

Drink & other drugs: legal and illegal

Being stoned, high or drunk affects your judgement and, often, your ability to have sex. If you're too out of it to drive, you're probably too out of it to work safely.

- Clients who are using can be more aggressive and less sexually responsive. They may blame *you*, rather than their drug use, for not being able (or taking ages) to become aroused or come.
- If you are drinking with a client, make sure you see the drinks being opened, that the client has some too, and don't leave it unattended in case it is 'spiked'. Choose which glass you have.
- If you're offered drugs, how do you know what it is you're actually getting? Is the client taking the same stuff? If you've not agreed to be paid that way, make it clear it won't be treated as part of your payment.
- Bringing or offering drugs to clients is very risky: the penalties for supplying drugs are much more severe than for possession alone.
- Viagra & Cialis take time to work so you can end up taking it before jobs 'just in case' and become dependent on it. Viagra/Cialis and poppers all lower blood pressure - don't use them together. If you're on combination therapy, talk to a sexual health specialist - some drugs shouldn't be taken with Viagra/Cialis, while others boost their effects so you only need to take half the dose.

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The legal information in this leaflet may apply to England & Wales only - contact SCOT-PEP for advice about Scotland. It is believed to be correct but it is not legal Advice. For that, you need to speak to a solicitor or some other qualified person.

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SW5, 11 Eardley Crescent, London SW5 9JS ☎ 020 7370 0406

This guide has been adapted from our website:

www.sw5.info - look for the law section

Other useful contact addresses

St Mary's Hospital in Paddington, West London, has two specialist health clinics, one each for male and female sex workers:

Working Men Project **Praed Street Project**

☎ 020 7886 1524

☎ 020 7886 1549

www.wmplondon.org.uk

Jefferiss Wing, St Mary's Hospital, Praed Street,
Paddington, London W2

Diamond Clinic

A service for male and transgender sex workers, it is part of the West London Centre for Sexual Health.

Charing Cross Hospital, Fulham Palace Road,
London W6 8RF ☎ 020 8846 1579 (ask for the health advisors)
www.chelwest.nhs.uk/services/hivgum/west_london_center.htm

CLASH (Central London Action on Street Health)

Part of the HIV prevention team of Camden & Islington Health Promotion, CLASH works with sex workers in Central London as well as on the gay scene.

11 Warwick Street, London W1B 5NA ☎ 020 7734 1794

IUSW - International Union of Sex Workers

A group of sex work activists who hold monthly open meetings and other campaigning & networking events.

www.iusw.org

GMB

A trades union that offers protection and services to people from all areas of the sex industry through the affiliated IUSW branch

www.gmb.org.uk

Barnardos Young Mens Project

Works with young men under 18 selling sex

3 Morocco Street, London SE1 3HB ☎ 020 7378 8797

SCOT-PEP

The leading sex work charity in Scotland.

70 Newhaven Rd, Edinburgh EH6 5QG ☎ 0131 622 7550

www.scot-pep.org.uk

Escort safety website

www.saafe.info



working with male & transgender sex workers

Working Alone

- a brief guide -

Escorts and the law

Escorts and money

Maids and the law

Working alone

Working for an agency

Working in a brothel

Is sex work for you?

Performing in porn

April 2007

Prostitution is legal in the UK. But there are some ways in which you can get into trouble with the law.

See our *Escorts and the Law* leaflet for more info, but the main thing that's illegal is soliciting on the street or other public space like from a balcony, doorway or window, or in an open space.

Apart from that, escorts working off the streets are said to be not a priority for the police or the council unless they cause a nuisance to others.

Working alone...

When you work for work for yourself, rather than someone else, you get to keep more of the money, but you also have to look after a number of things:

Name & image

Nearly every escort chooses a new 'working name' as part of separating their work from their private life. With a name (or web/email address) comes an image, often one based on stereotypes. What image do you want to portray to clients?

Advertising

Where and how you advertise will also affect how many clients you get and what sort. 'Carding' (placing prostitution ads near a public phone) is illegal, but apart from that, it's legal to advertise.

It's now legal to receive money for advertising, so you may find more places willing to accept ads than before. But where to use? Somewhere that's good for other people may not be the best place for you. Equally, one that doesn't work for others might do so for you.

If you use a picture to advertise, remember that once it's published, it will be out there forever. Do you want everyone to see your face (or tattoos) on an escort ad?

Contacting you

Most escorts find it safer to have a separate mobile number for work. With some companies, once you've bought the SIM card - about £5 - there're no other costs if you just receive calls on a 'pay as you go' deal.

Once you advertise your number, you may get calls at all hours, and calls may continue for many months after you stop advertising it. If you don't want to be disturbed, turn off the phone or set it to voicemail.

Most escorts think callers who withhold their number are a safety risk: how could they be traced if necessary? Decide whether or not to answer such calls. Many escorts ask for (and make a record of) a landline/hotel number to confirm details before visiting anyone new.

Charges & services

What services are you going to offer? What are your boundaries? What are you comfortable doing? Are you going to stick with those, or are you open to offers for other services? Some escorts will do some things with some clients but not others, or charge differently.

How much are you going to charge? What for - your time or specific acts? Most people charge by time, with a minimum charge even if you're only with the client for a couple of minutes, while some ask for more for particular services. Remember all of your costs (like taxes!) before deciding and find out what others are charging in your area, including in terms of services offered. Trying to compete with others on price alone rarely succeeds and it can also affect your self-image.

Somewhere to work

If you do outcall - where you visit the client - you need to decide where (and when) you're prepared to go. It can be risky to go off to meet someone without an address you can check out.

For incall... where? Your place or somewhere you rent just for work, like a flat or hotel room? Do you want clients to know where you live? Could your stuff be stolen or used as weapons against you? Are you breaking the terms of your lease? How would you get a troublesome client out? Does it have an alarm system? (And is it clean and tidy?)

If you share a working flat with someone else, it's a brothel. That's true *whether or not they work there at the same time!* It's legal to be a sex worker at a brothel provided you don't assist in its management - eg paying bills - that's just as illegal as actually owning it.

Security

Whether it's a booking or a pick up on the scene, think about who knows where you are and who you are with? If something went wrong, who'd notice or call the police? Many people call someone - even if it's just

their own answerphone or voicemail - on arrival at a client's or when a client arrives, saying when they expect to be finished and that they'll ring back then, to make the client know they'd be missed. If you work at home, consider having (or pretending) someone else in.

Duos & parties

Working with other escorts is legal, provided you're not controlling their work. Let the client book you both, rather than have you ask someone else along.

One police officer has described sex parties which charge admission as 'brothels on wheels', so they may take more interest in them. Again, it's the organisers of paid sex parties who are at risk, not everyone else.

... Safely

Safer sex work is like safer sex - there are a variety of things you can do to make it safer. If you decide to take some risks, be aware you are doing so, so you can watch out for them:

- If possible, establish how much you'll be paid and what for before meeting clients... and get the cash as soon as possible when you see them.
- Don't take anything on a call you wouldn't be prepared to lose. Have at least £10 on you for change / getting home if necessary. For incall, hide the money away from any other cash.
- On arrival somewhere, check there's nothing unexpected there - like more people than you agreed to see - and find out where all the exits are. If there was any trouble, how would you get out / create noise other people will hear?
- Have your own condoms and lube: they're ready, spermicide-free and you know the client hasn't tampered with them. Have a range of sizes for different sized clients.
- Unless it's a uniform scene, wear stuff that comes off easily and avoid necklaces and most jewelry.
- Someone who attacks you will probably attack someone else too. If you do have trouble, let the police know: they are treating attacks on sex workers more seriously than ever before. You can report it anonymously via a sex work project.
- **If you think you're in a dangerous situation, get out immediately. Trust your gut instincts.**