

- 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: there're ready, 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.**

### 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? Offering drugs to clients is extremely risky.

---

SW5 is part of the Terrence Higgins Trust.

Terrence Higgins Trust is a registered charity, number 288527.

A company limited by guarantee, registered in England.

Registered Company number 1778149.

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.

Copyright © SW5 2004-07. Last updated: 17th April 2007

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

This guide has been adapted from our website:  
[www.sw5.info](http://www.sw5.info) - look for the sex worker 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](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://www.scot-pep.org.uk)

Escort safety website  
[www.saafe.info](http://www.saafe.info)



working with male & transgender sex workers

## Working for an Agency

### - 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.** Working for an agency is legal, *whether or not you're having sex with clients.*

Working for an agency means you'll get less of the money the client pays. In exchange, the agency should look after several things for you.

## Getting hired

Many agencies are always looking for new staff: some people find they don't like the work or don't like working for someone else, and some agencies have a high turnover because they're not worth working for.

If they take you on, they will usually try to treat you as self-employed. While this means they shouldn't deduct tax from their payments to you, this doesn't mean you don't have to pay tax! (And they may have to tell the tax people who you are.) See our *Escorts & Money* leaflet for more details.

Before you agree to work for anyone else, check their policies: what are you expected to do? How does that compare with what you are comfortable with? You shouldn't have to stay with clients who are drunk, rude, abusive, or have an infection, for example.

## Agencies to watch out for

Some target men who want to be escorts for women, charging them to be on a list for women to select from. But the vast majority of clients for male escorts are men, and ***no agency worth working for will charge just for having you on their books*** - they should make their money from actually finding you clients.

Some managers will expect you to have sex with them. It's your choice, but remember there are plenty of other agencies out there looking for staff.

Agencies have to pay taxes too. If they're not VAT registered, then they're new, or not very successful, or breaking the tax laws and more at risk of being raided.

## What are you paying them for?

### Name & Image

With a name (or web/email address) comes an image. What image do they portray to clients?

Nearly every escort has a 'working name' as part of separating their work from their private life. If you're working for more than one agency, or seeing clients

privately, consider having more than one working name... not least so you know who's contacting you.

## Advertising

They will have ads - where and how many? It will affect what sort of clients you get, as well as giving an indication as to how the owner(s) see the business.

As part of their ads or website, the agency may want to have a photo of you. Remember that once it's published, it will be out there forever. Do you want everyone to see your face or other identifying features on an escort ad? Make sure you have the copyright of any photos, or that you trust the person who does.

## Handling Calls

A good agency will screen calls for timewasters and also check out callers (e.g. establishing that someone is indeed at the hotel they claim to be at or is on the electoral roll or in the phone book at the address given).

Although they should describe you accurately - you're the one going to the client and who will have to deal with any anger or disappointment - many people still find it a very good idea to talk to clients before meeting them to get a feel of what they're like and expecting.

## Waiting

The agency will expect you to be 'on call' at certain times. Some want you to wait for bookings at their offices, while most will allow you to be at home or elsewhere - but if you don't answer calls that do come in, the agency won't be happy.

Many people find that the later at night, the more desperate / drunk / off their head / trouble the clients are. What shifts are you prepared to work?

## Charges

Agencies usually set prices. Bad agencies keep all of the upfront fee they charge the client and expect you to negotiate 'extras' / 'tips' for sex. A few will even expect a share of any 'tips'.

Better agencies will share the upfront fee with you: many consider 75% for you and 25% for them is a good split. Some will expect you to let them keep all of the first (or first few!) payment as a deposit against being unreliable. Would you be happy with that?

Because of the pretence that they are not illegally 'controlling prostitution for gain', agencies will almost always charge by time rather than sexual service. Some will ask you to sign a piece of paper saying you're not to have sex with clients while explaining verbally that of course you are expected to do so! It's fine to sign: you're not doing anything illegal by having sex.

If they accept credit cards, how (and when!) will you be paid? How is their share of any cash to be paid?

## Travel to work

Most agencies offer 'outcall' - where you visit the client. The better agencies will provide a driver who will take you there and remain in the area in case of trouble. If they don't, make sure the cost of your travel and security is reflected in your share of the money. What areas are you prepared to travel to?

Any agency offering incall in a 'working' flat shared with others is operating a brothel. It's legal to be a sex worker at a brothel provided you don't assist in its management - that's just as illegal as actually owning it.

## Security

The agency should take your safety seriously. As well as verifying details before sending you, they should insist you call them on arrival at a client's or when a client arrives, saying when you expect to be finished and that you'll ring back then. If you don't, they should send someone and/or call the police immediately.

## Working for more than one

Agencies vary as to whether or not they mind you working for yourself or someone else when you're not on duty with them... but virtually all of them will take a dim view of you arranging private sessions with clients they've found for you.

## Working 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:

- 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.