

## **REPORT TO: STANDING CRIME SCRUTINY PANEL**

**DATE:** 5<sup>th</sup> January 2017

**REPORT TITLE:** Street Prostitution in Enfield

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**PURPOSE OF REPORT**

Street Prostitution has been identified as a local and pan London issue

**SUMMARY:** This report outlines the reported incidents of street prostitution in Enfield recorded by Police and Enfield's Public Safety Centre. It provides information about the work the Community Safety Unit has been undertaking with Police, Immigration and other relevant agencies. It also outlines the further work that is being planned in 2017.

### 1. **BACKGROUND**

#### **Street Prostitution**

The existence of prostitution is a highly emotive issue that can often divide opinion and prompt debate that spans a range of views and positions. For example some people will argue that prostitution is an inherently exploitative activity and should be challenged at every level and demand a zero tolerance approach, where others have a position that engaging in sex work is a matter of personal choice for individuals who need to be protected and respected by the Police Service and wider community.

Prostitution is where a person is known to engage in sexual activity with a person for payment. Throughout Great Britain it is illegal to buy sex from a person younger than 18 (although the age of consent for non-commercial sex is 16) Sex work itself is diverse however selling sexual services in itself is not illegal but some activities associated with it are criminalised,

The Policing and Crime Act 2009 amended various legislation to make clear the offences of activities associated with prostitution which include:

**Loitering or Soliciting** Section 16 of the Policing and Crime Act 2009 amends section 1(1) of the Street Offences Act 1959 to create an offence for a person (whether male or female) persistently to loiter or solicit in a street or public place for the purposes of offering services as a prostitute,

**Kerb Crawling** S19 of the Policing and Crime Act 2009 introduces section 51A into the Sexual Offences Act 2003 and creates a new offence for a person in a street or public place to solicit another for the purpose of obtaining a sexual service as a prostitute. The reference to a person in a street or public place includes a person in a motor vehicle in a street or public place.

## 2. ISSUES AND CHALLENGES

<b>Table of Prostitution ASB Calls to Police and CCTV logged incidents from Dec 2015 to Nov 2016</b>		
<b>Area</b>	<b>CCTV</b>	<b>Police CAD calls</b>
Bowes	1	0
Bush Hill Park	0	2
Chase	0	1
Cockfosters	0	0
Edmonton Green	2	73
Enfield Highway	0	2
Enfield Lock	0	0
Grange	0	5
Haselbury	0	3
Highlands	0	0
Jubilee	0	1
Lower Edmonton	2	7
Palmers Green	1	1
Ponders End	3	2
Southbury	0	0
Southgate	0	3
Southgate Green	0	1
Town	0	2
Turkey Street	0	1
Upper Edmonton	341	124
Winchmore Hill	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>350</b>	<b>228</b>

From the above data and intelligence being received, street based prostitution in Enfield is concentrated in Upper Edmonton ward and more recently calls are increasing in Edmonton Green.

Street sex workers can be vulnerable individuals, with alcohol or drug addictions and mental health issues prevalent. Many of the women that have been stopped and identified for street prostitution in Upper Edmonton are EU nationals (Romanian and Bulgarians). When spoken to the women have stated that they are working simply for financial gain. The majority of women stopped have not been class A drug users and refuse any offers of assistance to exit sex work or refuse offers of support stating that they are not trafficked

or coerced. This has proven challenging when considering any outreach that can be offered from services like Westminster Drugs Project etc.

The Community Safety Unit has been involved in Police **Operation Shadow** where officers have been attending locations where prostitutes are known for loitering and soliciting. Officers are making use of cautions, arrests and Community Protection Notices in the Upper Edmonton ward to deter the activity from taking place and provide respite to nearby residents who are experiencing anti-social behaviour.

Immigration Officers are also partaking in the joint operations with Police and CSU and have attended and served immigration notices on those stopped for any breach of EU treaty rights. New guidelines now allow for immigration officers to detain those EU nationals stopped for engaging in street prostitution where they cannot show any lawful employment or fixed abode.

The presence of visible prostitution in an area can have a negative impact on a community's confidence and satisfaction. A large amount of calls to Police are from residents in the Joyce Avenue Estate area in Upper Edmonton. This estate is being monitored closely by the CSU as part of the Crime and Estates programme. The CSU undertake frequent walkabouts on the estate with partners to identify local issues and work together to identify any crime attractors and take relevant actions. As a result of the residents reporting that they are suffering high levels of prostitution in this area the CSU has this year arranged:

- the removal of disused bin sheds which were being used for sexual activities
- daily cleaning of areas on the estate where residents have been reporting used condoms and litter.
- Tasking of the Police Safer Estates Team to include areas in Upper Edmonton including Joyce Avenue Estate as part of their proactive patrols.

### **3. RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Committee is being asked to note the report for information

- Further Operations and Patrols are planned in the months of December and January with CSU, immigration and Police.
- The Community Safety Unit will be writing directly to vehicles owners that have been noted by EPSC for kerb crawling.
- The Community Safety Unit will be supporting a funding application for the "Change Course Programme" and supporting the funding of £20k to deliver the programme in Enfield. This initiative is supported by Enfield Police and works with men who have been noted for the offence of kerb

crawling. Its aims are to directly focus on kerb crawling behaviour and its impact on: street prostitutes and the local community.

- EPSC will continue to heavily monitor the locations where they have received intelligence that sex workers are operating and continue logging incidents to inform further operations being undertaken.
- The Community Safety Unit will continue to work with Council Housing and other services to design out this crime on Joyce Avenue Estate and has programmed some works to include gating and the fencing of residential areas being used by sex workers.
- The CSU will continue to liaise with Police who support the National Ugly Mugs as a scheme for sex workers as a useful tool in addressing crimes against sex workers and reduce their risk of harm.