
- Pimps undoubtedly play a part in drawing people into sex work, but do not provide the only route into it; they probably play a larger part in locking people into sex work.

The role pimps play in drawing people into sex work is hard to establish with certainty. Seven out of the thirty-six we interviewed (whether pimped or partnered) said that a pimp had drawn them into the business. There will be others who having initially got involved for other reasons find themselves locked into sex work after meeting a pimp. For example, two of our respondents said that they started sex work with the help and encouragement of a friend, and shortly afterwards started working for a pimp. Others will have had similar experiences. We found some striking differences between different forms of sex work management:

- Pimps running street workers tended to have a diverse repertoire of offending styles.
- They had long criminal histories and did not necessarily define themselves as pimps.
- The majority had pimped juveniles at some stage.
- They routinely used violence, often using or threatening the use of guns, in the furtherance both of pimping and of other crimes.
- Many were heavily involved in drug dealing, and most had significant drug habits.
- Drug dependence often substituted for violence as the means of coercing compliance from sex workers.

- Whilst pimps had extensive contact with the criminal justice system, only a very small proportion of their offending came to police attention.
- Managers of 'regulated' off-street sex work tended to be women, without significant involvement in other forms of crime.
- Their relationships with sex workers were contractual rather than coercive.
- There were pressures on this group of managers to avoid working with juveniles and to minimise drug use on their premises.

On the policing of sex work and its managers, we found that specialisation, in the form of vice squads, brought several benefits:

- Clear 'ownership' of the issues.
- This sometimes bordered on campaigning commitment to take effective action.
- Detailed knowledge of the legislation.
- Good working links with the CPS.

As a consequence, the areas with specialist vice squads tended to be much more active in the prosecution of sex work managers than the other sites, and much more successful in securing convictions.

### **What sorts of harm does pimping impose?**

How vigorously should the police pursue offences of pimping? Clearly in numerical terms it is a rare offence. Pooling estimates from police and those involved in sex work, a city of 300,000 might support in the region of 20 'classic pimps'. Set beside the 250 burglars who typically pass through the criminal process in a town of this size, this may not seem a pressing problem, and one that is unlikely to have been flagged up as a priority in local Crime and Disorder Act audits. For pimping to be given higher priority on the policing agenda, an argument has to be made about the severity of the offence. If soliciting and loitering are identified as local concerns (within the Crime and Disorder Act audits) police strategists should devise both short and long-term objectives that take account of the coercive management that is likely to be causing some individuals to sex work.

As legally defined (for example in section 30 of the Sexual Offences Act 1956) living off the earnings of sex work does not necessarily have any serious consequences. For example, a sex worker who willingly chooses to support her partner's drug habit transforms him – in the eyes of the law – into a pimp. The two of them might well argue that this is a better solution to their problems than burgling to finance their drug use. From a libertarian standpoint, pimping may even seem a minor problem – if one chose to accept the assumption that all those who

operate in sex markets exercise a degree of choice in doing so. However, our findings support those of previous research, in showing that pimping can be highly coercive, and that those who are most vulnerable to such coercion are young people with limited personal resources (cf. Taylor-Browne, in press). The consequences of such coercion can often be sufficiently serious to justify regarding it as a form of “slow rape”.

If this analysis holds up, the harm in pimping lies not in the fact of benefitting materially from sex work, but in manipulating or forcing vulnerable individuals into an activity which is very likely to damage them to the same degree as crimes such as rape.

There is another reason for focusing effort on the policing of pimps. As we have seen, their criminal careers are long and their current criminal activities highly diverse. Pimping may thus be an indicator of a one-man crime problem, as well as a harm in its own right. If our sample is anything to go by, the twenty pimps in our medium sized city will have committed various offences over the last six months:

- Two-thirds will be in possession of illegal firearms.
- Three-quarters will be dealing in drugs.
- Two-thirds will have committed at least one robbery.
- Two-thirds will have committed ABH, and half will have committed GBH.

### Tackling pimping

In considering how pimping might be tackled more effectively we have first considered whether the pimping legislation needs amending<sup>22</sup>. Then we have examined questions of police organisation and structure. We consider the scope for diverting sex workers into less malign forms of management. Finally we offer some thoughts on primary prevention.

#### *The pimping legislation*

As we have seen, there was a sense amongst non-specialist uniformed officers that the pimping legislation was complex, and that it made for difficulties in securing convictions. Those police officers – largely in vice squads - who were experienced in bringing cases against pimps took the clear view that the legislation worked satisfactorily, and thus there was no need to revise it. They did not regard it as especially difficult to secure convictions, provided that pimped sex workers were prepared to make a statement incriminating their pimp and willing to continue with the case until the sentencing stage. Rarely, however, will a case continue if a sex worker does not give evidence. Vice squads valued the fact that the legislation puts

<sup>22</sup> At the time of writing ‘Setting the Boundaries: Reforming the Law on Sex Offences’ was published containing the recommendations to the Government by the Sex Offences Review Team. The paper contains proposals for reforming the law on pimping offences but it remains to be seen if the recommendations will be accepted by the Government.

the burden of proof on the defendant to rebut the presumption that he was “knowingly living on the earnings of prostitution” (Section 30(2) Sexual Offences Act 1956). However, Article 6(2) of the Human Rights Act (HRA) 1998 states that:

*“Everyone charged with a criminal offence shall be presumed innocent until proved guilty according to law.”*

Thus Section 30(2) of the Sexual Offences Act 1956 appears to be in conflict with the HRA. Where incompatibilities exist the HRA states that the legislation takes precedence over the HRA. However courts in such cases have an obligation, at least by implication, to make it clear that the legislation is incompatible, and higher courts have the power to make a ‘declaration of incompatibility’. We are unclear whether convictions secured under Section 30(2) will be vulnerable to challenges under HRA Article 6(2). If so, there is a strong argument for relying solely on Section 30(1) when charging pimps, thus avoiding an imposition on the defendant of a duty to disprove his guilt. In any case, one senior officer commented to us that experienced vice officers already prefer to charge defendants under Section 30(1).

There was near-unanimity amongst those with experience of pimping cases that court sentences erred on the lenient side. Over two-thirds favoured the creation of a separate offence – or separate and tougher sentencing tariff – for those who had pimped juveniles.

On the face of it, the way the legislation frames the pimping offence and the place given to the offence on the sentencing tariff are separate issues. In fact, they are intertwined. The courts are unlikely to favour heavier sentencing for pimping so long as the legislation specifies the offence as “living on” rather than “controlling” sex work. As the Criminal Law Revision Committee (1985) put it:

[The legislation] fails to identify what we consider ought to be the main thrust of the criminal law, namely, to prohibit organisation of prostitution. Thus the control of a prostitute under section 30(2) is mentioned only as a means of proving the “living on” offence. This seems to us to be getting the emphasis wrong; it subordinates the greater evil to the lesser.

Under the current legislation, the “living on” is relatively easy to prove, but as a lesser evil, will not attract heavy sentences<sup>23</sup>. Courts cannot be expected to sentence offenders for the greater evil, when only the lesser one has been proved.

<sup>23</sup> Current guidelines suggest a two-year maximum sentence for those found guilty of ‘living on immoral earnings’ if there is no evidence of coercion.

## SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

---

The Criminal Law Revision Committee proposed that the pimping legislation should be revised, to make three separate offences:

- Organising prostitution for gain.
- Controlling or directing prostitution for gain.
- Assisting a person to meet a prostitute for the purposes of prostitution.

The committee considered retaining a lesser offence of ‘simple poncing’, broadly equivalent to Section 30(1) of the Sexual Offence Act 1956, but on balance decided that the primary offences were sufficient.

In our view, the case for reform turns largely on whether current sentencing is regarded as adequate. If this is the case, it must be a fairly low legislative priority to “tidy up” the law on pimping. If – as our police respondents argued – there is a case for tougher sentencing, then the law has to be revised, to specify more clearly the precise nature of the harm which needs to be punished heavily. The case for tougher sentencing is strongest in relation to the pimping of juveniles. We see considerable advantage in amendments to the legislation along the lines proposed by the Criminal Law Revision Committee, but making explicit reference to the pimping of juveniles and to coercive forms of control as aggravating factors.

The main drawback with such amendments is that they would make it harder to secure convictions, because it is easier to prove “living on” than coercive forms of control. There is thus a pragmatic argument for retaining the “living on” offence (“simple poncing”, in the terms of the Committee) to provide a safety net in cases where the more serious charge fails to be proven.

If any amendments to the legislation are made, these should include changes to abolish the legal distinctions between pimping by men and by women, and those between pimping of men and of women. It is anachronistic for the law to distinguish arbitrarily between the sexes in this way.

### *Policing pimps*

One of the clearest findings to emerge from this study is that effective police action against pimps is helped by specialisation. We are not in a position to assess the drawbacks and costs of specialisation, but the benefits are clear:

- A specialist unit develops clear ‘ownership’ of pimping as a problem.
- It builds up specialist knowledge of the relevant legislation.
- It can establish relationships of trust with sex workers, who are likely to be key witnesses.
- It can develop working links with corresponding specialists within the CPS.

There was unanimity amongst the sergeants and constables whom we interviewed that specialist units were helpful in the policing of sex markets and essential in investigating and prosecuting offences against sex workers. Any prosecution will rely heavily on the evidence of the victims, and statements from sex workers will not be forthcoming unless there is trust between them and the police. For the police to build up this trust, officers have to know both the sex workers and the voluntary and statutory helping agencies who have contact with them. In this respect Area 4 stood out as a model of good practice.

In Areas 3 and 4 vice units were supported by a dedicated CPS prosecutor. Police officers spoke of the benefits of this arrangement, which included easy access to advice, and the knowledge that when a case is taken to court a Crown Prosecutor who is familiar both with the legislation and with the ways in which sex markets (and pimps) operate is prosecuting cases. Specialist prosecutors aware of pimping offenders and their offending repertoire will also have a clearer understanding of the importance in some cases of refusing bail. Although not essential it seems a good idea and one that could easily be adopted in other sex working areas.

Other suggestions for good practice on the organisation of vice policing included:

- Those assigned to specialist vice units should serve a probationary period.<sup>24</sup>
- Investigative training should be given to all officers assigned to specialist vice units.
- Officers assigned to specialist vice units need training about drug misuse.

*<sup>24</sup> New officers in Area 4 served a probationary period. They found it helped in many respects as familiarising themselves with the unit on a trial basis provided them and the unit with a chance to see if the vice squad was a good working environment for them.*

### *Policing off-street sex markets*

We have suggested that the real harms in pimping lie in the risks posed to juveniles and other vulnerable people, and the coercive violence that often accompanies pimping. We have also found that for the present, at least, many off-street establishments appear to manage sex workers in a relatively benign way. The sex workers we interviewed tended to regard the risks of being pimped as being greatest in street sex markets. Both workers and professionals expressed the view that juveniles were more likely to work on the street than in off-street settings. The risk of violence – whether from managers or clients – also seemed relatively lower in off-street settings. And as we have discussed in an earlier report, the harm to the community imposed by street sex markets is probably greater than that by off-street establishments.

Recently there has been a steady rise in the number of off-street sex market establishments. Many of these are ignored by the police, unless a complaint is

## SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

---

received, and are therefore largely unregulated. There are likely to be clear benefits in tighter control and regulation. Not least of these is the fact that if these markets are well-managed, enforcement efforts can be focused on street sex markets and protecting vulnerable individuals who find themselves working as sex workers. Focusing enforcement efforts on the street sex market is also likely to have the greatest gains in terms of community satisfaction and reduction in the fear of crime from both local business communities and residents. In Areas 1 and 2 officers work with parlours and working flats, offering advice and support. The police monitored the parlours to ensure that unwritten rules were being observed. We support this sort of pragmatism. Ensuring that sex markets take the least unacceptable form is a more realistic policy goal than eradicating them.

An off-street market should not, however, be neglected or allowed to operate unregulated. Work by Kelly and Regan (2000) suggests that, with notable exceptions, police forces are generally not aware of the extent of the off-street sex markets in their area. If off-street markets are to be tolerated they must be regulated and well managed, and there must be a commitment by both councils who license premises and by the police to ensure that neither vulnerable individuals nor criminal activities are allowed to flourish.

We also think that if well-managed off-street establishments are stringently monitored there is a good chance of preventing their colonisation by highly criminal operators who manage sex workers through coercive violence. However, there is insufficient evidence at present to say with certainty that pushing street sex markets into off-street locations is a viable policy option. Care must be taken when considering how best to regulate off-street sex establishments. If off-street establishments remain unmonitored and police forces continue to 'turn a blind eye', the result could be an increase in the numbers of trafficked women in some types of parlour. Kelly and Regan (2000) suggest that clear policy statements need to be drawn up and adhered to by key agencies concerned in the eradication of trafficking of women. If there is a "zero tolerance" approach, however, with even-handed policing of street markets and off-street establishments, this will drive out the relatively non-criminal, risk-averse managers who currently run the latter.

### *Sex workers, the criminal justice system and specialist services*

Sex workers spoke of the lengthy delays and lack of protection offered by the criminal justice system when reporting pimps. This view was reiterated by many police officers and professionals. Officers felt that cases involving a juvenile or vulnerable adult need to be fast tracked through the criminal justice system, and to

be given the status of vulnerable witnesses. Delays are lengthy. We encountered one case at the start of fieldwork involving the pimping of a juvenile which had still not come to court seven months later. It is unrealistic to expect to sustain the co-operation of a vulnerable young witness over such a period. It is also inefficient to bring cases which fail because witnesses are too frightened or too disillusioned to cope with long delays. Perhaps one promising avenue all services involved with sex workers could follow is to document injuries sustained (as in domestic violence cases with Polaroid photos) and present these in court if a sex worker is too frightened to appear in person.

In areas where specialist services for sex workers exist, the support they can offer is invaluable. An effective relationship between specialist services and the police can be of considerable value in securing convictions against coercive pimps. Agencies can provide counselling, support and encouragement to help witnesses handle the ordeal of giving evidence against people who have exercised coercive control over them.

### *Prevention*

Finally some thought should be given to primary and secondary prevention. Primary prevention involves steps to reduce the chances that people get involved in pimping, and secondary prevention involves ways of helping those already involved to disengage themselves.

It is easy – indeed tempting – to focus on solutions to pimping which emphasise deterrence and incapacitation. It should be remembered, however, that pimps emerge from backgrounds which are not dissimilar to sex workers. Those we interviewed tended to be brought up in economically deprived and chaotic family circumstances. Many commented they ‘fell into’ managing sex workers because they had always grown up in areas where sex was openly sold and pimps were a feature of everyday life. They had very poor school records; few had formal educational qualifications or training. Most felt their life chances were limited, and many considered managing sex workers as the only viable opportunity open to them.

We appreciate that people with sufficient social skills to pimp successfully will also be able to put a self-serving gloss on their current and past lives for the benefit of researchers. We have no illusions about the harm that many of them have done. Nonetheless, they are products of their circumstances no less than their victims. It is important to search for creative ways of stopping the development of pimping careers. Education authorities, local housing authorities and youth groups can all

## SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

---

offer guidance and support in an effort to reduce the incidence of young people believing their only opportunities exist in the illegal economy. The criminal justice system and in particular Youth Offender Teams could also play an important part in early identification of those at risk, and in early intervention. Where primary prevention fails, however, punishment needs to be followed by constructive work to help offenders find alternatives to pimping.

## References

ACMD (1982) *Treatment and rehabilitation*. London: HMSO.

ACPO (1998) *Child Prostitution: A Report on the ACPO Guidelines and the pilot studies in Wolverhampton and Nottinghamshire*. Cheltenham: Gloucestershire Constabulary.

Barry, K. (1995) *The prostitution of sexuality*. New York, London: New York University Press.

Barry, K. (1984) *Female Sexual Slavery*. New York, London: New York University Press.

Barnardos (1998) *Streets and Lanes (Sals) Annual Report April 1997 – March 1998*.

Benson, C. and Matthews, R. (1995) 'Street Prostitution: Ten facts in search of a policy'. *International Journal of Sociology of Law*, Vol 23, No.4, pp. 395-415.

Benson, C. and Matthews, R. (1995) *National Vice Squad Survey*. Enfield: Middlesex University.

Campagna, D. and Poffenberger, D. (1985) *An Investigation of the Child Sex Trade*. Dover, Mass: Auburn House.

Criminal Law Revision Committee (1985) *Seventeenth Report. Prostitution: Off-street activities*. Cmnd.9688. London: HMSO.

Faugier, J. and Sargeant, M. (1997) *Boyfriends, 'pimps' and clients*, in Scambler, G. and Scambler, A. (eds.) *Rethinking prostitution: Purchasing sex in the 1990s*. London and New York: Routledge.

Giobbe, E. (1987) 'WHISPER Oral History Project', Minneapolis, Minnesota. Quoted in Faugier, J. and Sargeant, M. (1997) *Boyfriends, 'pimps' and clients*, in Scambler, G. and Scambler, A. (eds.) *Rethinking prostitution: Purchasing sex in the 1990s*. London and New York: Routledge.

Hodgson, J.F. (1997) *Games Pimps Play: Pimps, Players and Wives-In-Law*. Toronto: Canadian Scholars' Press.

Hoigard, C. and Finstad, L. (1992) *Backstreets: Prostitution, Money, and Love*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

## REFERENCES

---

**Inciardi, J. A. Lockwood, D. and Pottieger, A.E.** (1993) *Women and Crack-Cocaine*. New York: Macmillan.

**Kelly, L. and Regan, L.** (2000) *Stopping Traffic: Exploring the extent of, and responses to, trafficking in women for sexual exploitation in the UK*. Police Research Series Paper 125. London: Home Office.

**Maher, L.** (1997) *Sexed Work: Gender, Race and Resistance in a Brooklyn Drug Market*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

**Matthews, R.** (1996) *Armed Robbery: Two Police Responses*. Crime Detection and Prevention Series, Paper 78. London: Home Office.

**Matthews, R.** (1997) *Prostitution in London: An Audit*. Department of Social Science: Middlesex University.

**May, T. Edmunds, M. and Hough, M.** (1999) *Street Business: The links between Sex and Drug Markets*. Police Research Series, Paper 118. London: Home Office.

**McKeganey, N. and Barnard, M.** (1996) *Sex work on the streets: Prostitutes and their clients*. Buckingham: Open University Press.

**McLeod, E.** (1982) *Women Working: Prostitution Now*. Beckenham: Croom Helm.

**Miller, E.** (1986) *Street Women*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

**Miller, J.** (1995) 'Gender and power on the streets: street prostitution in the era of crack cocaine'. *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, 23: 427-452.

**Mirrlees-Black, C.** (1999) *Domestic Violence: Findings from a new British Crime Survey self-completion questionnaire*. Research Study 191. London: Home Office.

**O'Connell Davidson, J.** (1998) *Prostitution, Power and Freedom*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

**Pheterson, G.** (1996) *The Prostitution Prism*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press.

**Reynolds, H.** (1986) *The Economics of Prostitution*. Illinois: Charles C. Thomas.

**Selfe, D. and Burke, V.** (1998) *Perspectives on Sex, Crime and Society*. London, Sydney: Cavendish.

**Shackleton, B.** (1997) 'Protecting Prostitutes', *Policing today*, September pp. 37-40.

**Sharpe, K.** (1998) *Red Light, Blue Light: Prostitutes, punters and the police*. Aldershot: Ashgate.

**Taylor-Browne, J.** (in press) *A Crying Shame: Young people abused through prostitution*. London: Home Office Policing and Reducing Crime Unit.

## Appendix A

Number of cautions and convictions recorded in 1997 (when the fieldwork was conducted) relating to soliciting or sex work management from all police force areas.

Appendix A		
Offence	Cautioned	Convicted
Living off/exercising control (S.30 Sexual Offences Act 1956)	11	177
Living off earnings of male prostitution(S.5(1) Sexual Offences Act 1967)	0	5
Brothel Keeping (S.33 Sexual Offences Act 1956)	31	40
Procuration (S. 22(1)(a) Sexual Offences Act 1956)	4	75
Loitering/soliciting (S.1(1) Street Offence Act 1959)	3507	7952
Man soliciting woman(S.1(1) Sexual Offence Act 1985)	113	993

## Appendix B: Cedric: Life on the beat<sup>25</sup>

<sup>25</sup> Cedric's life story is written by himself, the final text has only been edited by the authors.

Life for a 12-year-old in my city was adventurous to say the least. It was 1968!

My brother lived in the area known as the "beat" which was where the prostitutes hung out and hustled. It was around that time I first got to learn what a prostitute was and what prostitution meant. I was babysitting and running errands for prostitutes and pimps before I even knew I was doing it. I learnt quickly to keep my mouth shut and then I started to get paid to keep my mouth shut. Life out of school seemed to be a joy. In 1971, I was 14 years old, and I'd left school. I hadn't passed any exams I didn't have any job prospects or even a planned outlook, but I was eligible for Unemployment Benefit - £4.75. No matter how I tried £4.75 only lasted me a few hours. I turned to shoplifting among other things. I just loved looking good. I wanted to impress my friends, especially girls. There were girls my age that were beginning to teach me about making easy, fast money and about prostitution.

Prostitution started to become a big topic, especially when it came to trying to emulate the older and more successful guys at pimping. At 16 I tried to get help from an experienced pimp I was close to – I wanted to get my teenage sweetheart to hustle for me. I wanted to progress and gain experience in the field of pimping and prostituting. There wasn't any drug motivation at this point, apart from smoking and selling a bit of weed. I soon learned that although men could be smart, women were far smarter. Although I was trying to encourage my girlfriend to hustle for me and leave her job, she was making good money fiddling the tills and charging prostitutes for renting the toilets at her work.

When I was 18 I met a woman who was an experienced prostitute and almost 10 years older than me. I became her "toy boy" and a spoilt one at that! She bought me everything I wanted or asked for. Everything at the time was wonderful. This was my education and it was just beginning for real. I was on bail for stupid little crimes but whilst I was with her she more or less kept me out of trouble. I began to find out about sugar daddies and the money that could be made. Soon after the relationship ended, however, I found myself in prison.

In prison I was introduced to a girl who a friend told me was a good hustler – that was all I needed to hear, I began writing to her straight away. This girl was working all over. She had a man but that didn't stop her from visiting me and

looking after my every need. However, things went wrong for her and she gave the game up. I didn't have any contact with hustlers until after my release from Borstal.

After 15 months inside I was free and headed straight for the streets. Within a week I decided to go and look for the girl I was running before I'd gone to prison. This girl had stepped up from shop lifting to hustling she was doing quite well and raising good money. We had a try at getting together but her man couldn't and wouldn't accept being told that she didn't want to be with him anymore. We argued over her and fought until it became stupid. One minute he said I could have her and that she was no good, the next he changed his mind. I decided to leave them to it - fighting for an unsure woman with a mad man became ridiculous. I soon met a girl who was to become one of my baby mothers. We met and she more or less chatted me up, which was easy. I can remember thinking that this girl is innocent and she doesn't hustle or anything like that and her family lived in a posh area of town. My brains ticked over like mad trying to find a way to break my new girlfriend into a different way of thinking. I was catching girls all over - anywhere and everywhere. I had 'yards' all over.

In early 1978 I started paying more attention to my baby mother, she was shoplifting very hard and fixing me up, I started looking crisp and sharp once again. All that from a woman who I thought wasn't hustling, just shoplifting, believe me she was good, if not one of the best I've ever had the privilege of meeting. Then I found out she had moved from shoplifter to hustler. She was starting to sit around her cousin's when she had punters and began to realise by just showing her tits (which wasn't really that hard to do) how easy it was to raise good money. It all started from there, the next thing I knew she'd been offered a job hostessing in Belgium! I wasn't going to stop her; in fact I thought it was a good idea and encouraged her. Suddenly big money was coming in and my woman wasn't on the beat doing punters. In no time I was being sent £1000 every 3 weeks without fail, and she was coming home only once every month for a few days then going back again.

It was 1981 and heroin and crack cocaine started to enter my life - the two things that have made me and destroyed me. I met a new woman and things started to feel good. I knew my new woman had been a hustler in the earlier days but had stopped. However, she started to work again through contact magazines, she also had a sugar daddy that use to visit her. Having moved into

this ready made home and situation I began to take control, I realised now I had responsibilities, and I wanted to live big. I needed to show that I had control, ambition and creativity. I began to fill out the advert for the new contact magazine and other little things. She was proud of me - her young man who was beyond his years who had dealt with women older than she was. So many people respected me. That is why, when she hustled I made her feel that she was hustling for us both, not just for me. I'd even juggle a little weed to keep my own little finances going – she also helped with that. Money and life were good, it was like a dream. I used to have somewhere to go every night of the week nearly always by myself - without any fuss from her; I was always out of town. The further I went the longer it'd take for me to come back and I'd be gone for days, that's when she knew other hustlers were involved. I can remember one snowy winter she'd gone to another city to hustle, it was freezing but she was determined to raise her money before she came home. She'd been trying to phone but I wasn't there. She found out that I was with some other girls whilst she was working. Saying she went berserk is an understatement.

I continued this lifestyle for a couple of years - blues clubs, dancing and generally living the high life. I was free to do what I wanted and my woman kept on earning the money for us both and not minding too much about what I got up to, that was until one night I went to rave in ———- and was introduced to freebasing!

I'd snorted the odd line of coke whilst out of town but was never drawn into it big time. That first pull on the crack pipe, and I mean it was a proper pipe, was just something else. Before I did it I was instructed on what to do, how to do it, and how to hold it in - it was completely out of this world. I only had one pull on the pipe and the buzz lasted for hours. I'll never forget that first buzz, the high that lasted so long and made me feel so beautiful. On reaching home I told my woman about it, what I did and how I was feeling, she knew that I'd experienced something new and different. I don't think either of us ever realised what this was the beginning of. So few had had the experience, I felt like one of the chosen few, I never considered the impact it would eventually have. When I saw my main man, the one who introduced me to taking that first pull of the crack pipe his first words were "do you want us to do it again?"

In 1983 I started a year of experimenting, especially with class A drugs; it was also the year in which I lost interest in raising money off women. I was beginning to realise that selling drugs gave me more kicks and independence.

After free-basing for the first time, chasing women soon went out of the window, mainly because there was no time to do it and selling and taking drugs was beginning to mean everything to me. It was easier and quicker to make big money and it didn't answer you back. I started to learn how to turn cocaine into crack, and then later that year I found heroin. Smoking crack in those days was done with a select few and it wasn't something that was readily available on the streets like it is today. Both me and my woman soon raised enough money to support our habits and buy more drugs to sell and keep the cycle going. Soon enough though we met some 'yardies' and they wanted a large quantity of heroin converted into cash. It was a substantial amount, and there was room for us to make big money. My woman always made sure these guys had their money and we were well rewarded for it. We were always left with more heroin and money than we knew what to do with.

From 1984 to 86 it seemed nothing could go wrong. I was becoming heavily involved in freebasing and was spending thousands, literally. My partner though, preferred heroin. She began to hate the way I was becoming involved. I was just too cracked up to realise she could see straight through me and my lies. I was starting to pay more attention to prostitutes again, having parties with working girls who I was introducing to crack for the first time. They'd give me the money to buy the powder to wash it up; all of these girls were hustling girls, raising very good money. We would smoke their crack for two days straight before some of them would go home. This was all going on in '86. Eventually because of my stupidity and fooling around mistakes were being made and things were going wrong. The police were moving in on our operation, and soon they decided to bust us. They started off busting the house for guns, and then after they had gathered up more information on the amount of drugs being sold from our house busted us again. We ended up being charged with supplying heroin. My woman and I both ended up in prison, sentenced to five years, we didn't see the streets again until 1990. Three very long years in prison and everything taken away and lost. Coming out to nothing obviously makes you have to think and act, and have to do something to make up for the things and time lost, it's who dares, wins!

## RECENT POLICING AND REDUCING CRIME UNIT PUBLICATIONS:

### Policing and Reducing Crime Unit

#### Police Research Series papers

121. **Policing Diversity: Lessons from Lambeth.** A. Benjamin Spencer and Michael Hough. 2000.
122. **The Effective Detective: Identifying the skills of an effective SIO.** Nicky Smith and Conor Flanagan. 2000.
123. **Policing Anti-Social Behaviour.** Nick Bland and Tim Read. 2000.
124. **Feasibility of an Independent System for Investigating Complaints Against the Police.** KPMG. 2000.
125. **Stopping Traffic: Exploring the extent of, and responses to, trafficking in women for sexual exploitation in the UK.** Liz Kelly and Linda Regan. 2000.
126. **Where Are They Now? An evaluation of sex offender registration in England and Wales.** Joyce Plotnikoff and Richard Woolfson. 2000.
127. **The Impact of Stops and Searches on Crime and the Community.** Joel Miller, Nick Bland and Paul Quinton. 2000.
128. **Upping the PACE? An evaluation of the recommendations of the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry on stops and searches.** Nick Bland, Joel Miller and Paul Quinton. 2000.
129. **The Views of the Public on Stops and Searches.** Vanessa Stone and Nick Pettigrew. 2000.
130. **Police Stops, Decision-making and Practice.** Paul Quinton, Nick Bland and Joel Miller. 2000.
131. **Profiling Populations Available for Stops and Searches.** MVA and Joel Miller. 2000.
132. **Managing the Use and Impact of Searches: A review of force interventions.** Nick Bland, Joel Miller and Paul Quinton. 2000.

#### Crime Reduction Research Series papers

2. **Neighbourhood Warden Schemes: An overview.** Jessica Jacobson and Esther Saville. 2000.
3. **Alcohol and Crime: Taking stock.** Ann Deehan. 1999.
4. (Awaiting publication) However, 12 briefing notes under the general title **Reducing Domestic Violence ... What works?** have been published in advance of this publication. 2000.
5. **RV Snapshot: UK policing and repeat victimisation.** Graham Farrell, Alan Edmunds, Louise Hobbs and Gloria Laycock. 2000.
6. **Not Rocket Science? Problem-solving and crime reduction.** Tim Read and Nick Tilley. 2000.

