

Project 6: Migrant sex work post-EU Referendum

REASON FOR FUNDING:

Our research found that violence, racism and xenophobia against EU migrant sex workers has increased since the Referendum result was announced. Yet far from being able to rely on the police for support, migrant sex workers are increasingly fearful of arrest and deportation. They are told that sex work is not 'legitimate' work, despite EU migrant sex workers having the right to claim self-employed status in the UK.

USE OF FUNDING:

The funding was used to work with in a two-way knowledge partnership with industry partners, principally the English Collective of Prostitutes.

Funding used to mitigate the problem in three ways:

Events for non-academic stakeholders (primarily to raise awareness and prompt policy/practice actions). We co-hosted two national public (online) events on the topic of migrant sex work. Both events were well-attended (100+) by a range of audiences: sex workers, representatives from sex worker support projects, MPs and counsellors, academics, and members of the general public. Other speakers included Amnesty International, the International Committee on the Rights of Sex Workers in Europe, Women Against Rape, US PROStitutes collective, and the Joint Council on the Welfare of Immigrants.

Translation of research findings for non-academic audiences. Research findings were translated into a range of accessible formats: a full length research report for key stakeholders; a two page summary report available in both English and Romanian; a two-page Know Your Rights documents for migrant sex workers in both English and Romanian; and media articles in The Independent and Brexit Spotlight. An artist was employed to facilitate visual (accessible) representation of key findings.

The two outcomes listed above fed into a third: **the strengthening of networks outside of academia.** Key findings were fed into stakeholders to affect policy change. For example, a template MP letter was developed and attendees at the May event were encouraged to use it to lobby their local MP for policy change.

OUTCOMES AND FUTURE IMPACT:

The public engagement events opened up opportunities for end users (migrant sex workers) to share stories little heard in the public domain; stories that were listened to by MPs, support organisations and other key stakeholders. Attending MPs and other MPs that received the letter template of key findings now have the ability/resources to push for the key recommendations made by the research in Parliament. Support organisations have received copies of the research and have been encouraged to report policy/practice changes back to the author at a 6 and 12 month point.

Via the media articles and public engagement events, this project has also raised the profile of scholarship at the University of Salford. It complements the aims of the Centre for Social and Health Research by working towards positive social change through engaged research and practice. The researcher has since been invited to present the findings at international (online) events alongside the English Collective of Prostitutes, including most recently at Brand Week Istanbul.