



voicing  
*Our*  
views

end of project report



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This report could not have been written without the time, enthusiasm, help and support of many voluntary projects. Finally, we would like to acknowledge and thank all of our respondents without whom we would have had nothing to say.....

This report is dedicated to the memory of Anne van Meeuwen.

## **About the authors**

### **Research director**

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### **Researchers**

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*Fiona Broadfoot:* Through her own experience of being exploited at the age of fifteen into prostitution by a brutal pimp, and now being an adult survivor Fiona became involved in working with both voluntary and statutory agencies who are working to address issues surrounding CSEC. Over the past seven years she has worked both in a voluntary capacity and in paid employment. During this time she has contributed to the development of strategies in dealing with this issue on a local, national and international level. This has involved one to one support; group work and facilitating and delivering training to professionals including the police. She has recently been employed as development worker with CROP (the Campaign for the Removal of Pimps) where her role is to support parents and young people involved in or at risk of CSEC.

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funding. She currently manages a residential home for boys aged 11-18 years who have committed sexual offences.

## ***Executive summary***

### ***Background***

This research was funded under the Research, Development and Statistics Directorate Innovation fund in 2001. Its aim was to take forward recommendations from young people involved in previous youth participation work by ECPAT UK. This work included the attendance by a UK delegation to the first international conference bringing young people together to discuss the commercial sexual exploitation of children (CSEC) called 'Hope and Action' in Manila, May 2000. On their return the UK delegation made recommendations on what they would like to see happening in the UK to improve the participation of young people on the issue of CSEC. The first of these was that 'research should become a focus point'. This recommendation formed the premise of the Voicing our Views research project and the principle of participation, an important part of the implementation of the project. A steering group was formed with representation from the Children's Society, NCPCC, Barnardo's, NCH and the Home Office.

### ***Methods***

Two youth researchers (i.e. under 25 years old) were employed to interview a target sample of 15 young people involved in prostitution each, the same age as themselves or younger. Two older researchers (i.e. older than 25) were employed to interview a target sample of 10 each. In fact 47 interviews were carried out, only 41 of which were transcribed due to technical difficulties. The researchers underwent training in research methods, carried out semi-structured interviews using a tape-recorder, and participated in analysing the data using WinMax, a qualitative analysis package. The interviews were designed to elicit information about the sample's backgrounds and their involvement with prostitution, their experience of services and their feelings about exiting. The interviews were transcribed by a transcription agency. The youth researchers took part in the Youth Conference and the main 2nd World Congress Against Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children held in Yokohama, Japan in December 2001. All the researchers helped to design the research instrument and helped to write the final report collaboratively with the research director.

### ***The sample***

40 of the sample were female, and one was male. The male was white and aged 20 from London. 35 were white, 2 were mixed race and 4 were black. The sample was accessed through specialist support services including those funded by the children's charities. These were based in the following areas.

Doncaster	10
Middlesborough	3
Wolverhampton	5
London	7
Rotherham	2

Northampton	2
Bradford	2
Leeds	4
Stoke	4
Southampton	2

The average age of those interviewed by the youth researchers was 20 (n<sup>1</sup>=23). The median age was 20. The average age of those interviewed by the adult researchers was 26.3 (n=18). The median age was 25. The age range was from 14 – 38.

### ***What the young people told us***

The average age across the whole sample of their first involvement in commercial sexual exploitation (CSE) was 16. We asked them about the number of years they had been involved in CSE. In the young people's sample this was 4 (n=19). In the adult sample this was 8 (n=16).

The answers to the semi-structured interviews revealed a picture of very difficult family backgrounds; for example, 12 out of the 41 spontaneously disclosed childhood sexual abuse although this was not a specific question we asked. In addition 11 out of the 41 also disclosed violence in their family background, again this was not question we actually asked. Deaths of parents, alcoholism and drug use by parents were also disclosed.

The sample we interviewed had frequently run away from home; only 9 out of 40 respondents to this question had never run away (i.e. 77.5% had run away at least once. In the general population only one in nine 14 and 15 year olds will run away from home each year (i.e. 11%). Many had truanted from school and left with no qualifications. The average school leaving age = 14.75 (n=32). Only 10 had not truanted (n=33) and only 10 had any qualifications (n=38).

Many had had experiences of social services and only 18 had not had experience of the looked after system (n=38) at some time.

There seemed to be a trend for our sample to have their first experience of sexual intercourse at a younger age than that in the general population of girls. The average age for our sample was 14 as opposed to 17. On average their partner was 6.75 years older than them (n=25).

There was also a tendency for our sample to have dependent children, which they had often had at a young age. In the young people's sample: 9 out of the 23 interviewed were either pregnant or already had children. Average age at first live birth = 17 (n=7). In the adult sample 15 out of 18 interviewed were either pregnant or already had children. Average age at first live birth = 21 (n=15).

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<sup>1</sup> n= means the number of respondents in that case.

Out of the 41 interviewees, 10 disclosed that they were being or had been coerced by pimps. Ethnic origin of the coercer where disclosed (n=7) was Afro-Caribbean and Asian. The average age difference where disclosed was 12 years (n=7).

Many of the sample were, or had been addicted to drugs. Only 7 out of the sample of 41 had not taken drugs during their involvement in CSE, i.e. 83% had taken drugs. The drugs taken were as follows:

Cannabis	4
Amphetamines	3
Pills/Heroin	1
Heroin	9
Crack	3
Crack/Heroin	13
Valium	1

*Services and exiting:* Most of the sample interviewed told us that they felt that they had no-one to turn to who would help them with what they felt were insurmountable problems. Frequently these involved; drug dependency, homelessness, childcare problems, lack of qualifications and training, debt and emotional problems. Whereas a single agency might be able to help them with, for example methadone or housing, this wasn't enough when faced with their multiple and complex problems. The only exceptions were those who had been helped by independent, specific projects for those involved in prostitution as these organisations were set up to act as advocates and to help them access the numerous agencies and services required. In addition, the workers from these projects offered much valued, non-judgmental support and aftercare.

*Participation.* The sample we interviewed were very positive about the aims of the research and out of the 15 young people asked about participation, only two did not want to participate in either a campaign on the issue of CSEC or to participate in service design and delivery.

### **Conclusion and recommendations**

The findings of this report illustrate that the statutory and other services are dealing with a particularly vulnerable group of young people. Various studies indicated that the impact of factors such as an early sexual relationship (that is, under 16), early motherhood and leaving school with no qualifications is an increased risk of poverty, social exclusion, unemployment and mental health problems. In order to minimise the risks of exploitation, drug addiction and prostitution to this group the following steps are recommended:

- Develop a strategic response to young people involved in prostitution, or at risk of being involved, with all relevant agencies. A fast, appropriate referral service should be set up.
- Early intervention is key. Identifying and working with young people who have run away is a necessity to prevent the slide into drugs, exploitation and prostitution.

- Involve service users in setting up appropriate services
- Fund independent service providers who will have the role of outreach, support and contact throughout the process. Aftercare, education and training is an essential component of this service.
- Increase access to drug rehabilitation services for those involved in prostitution. A fast, tailored response is needed to fit the needs of these service users.
- Establish use of safe, supported housing for vulnerable young people at risk of prostitution.
- Rigorously enforce guidelines on the disruption, detection and prosecution of coercers (pimps) and abusers (punters). Follow ACPO and ACPC guidelines with regard to young people at risk of prostitution.
- Introduce specific education and prevention programmes targeted at young women at risk of prostitution. These should cover work on abusive and non-abusive relationships, drug prevention work and peer education.
- Commission further research in order to develop profiles of 'pimps' and 'punters' in order to develop preventative strategies.

## ***Introduction***

There is already a considerable body of literature on children and young people abused through prostitution. This includes a literature review (Taylor-Browne, forthcoming), studies on coercers and their methods of controlling young people (Swann, 1998) and boys involved in prostitution (Palmer, 2001). Other very relevant work focuses on the links between running away, abuse, homelessness and prostitution (Children's Society, 1994, 1999). Very little, however, has been written which gives a voice to the young people themselves.

In 1989 the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child came into force. This has been signed by all but two countries in the world. Article 12 requires that all States Parties shall assure to the child who is capable of forming his or her own views the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting the child, the views of the child being given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child.

In 1995 over 100 countries attended the first World Congress against the Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children in Sweden. All those attending signed an Agenda for Action, stating that they would undertake actions to prevent the commercial sexual exploitation of children in their country. The Agenda included the following commitment:

To promote the participation of children, including children victims, young people, their families, peers, and others who are potential helpers of children so that they are able to express their views.

In response to the Declaration and Agenda for Action from the first World Congress Against the Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children a national plan on Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children (CSEC) was announced by Home Office Minister, Alun Michael in October 1997 at the ASEM Child Welfare Conference in London. This plan includes a commitment to child participation in order that young people's views can be expressed and that action can be taken to prevent and protect children from commercial sexual exploitation (CSE). In addition, the plan commits governments to identify or establish and support children and youth groups as advocates of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and include children in developing and implementing government plans concerning them. The First National plan was published in 2001 (DoH et al, 2001).

This project was born out of recommendations from young people involved in previous youth participation work by ECPAT UK. This work included the attendance by a UK delegation to the first international conference bringing young people together to discuss the commercial sexual exploitation of children called 'Hope and Action' in Manila, May 2000. On their return the UK delegation made recommendations on what they would like to see happening in the UK to improve the participation of young people on the issue of CSEC. The first of these was that 'research should become a focus point'. This recommendation formed the premise of the VOV (Voicing our Views) research

project and the principle of participation, an important part of the implementation of the project.

Consequently it was felt that other young people rather than adults should ask young people their views. Two youth researchers were employed in order to serve a number of purposes to further participation:

- empower 2 young people in the development of their careers as researchers
- give an insight into the effect of using young researchers (as opposed to adults) to interview other young people both in terms of the findings of the research and in terms of relationships developed during interviewing
- enable a better understanding of participative research and the possible production of a 'model' on CSEC
- allow the management of the project to be influenced by the views of young people and participative techniques
- allow assessment and evaluation of the project from a young person's perspective
- involvement/access to youth participation networks (notably the 'youth' activities of the Yokohama World Congress Against CSEC)
- enable any follow-up to the research to be based on the recommendations of young people.

This report is in two sections. Section I describes the findings of the report, both qualitative and quantitative. It also includes a short section on nationally obtained statistics for comparison purposes. Section II discusses the literature on participative working with young people. The conclusions and recommendations are followed by the appendices, which contain the ethical guidelines used by the project, an account of the project from the perspectives of the youth interviewers and the questionnaires used.

## **Section I**

### **Findings**

#### *1. Quantitative findings*

47 interviews were carried out but due to technical problems, only 41 were transcribed.

#### **Demographics of sample**

40 were female, and one male. The male was white and aged 20 from London

35 were white, 2 were mixed race and 4 were black.

#### **Where was the sample from?**

Doncaster	10
Middlesborough	3
Wolverhampton	5
London	7
Rotherham	2
Northampton	2
Bradford	2
Leeds	4
Stoke	4
Southampton	2

#### **Average age at interview:**

Sample interviewed by youth researchers: 20 (n<sup>2</sup>=23) Median age: 20

Sample interviewed by adult researchers: 26.3 (n=18) Median age: 25

The age range was from 14 – 38.

#### **Average age of first involvement in CSE**

16

#### **Average age of first sexual intercourse**

14

#### **Average age difference for first sexual intercourse. i.e. how much older partner was:**

6.75 (n=25)

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<sup>2</sup> n= means the number of respondents in that case.

***Pimps/Coercers***

Out of the 41 interviewees, 10 were coerced. Ethnic origin of the coercer where disclosed (n=7) Afro-Caribbean and Asian.

***Average age difference***

12 years (n=7)

***Running away:***

Only 9 out of the sample (n=40) had never run away.

***Experience of the looked after system***

Only 18 had not had experience of the looked after system (n=38)

***Average number of years involved in CSE.***

Young people's sample 4 (n=19)

Adult sample 8 (n=16)

***Prior sexual abuse***

12 out of the 41 spontaneously disclosed childhood sexual abuse. This was not a question we actually asked about.

***Family violence***

11 out of the 41 spontaneously disclosed violence in their family background. This was not a question we actually asked about.

***Children***

Young people's sample: 9 out of the 23 interviewed were either pregnant or already had children

Average age at first live birth = 17 (n=7)

Adult sample: 15 out of 18 interviewed were either pregnant or already had children.

Average age at first live birth = 21 (n=15).

***Drugs***

Only 7 out of the sample of 41 had not taken drugs during their involvement in CSE, that is 83% had taken drugs.

Drugs used:

Cannabis	4
Amphetamines	3

Pills/Heroin	1
Heroin	9
Crack	3
Crack/Heroin	13
Valium	1

### **School**

Average school leaving age = 14.75 (n=32)

Only 10 had not truanted (n=33)

Only 10 had any qualifications (n=38)

3 of the sample had not truanted and had obtained qualifications.

### **Best thing that had happened to them:**

Out of the 32 who answered this question: <sup>3</sup>

14 answered that it was being pregnant or having children

2 answered that it was being in a relationship and having children

1 thought that it was being in a current relationship

2 thought it was their parents or grandparent

3 thought that it was finding their project that had helped them with life issues such as coming off drugs

3 thought it was leaving prostitution

2 thought that it was getting off drugs

1 thought it was prosecuting her father for sexually abusing her as a child

1 thought that it was escaping having been sexually abused at home

1 thought it was getting her own (safe) accommodation

1 thought that it was getting into nutrition

1 thought that it was being given a dog.

### **Worst thing that had happened to them**

Out of the 34 who answered this question:

8 thought it was being involved in prostitution

4 thought that it was getting into drugs

3 thought it was the abuse they had suffered as children

3 thought that it was meeting their pimps

3 thought it was their very difficult childhoods

2 thought it was the death of their fathers

1 thought that it was being raped by a neighbour at 13

1 thought it was having their child taken into the looked after system

1 thought it was being born

1 thought it was themselves

1 was unable to answer

1 thought it was being attacked by punters

1 thought that it was witnessing a murder

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<sup>3</sup> A number of respondents were either too upset by this question to answer it, or couldn't think of anything.

- 1 thought it was seeing family members in pain
- 1 thought it was having a child at 15
- 1 thought it was losing her virginity at 14
- 1 thought it was the lack of family support

***Participation***

Out of the 15 young people asked about participation, only 2 did not want to participate (at a later date)

## *2. Putting the findings in context*

### ***Living in poverty:***

NCH (2001) report that certain groups of children and young people are particularly likely to be living in households with low incomes. Those most at risk of being in the bottom 30% of the income distribution include children living:

- In families with young mothers (aged 16-24). 68% are in the bottom 30% of the income distribution.
- With parent(s) without educational qualifications a 54% chance. (DSS, 1999)

### ***Employment chances:***

Young people are much more likely to be unemployed than older people. In spring 1999, 21.6% of 16 and 17 year old men and 14% of women of the same age, were unemployed. The rates for 18 to 24 year olds were lower at 12.5 and 9.3% (ONS, 2000a) respectively, but these were still almost double the rates for all people of working age. Young people who have been looked after are four times more likely than others to be unemployed. (NCH, 2001)

### ***Educational achievement:***

Nationally, most young people achieve graded results, although a small minority do not. In 1997-1998 this proportion was 6% in England. (ONS, 2000b)

### ***Drugs***

In 1998 the British Crime Survey found that 29% of 16-24 year olds in England and Wales had used an illegal drug during the last year (Home Office, 1998). A recent Joseph Rowntree Foundation study found that around 25% of girls in Year 11 said they had used it at least once. Five percent of girls said they had used cannabis on three or more occasions in the past month. When asked about more harmful, illegal drugs, 4 percent of girls in Year 11 said they had 'never' used ecstasy, while 2.5 per cent of girls said the same about cocaine. The figure for heroin use was even lower at less than 1 per cent of girls.

### ***Education and training:***

At any one time it is estimated that about 9% of 16-18 year olds are not in education, employment or training. The young people who are most likely to be in this group are those who have not achieved well in education and/or who have experienced problems with truancy and exclusion. Being out of education, employment or training for more than six months between the ages of 16-18 is the most powerful predictor of unemployment at age 21. (ONSb, 2000)

***Risk of mental health problems:***

The risk factors set out below are those believed to increase the probability of a child developing mental health problems. They are cumulative: if a child has only one risk factor in their life, their probability of developing a mental health problem is between 1% & 2% with three risk factors, the likelihood increases to 8% and with four or more risk factors the likelihood of the child developing a mental health problem is increased by 20% (NCH, 2001).

<b>In the child</b>	<b>In the family</b>	<b>In the community</b>
Genetic influences	Overt parental conflict	Socio-economic disadvantage
Low IQ and learning disability	Family breakdown	Disaster
Specific developmental delay	Inconsistent or unclear discipline	Other significant life events
Communication difficulty	Hostile or rejecting relationships	Homelessness
Difficult temperament	Failure to adapt to child's changing needs	Discrimination
Physical illness especially if chronic and or neurological	Parental criminality, alcohol or personality disorder	
Academic failure	Physical, sexual or emotional abuse	
Low self-esteem	Parental psychiatric illness	
	Death and loss – including loss of friendship.	

Source: Mental Health Foundation (1999)

***Under age sex and pregnancy.***

A quarter of girls in the general population are now estimated to have sex below the age of 16. The average age amongst this group of first intercourse is 17. (NCH, 2001)

In 1998 there were 47 conceptions per 1,000 under 18s in England and Wales. Not all of these conceptions resulted in a birth, however. (NCH, 2001)

Those who become involved in sexual relationships before the age of 16 are more than three times as likely to have a child by 20. (Social Exclusion Unit, 1999).

Research on the 1958 UK birth cohort, examining the impact of childhood poverty and age at first birth on adult outcomes, found that early motherhood was strongly associated with adverse outcomes in later life. Giving birth under 23 produced dramatic differences but giving birth as a teenager was usually

associated with even higher risks of adverse outcomes. This research and other studies found that those who became mothers in their teens:

- were more likely to have no qualifications by age 33;
- were more likely to be in receipt of non-universal state benefits at age 33;
- were likely to be on substantially lower incomes in their thirties than any other group, with nearly half in the bottom fifth of the income distribution;
- if working, were more likely by mid twenties to be in semi-skilled or unskilled manual occupations;
- were less likely to be home owners by the age of 33;
- were more likely to have divorced or separated by the age of 33; and
- were more likely to have large families by the age of 33 (20 per cent had four or more children by the age of 33). (SEU, 1999)

### ***Homelessness and running away***

- Within the general population, it is estimated that a fifth of 16-24 year olds will experience homelessness at some point in their lives.
- One in nine 14 and 15 year olds will run away from home each year. (Children's Society, 1999).
- From the age of 14, girls are twice as likely to run away as boys.
- 7% of runaways are physically or sexually assaulted while away from home. (NCH, 2001).
- An estimated 100,000 children run away from home each year in Britain (Children's Society, 1999)
- The main reasons children give for running away include violence, abuse, family instability, family conflict, neglect, rejection and drug problems.
- By the age of 16, one in nine children will have run away for at least one night. (Children's Society, 1999)
- An estimated 18,000 children a year are thrown out by their parents. (Children's Society, 1999)
- 45% of children in the looked after system have runaway overnight. (Children's Society, 1999)
- One in seven children who run away experience violence and sexual assault whilst away. (Children's Society, 1999)
- There is little evidence of a direct link between economic factors and running away. (Children's Society, 1999)

### ***Child abuse and neglect***

The latest NSPCC report on abuse (Cawson et al, 2001) asked 2,869 young people aged 18-24 about their childhoods. They found:

- 26% reported violence between their parents. For five percent this violence was constant or frequent.
- Three per cent had to look after themselves due to their parents' problems with alcohol or drugs.

- Six per cent of respondents had suffered serious absence of physical care by their parents or carers.
- Seven per cent suffered serious physical abuse by a parent or carer.
- Six per cent of the young people were emotionally maltreated consistently in childhood. Young women were twice as likely to have been emotionally maltreated as young men.
- One per cent suffered sexual abuse by a parent or carer and three per cent by another relative.

### 3. Qualitative findings

#### ***Family Background<sup>4</sup>***

On interviewing our respondents for this research, one thing that became apparent to us very quickly, was the number of identifiable risk factors inherent in the family home and background that we believe are strongly associated with a vulnerability to being abused through prostitution. However, given the small sample size, our observations can only be indicative.

We have termed the following risk factors as "poor family background". It is not a term that contains all the risk factors that we have identified; yet it goes some way to grouping together these risk factors. It is also worth noting that in only exceptional circumstances do these risk factors in poor family background appear alone.

#### ***Child protection concerns***

In the majority of cases there were serious child protection concerns within the family. Physical and sexual abuse were frighteningly common, and seldom picked up by social services. These were neither isolated one-off incidents- many of our respondents were subjected to years of sustained violence and sexual abuse. The histories below document the pain of abused and neglected children's lives we heard:

Well before I left home I went through a really bad time and then I got chucked out of my house and told to live with my dad but he was that violent, he was a drug dealer and gave me all sorts of drugs and everything.

I were 10 when he beat me up and put me in hospital. And he got sentenced for that. He got 4 years and he got out after that time and my mum went back to him. So I had to go through it all again.

My mum, I can't really remember much about her until I was about nine and by the age of nine and a half when she'd met my step-dad, I was then getting abused at ten and that went on for a few years.

This clearly impacted upon their self-esteem and on the trust - which they showed to outside agencies or those around them. It has been reported in these histories that where social services did act, the looked after system, they say, did not address their emotional needs - and they appeared too late.

It was clear from many responses that the young people had not received appropriate responses. When they were asked about being looked after by the local authorities, many said "my parents couldn't control me", "I was off the rails" and so on.

They appear not to be aware that their natural response to the abuse that they have suffered is not their fault.

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<sup>4</sup> By Lyndsey Broadhead

### *Drug and alcohol abuse of parents*

In a large number of cases, the parent, parents or stepparents were abusing alcohol or drugs. This often resulted in abuse of the child, and many of the young people we interviewed whose carers were abusing substances felt that their life was neglectful. Again, social services were not felt to be effective in these cases. In a small number of cases, parents introduced their children to substances.

My Dad is an old \*\*\*\*\* he got me on Valium.

My Mum used to do drugs. My Mum used to do heroin.

In another case a drug-dealing father saw a sitting market for a heroin addiction. He introduced his daughter to heroin at 14 and told her to sell sex to pay for her ever-increasing addiction.

I think I was a deprived child; my mum had three kids, single parent; she was a selfish mother, going out drinking. I suppose when I was a teenager, 12 years old, I retaliated against it and basically did what I liked.

### *Poor understanding and support*

When the young people suffered trauma they felt that there was no one there with whom they could talk to, to share their feelings and turbulent emotions with. Some mothers colluded with sexual abuse, were not able to protect their children from violence or glossed over abuse that was taking place.

She used to walk in bedroom and he would be in my bed, with nowt on and she'd just go "oh what you doing" and then just walk out and then she would say "why don't you take her for a walk with dog", She knew I was petrified of him, she knew that when I used to come back I'd be quiet and it were wrong. It's your kid you know and she did know.

When relationships broke down or a family was bereaved, the young people felt that they had no-one to share their pain with and as a result were vulnerable to exploitation, through sexual exploitation, or through drug abuse.

### *Education*

The majority of the young people we spoke to clearly had missed out on the opportunity for education for life. Many were simply not emotionally available to be educated due to the trauma that they suffered, many could not respond to the boundaries and discipline that were laid down for them at school. Many parents know or knew that their child was not attending school, yet did not care.

Yeah I was happy but my Mum never used to let me go to school. She used to always keep me off, she used to give me alcohol you know and everything. That's how bad she was, you know. You don't want a Mum like that, you want somebody who cares for you....

One young woman said:

My mum thinks I should be out shoplifting instead of being at school.

It is clear that these children are desperately at risk of social exclusion before they have set foot out of the family home.

### ***Entering and staying in prostitution***<sup>5</sup>

Following on from the description of the risk factors, the next section describes the interviewees' experiences of actually being involved in prostitution, getting involved, boyfriends, coercers and abusers, drugs and daily life.

#### ***Getting involved***

None of the young people we interviewed woke up one day and decided to become prostitutes. There was invariably someone pushing them into it, directly or indirectly. There seems to be a tangled mix of peers and 'boyfriends' getting the young people involved.

For a few young women, someone else in their family was already involved in prostitution. One woman said an older woman who was already a prostitute, who she had to give all the money to, had forced her into it. Living near a red light district also appears to have been a risk factor.

Others said that many of their friends had been involved. Some even spoke of it being something normal, that everyone was doing it. One young woman said:

Because it was like normal because everyone was doing it. Everyone was. Everybody who I associated with anyway. Even in the children's home.

Many didn't associate with their old friends from school, one woman said she was too ashamed, and others felt that the people they spent time with could not really be considered friends, as they had got them into drugs or prostitution in the first place. There was also some fear of other women involved in prostitution as they had experienced violence or had been robbed of their money by them.

#### ***Boyfriends***

As you can see from the quantitative analysis, many of the interviewees have had older boyfriends. Often they were on drugs themselves and introduced the young women to drugs. Many of those interviewed had experienced considerable violence in their relationships, perhaps following on from a childhood of abuse. These crimes generally went unreported, either through fear or lack of anyone to turn to. Reflecting back, older women said they had felt dependent on their boyfriends, or they had undermined their confidence.

A couple of the older women discussed relationships where the boyfriend had not been happy with their involvement in prostitution, although it did appear that the majority of boyfriends, were either acting in some way as a coercer, accepting the girl's earnings for drugs or were otherwise not questioning their involvement.

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<sup>5</sup> By Anna Downie

### *Pimps/coercers/boyfriends*

With the young people we interviewed, it was sometimes difficult to identify a 'pimp' in the classic sense of one. There may be a few reasons for this.

Firstly, some of the older women did reflect that the situation had changed more now; that drugs had such a big influence that women were involved in prostitution in order to pay for their drug habits, and those of others. Life centred more on the drug dealer than around a more stereotypical coercer/boyfriend model: though this may be a difference, the exploitation, however, remains the same.

Another reason may be that the situation varies from town to town. One young woman who had recently moved from Sheffield to Doncaster told us that in Sheffield everyone has pimps, whereas in Doncaster almost no one does.

The third reason is perhaps that the young people did not disclose to us, or perhaps to themselves, that they were being coerced. Young people with coercers may also not be the ones that we had access to interview. Much of our information on coercers therefore comes from the experiences of the slightly older women.

Many of the older women certainly had been coerced at one point in their lives and many said they would have seen them as their boyfriend who they were in love with at the time. One woman said she was coerced by another slightly older woman. The women described the classic progression from loving boyfriend to violent coercer:

I didn't think he was a pimp when I first met him, I thought he was another nice bloke, you know what I mean, and I thought he was going to save me from this bad pimp because that's what he told me. And then before I knew it the violence started and I was in too deep.

I really did think I loved him but now when I look back I think oh, what a sad sorry little girl.

He was gentle at first, he won me over and then the violence would come with the drugs.

One very common thread was the horrendous violence that the women had experienced from men and the fear they had of the consequences of not earning sufficient money. This fear of violence from coercers for some was far more in their minds than any fear of getting into a car with a stranger. This proves a strong factor in preventing exiting for those young people who were being coerced. One older woman who had exited reflected that:

If I had a pimp I don't think I'd be finished now.

They have little choice or control in their lives:

He bought all the furniture we had, he chose my clothes, he chose my knickers, he chose my food, he told me when to eat, when to sleep, when to work, when to go home, when to speak.

Whilst it is difficult to generalise from such a small sample, several of the women described their coercers/boyfriend's ethnic origins as black or Asian.

### *Drugs*

The interviewees took a whole range of drugs from cannabis to heroin. Not every individual we interviewed were drug users, but certainly for the majority it was part of their life. In terms of addictions, heroin was clearly the biggest problem.

Several of the young people had started on drugs because their boyfriends were addicts or drug dealers. One young woman was earning money through prostitution to feed her boyfriend's addiction and getting onto drugs herself was a way of getting some of what she earned.

Many of the women were generally in very close proximity to drug taking, in and out of school, many as a consequence of running away from home and ending up sleeping on someone's floor. A few had seen the danger of being in close proximity to those on drugs and tried to protect themselves against getting addicted by isolating themselves from friends who were addicted. One young woman said:

I think it's getting in with the wrong crowd that gets you into trouble.

Amongst those who had become addicted through peers, they had felt that it was a cool thing to do:

That it was good. That I was one of the big people, but then I realised and I knew it was a dumb game. But then you got addicted to them.

### *Drugs and prostitution*

For the young people, some had become addicted to drugs before getting involved in prostitution, as a way of funding their habit. Others had become addicted after getting involved, as a way of taking them away from the grim reality of their life. One woman spoke of the impact of drugs today:

They weren't really on drugs, they were motivated by pimps. Now, in this day and age now, you don't really get pimps. You'll probably get a guy with a girl who works. They're both on heroin or they're both on crack and the girl's out there to feed both their habits... Everything's different.

### *Staying addicted*

Young people spoke of the pressures that keep you addicted to drugs. They were a way of getting away from reality and helping you to not think about what you are doing. Others spoke of the desperation of being addicted and the way it takes away your confidence.

When I was on gear, I had no emotions, I didn't cry. I was nasty, I was evil, I never cared about anyone.

Some had tried to get off drugs but they were still surrounded by addicts, boyfriends and friends, which meant that it was difficult to stay off them for long.

### *Detox*

These pressures made it very difficult for the many young people we spoke to who very much wanted to get off drugs. One interviewee said it had taken her eight years before she felt ready to get help, and there was nothing any agency could have done. Some of the younger women spoke of their frustration of the services offered for coming off heroin, that didn't provide enough support and one young woman who had already tried to come off drugs felt that she wouldn't be able to manage it unless she was actually put into rehab for 6 months. The need to distance yourself from your friends or peers was also acknowledged as necessary for coming off drugs permanently, because they were likely to be drug users as well, but it was difficult to isolate yourself totally from this community.

### *Choices*

The young people interviewed did not necessarily recognise that they were not responsible for some of the things that had happened to them. There was a sense that many of the young people felt they had got themselves into the situation they were in. Some felt they had seen others working as prostitutes and had made a choice to join them. However, those looking back described themselves as vulnerable or naïve and were more able to see who had manipulated them into the situation.

I never worked as a prostitute of my own free will, it was always some man making that choice for me, deciding my life and deciding which road he wanted me to take rather than me deciding my own path.

The young man interviewed felt that if you are gay you are more vulnerable and open to manipulation due to society's attitude. He also pointed out how open to manipulation children are from adults.

### *Abusers/clients*

Most of the younger women met the abusers on the streets, although some had regulars who would phone them, one advertised in a magazine, and some met men in clubs. They would mostly have sex with them in their cars or in a car park somewhere quiet, although some had travelled round the country working and had worked in houses or hotels. At least 2 had worked for an escort agency. One woman said she used to meet one man in the dinner hour round the corner from her school.

The interviewees described the men who bought sex from them as mostly married, many with children.

There was awareness that some of the men were more dangerous than others. One woman described two types of men. One group were described as lonely, sometimes wanting to talk and often treated them fairly well. The other group were far more dangerous. She said it was this latter group who the younger girls mainly met. This seemed to tie in with the experiences of the

young people. When asked how they felt about the men, some said they just didn't. They blocked it out, thinking instead of the money and the drugs. One woman said:

I just walked round like a zombie; I don't think I had any feelings.

However most were quite clear about what they thought of the men. Sick, disgusting, horrible, dirty old men and hate were just some of the more repeatable words used to describe them. They felt that the men considered they could do what they liked to them once they had handed over money.

Some had experienced violence from an abuser. One was forced to take drugs and others were raped.

Perhaps the most worrying aspect of talking to the young people about their abusers was the frequency of what they identified as paedophilia. The young women said men go round asking for twelve-year-old virgins, one had said he wanted an eight year old. One woman said that men wanted her to pretend to be his daughter; another had had photographs taken of her and her sister. The young man interviewed said that it was a gold mine being young.

### *Clipping*

We asked the young people if they had ever taken money from abusers and then run away, sometimes called clipping, rolling or robbing. Many of the women said they were too scared to do this, and there was a fear that even if they were not caught that time, the man might come back another night. Some young women did whatever they could to avoid having sex. One young woman felt that it was wrong as it was stealing and people should get what they pay for.

### *Daily life*

When asked about what they liked doing this revealed a variety of interests that any young person might have, such as swimming, reading or going to the cinema. The extent to which they were able to do any of these was probably very limited- one girl said:

We don't have no fun.

We asked the young people about their days. By and large they were fairly simple, revolving around sleep, drugs, working and occasionally food. One older woman said she had often felt guilty about wasting time or having fun.

A couple of the young women said the only fun they had was when the project supporting them had taken them out to do something. One young woman had completed her Duke of Edinburgh award whilst still involved in prostitution.

When asked about best friends many didn't really feel they had one. Sometimes it was themselves, or the drugs worker, or their 9-year-old daughter. One older woman reflected that she had had to learn what real friendship was.

### *Money*

A considerable amount of money could be earned through working. For those addicted to drugs, their money was almost entirely going on drugs, as two young women said:

If we're lucky we have a couple of quid left over for food.

Others spent their money on clothes, make up, gambling and their children. Whilst £800-1000 a week may seem to be a large amount, almost nothing is saved, everything is spent living day to day, and often not on themselves.

### ***Experience of Services***<sup>6</sup>

From the research undertaken the key support needs of the girls and young women abused through prostitution can be identified as: -

- early intervention;
- support and flexibility of services; and,
- accommodation.

### *Early intervention*

Throughout our research we have encountered a number of girls and young women who have become entrenched in an abusive relationship and developed a lifestyle, 'friendships' and a level of drug dependency that makes it difficult and sometimes impossible to change her lifestyle.

...a lot of these kids now are picking up their first drink when they are twelve, ten. There's kids of my age with joints in their hands now, they are smoking at seven, eight because they are picking the stubs up out of the bloody ashtray.... It's all about getting to these children before the start – not afterwards.

One feature of all individuals interviewed was they had all suffered various forms of abuse within their families. For many this was the use of physical abuse or sexual abuse. In several cases social services had been involved to some extent. However, the majority of women interviewed did not engage with social services and little in the way of follow up services were provided.

No, they never helped me....and they said she had no physical marks on her and unless she had some physical marks then we might be able to move her....

In some cases, where a young women or girl was known to be at risk of further sexual exploitation appropriate placements were difficult to find. A lack of placements meant that they often placed in children's homes.

Children's homes, they're no good. It's no good putting a heap of kids into one house and different people every day. That way it's mostly you know most of the prostitutes and that, they've come from children's homes. Did you know that?

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<sup>6</sup> By Millie McKetty-Campbell

It seems that in some of the interventions the girl themselves begin to be identified as 'being the problem' rather than as a client seeking help to deal with a problem.

I think social services need to work better with the young people. They do, they need to give them more support, especially if they become pregnant. They need to show that they are going to be there and give support.

### *Support and flexibility of services*

Voluntary organisations such as refuges, counselling organisations and drug services figured highly in terms of the support that the girls had either used or wished to use when exiting from their lifestyles. One young woman commented:

This is good man, cause they help you with housing, they help you when you want something to eat... they help you with lots of things you know...

Another stated:

This is a good place, if they could give you housing they would try their best, they try to do everything for you...

These projects were often very flexible, for example by offering an outreach service, and meeting the young women and girls wherever they were. Attendance at drop-ins allowed them to check out the services on offer and to engage when they were ready. For girls involved in sexual exploitation, their chaotic lifestyles makes it difficult to make appointments. Cancelled appointments may lead to hostility from service providers and ultimately rejection because of heavy caseloads etc. Staff in voluntary organisations may not have the same statutory commitments (e.g. attending case conferences) as other agencies, and are therefore able to offer a more flexible service.

### *Accommodation*

For young women and girls who are being sexually exploited, safe accommodation usually means accommodation that provides some 'distance' from their usual circumstances. Comments included the following:

Housing, that's my main thing. If I've got a base I know that I'll be able to progress a lot better....

Housing (services).... They won't listen to you, they just like to give you night shelter and that's no good because we work all night anyway and night shelter.... You have to leave it in the morning.

When I eventually fled from the violent pimp that I were with... I was put into a safe house and like he didn't know whereabouts I was, so he couldn't find me.

Several of the young people interviewed did find Housing helpful:

Yes, they did help me, once I'd actually applied for a house. I did get support. I was very honest about my past, I did find one of the workers really, really supportive, you know, maybe I was lucky.

However, this indicates that those who did receive a good service did not see this as their right – more good luck.

### *Police and the Courts*

Many of those interviewed had some ambivalence towards the police and courts.

Some coppers are good, but you find some nasty ones...

Several of the women felt that the police needed educating. They know that they are disliked by the police and feel that the police don't see that their role as including the protection of those involved in prostitution.

If a prostitute gets raped, it's disgusting; well she's a prostitute, she were asking for it.

In terms of the courts, women were unclear as to their function. Whilst one commented that attitudes had improved a bit, the majority felt that they had learnt nothing from going to court. If anything, it forced them to go back out to work in order to pay the fines for soliciting.

### *Exiting<sup>7</sup>*

The majority of the young people and women who were interviewed had made more than one attempt to exit but felt that there wasn't enough support for them to remain free from the lifestyle of prostitution. There were varied reasons for this.

Due to the damage caused to them whilst being abused through prostitution they didn't feel worthy of anything else and their identity was lost.

It's changed my whole way of looking at life. I see myself as a prostitute now, that's what I do, because I'm so used to doing it. I've been doing it for three years that's what I'm so used to doing.

Some of the young people and women were addicted to heroin and crack cocaine but unfortunately when they were desperate to go into rehab there just wasn't any available spaces or resources.

I think if I came off drugs I would stop working.

Although some of the women felt the money that they earned was difficult to give up, most young people and women earned just enough to feed their and/or their boyfriend's/coercer's drug addiction.

I didn't get to keep my money, he just used to give me heroin and crack, and after the money was spent he would put me back on the beat.

All the women interviewed felt the need of more support when trying to exit and recover, as for many this is when the hard work begins. Often for these

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<sup>7</sup> By Fiona Broadfoot

women if they left prostitution they felt they would be isolated as all their peers, friends and boyfriends were involved.

The projects working with young people abused through prostitution were often their only link to the outside world. There were many positive feelings about the support that the interviewees got from projects. The voluntary relationships with the project workers and the non-judgmental approach of these workers meant the women and young people felt more able to approach these projects than statutory organisations.

The project is now more a social thing rather than counselling support or coming to go to the clinic or helping you to get away from your pimp. You have built up that friendship and trust between you.

Many of the interviewees had been brought up in the looked after system, or experienced abuse from family members, or they were estranged from their families which left them extremely vulnerable and isolated. Others had become estranged as a direct result of their involvement in prostitution. This was a big issue for many women and young people when trying to exit as they felt they couldn't do it alone.

Drugs and prostitution are the reason I don't see my family. I'm too ashamed really to go and see my family. I'm too ashamed.

Another reason that this was very difficult was that many of the young people and women said that they didn't feel worthy of stopping and had little or no self-esteem. There are no specialist services for women wishing to exit prostitution and due to the violence and abuse that the majority of the women suffer from both coercers and abusers, their experience leaves them feeling completely worthless. Furthermore, there were a high number of interviewees who have suffered from depression, have self-harmed and some who had attempted suicide.

I remember being between a bath and a toilet bowl for three days wanting to die. That's what I remember feeling. I didn't want to live cause I just thought it was too difficult to deal with everything I had to deal with.

However the longer the women and young people were away from this lifestyle the more able they were to talk about what had happened to them. They also had much stronger views and were more aware of the damage done to them.

I'd stepped out of mainstream society for a lot of years I was a nobody and how do you then re-enter mainstream society? When I was a kid I was taken away from my home and I was led into this world of madness and violence, of sexual violence of you know the most extreme nature and how do you then deal with that and conform back into society and rebuild your life?

For some of the women and young people there was a trigger, which led them to finally exiting abuse through prostitution. Many of them talked about their children and how much they meant to them. When asked what was the best

thing that had happened to them, they felt it was having children. All who had children did not want them to be brought up within the world of prostitution.

My life was going nowhere and I know now and I knew at the time if I didn't get out when I did I would have been dead and if I hadn't got pregnant with my little boy, which was the thing that made me stop permanently, I know for a fact I would have been dead now.

Other triggers were usually connected to a severe violent attack or rape from coercers and abusers and for one of the women it was the murder of a younger family member, who was also involved, that triggered her exiting.

It was when a punter attacked me. He raped me, he bugged me. Everything every pain that had been done to me all my life had been done to me in one night by him.

It is evident from the research that none of the women and young people had become successful happy individuals whilst being abused through prostitution but the strength and courage that they showed was incredible.

After some of the interviewees had exited prostitution they went on to further education and one of the women had just received her results when we carried out our interview with her. She had passed her exams with flying colours. There was an issue around criminal convictions for one of the women after she had worked at a primary school as part of her childcare course. A police check was requested and it became evident to the school that she had prostitution-related offences. She was asked to leave the school and was unable to continue with her studies. This led to her returning to the lifestyle.

Finally, all of the young people and women felt it was extremely important to prevent the exploitation of young people as they felt that once you are involved it is extremely difficult to exit.

### *Participation*<sup>8</sup>

In December 2001, the Second World Congress against Commercial Sexual Exploitation was held in Japan. This conference included 100 young people from around the world, from various backgrounds. Some had been involved in commercial sexual exploitation; others who had never been exploited were there to pledge their support and campaign on behalf of the thousands of young people who are unable to attend such an event. This was in the name of participation, yet it was tokenistic, and did not live up to the views expressed in either the CRC or the Agenda for Action from the first Congress.

Throughout the conference, the presence of the young people was alluded to. Young people presented their ideas in the large plenary sessions, yet were never referred to by their names, but just a youth representative, their accommodation was over an hour away from the Congress, which meant any socialising with other delegates after the day's event was kept to a minimum. And if this didn't marginalize them, the fact that they weren't allowed to attend

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<sup>8</sup> By Carron Somerset, ECPAT UK

the workshops that were held throughout the days, but attend a parallel young people's round table meant they didn't socialise with other delegates during the day.

However, it wasn't all bad. This was the first time that a large number of young people were included in an international 'adults' conference, although many of the young people were over 20 years of age, and therefore considered adults in their normal daily lives. Yet in this context, by being referred to as young people, they are set aside to be heard and listened to. Which, apart from the plenary sessions didn't happen. But what did happen was that they were invited, and some effort was made to include them.

And this is, at least the start of youth participation. Youth participation is about including young people in their own lives, empowering them, and providing the means to make them realise that they can help themselves, rather than making them reliant on other people. Youth participation is about involving them in decisions, and not making the decisions without asking the young people what they want. It is startling that participation is a new concept, considering, by using participatory methods, and gauging the ideas of those you wish to help, support or provide services to, means less resources required, as the provisions should be tailor made and specific, resulting in less wastage, and possibilities of things going wrong.

Participation to different people means different things. In this project we wanted participation to be about finding out what young people involved in the sexual exploitation thought about how they had been treated, how they were involved in their lives, and how much respect adults gave them in their decision making processes. Apart from talking to young people about how they felt, and how they had been treated, we also wanted to find out whether such a vulnerable group wanted to help others, and take part in a campaign, or poetry writing, or going to schools and telling young people about the dangers of getting involved. The results reveal that young people are not allowed to be involved in the decisions that most affect them, but that given the slightest chance, do want to take part in these decisions and in helping other people.

Referring directly to the findings of the research, the answer to the question 'Have you ever been asked about the services you received', received a general reply of 'no'. For many the decisions about what they needed were never directed at them, and they were never asked whether the services they were receiving were adequate or appropriate.

When asked whether the respondent had ever been consulted about the services she received, and whether being consulted would make a difference, the respondent said:

It could have. You could have told them what's right and what's wrong. At the end of the day they might be sat there listening to you and you might be going there and they are on your side. They don't know how hard it is.

When asked whether they think young people should be asked about what they want, or think, the replies reveal a unanimous 'yes'. One girl replied:

They never used to say do you wanna go in a kid's home or owt? They just used to put us in it or, they never used to ask us, they just used to do it and we had to do it, we had no choice. And that's what really used to piss us off because we used to think, right we'll do what they want us to do. And that's why I used to be so rebellious and that, because, if they'd sat us down and said, do you want to do this, and they'd found out what we wanted, but they didn't, and they just used to put us places and do things with us. And, they go about it all wrong, they do.

Another said:

Just try and get an idea of what young people are actually going through things and work from it like that. Because you need to know what they want before you can even do owt.

And another:

They should be part of that decision making, yeah. They're certainly capable of doing that but I think, I think society tends to think you lose your brains or something when you become a prostitute, you know?

And finally, when asked about how they wanted to get involved, the responses were varied, and very individual, but positive. They were given ideas about how they could be involved, such as through poetry, plays, panel discussions or visiting schools.

I think a youth panel, you know, is a really good thing as well because what adults want and what young people want, or young adults want and older adults want are two different things.

I would [talk to other young people], that would be ace. I know that I'm not the only one. It would be good to see that someone else has gone through it. It's a winner. I can do it.

I would do more like poetry and writing. When I'm getting off drugs I wrote a lot of poetry.

Another interviewee said:

I think there should be a young people's panel. I think that they should be able to help young people through arts and crafts, as well, because I know from my own experience I find it hard to talk to people, but I find it easier to write it.

To finish with another quote that sums up what we hope this project wasn't what one respondent said, when asked whether they had ever been asked what they wanted from services:

And every so often one of these places will give you a little bit of a questionnaire to fill in. How did you find us, what we gave you and that but they don't do anything about it. They don't act on it. They just ask because somebody said it's a good idea. Maybe because there was a bit of funding left over.

ECPAT UK hopes that this project doesn't just end now, because the funding has. We aim to use the material gained from the research and try and start a national campaign for young people, run by young people. This will cost money, but in the long term, could help prevent vulnerable young people becoming involved in commercial sexual exploitation.

### ***Messages from young people***

*'Everyone deserves a chance'*

We asked all our participants whether they had any messages to the government. They did. To summarise them in the words of one young person.

Yeah I think they should help people. Everybody deserves a chance.

Their comments ranged from *prevention*, *services* and *policing* through to what had helped them personally to exit.

Almost inevitably there were very strong criticisms of social services and social workers. They felt that social services often sided with their families and took their word on the situation – they felt that they should have been offered *more support* and *should have been listened to*.

Social workers without a doubt know nothing. Absolutely nothing. All the degradedness that you have to go through. All places. Residential workers and then they think it is all about them gaining their qualifications and the next staff and that's all that they say.

I think that they need definitely more sympathetic people.

Many of their problems with social services had continued into adult life, with their children being taken into the looked after system.

I'd like more support to get my son back. That's the only thing I can really say would help and I think this government should actually help me. If they knew half the stuff that's happened to me, they'd all turn grey. It's like even this that we're doing now; you don't know the half of it. This is just one issue of my life and there's been a hell of a lot more.

Many of our sample had had children at a young age, and felt that there should be *more support for them as mothers*.

I think Social Services need to work better with the young people. They do, they need to give them more support, especially if they get pregnant. They need to show that they're going to be there and give them support. Because I think that if they'd given me support at that time I wouldn't have lost my daughter, because I'd have had help from the Social Services.

Concomitantly, there was very great praise for the projects that had helped them. Normally these were *voluntary sector ones* such as those provided by our project partners. Many of them saw *the need for more funding and resources for this type of projects*;

Well, projects like Street Reach. I mean I know there's plenty of projects around in different areas. But they need funding because they need to be able to stay here because it's a good thing for. The stuff for young prostitutes.

I think there should be more centres like Streetreach helping us, you know, to go out, giving out condoms and stuff like that, making it safer. I think that's the main thing for the government is to make it, it happens, you can't stop it from happening, so just to do things to make it safer.

In particular what the young people valued was *non-judgmental help*. They felt stigmatised by not only their families and friends, but by agency responses:

It made me turn more to drugs, because that's what I needed because everybody knew what I was doing and to most people it was the most disgusting thing to.

I think people should be treated as equals, especially the young people because at the end of the day all they need is loving, caring people to look after them. The other thing is I don't think it should be legalised, but I think it should be decriminalised and made safer. The other thing is they need to look into Social Services and the Children's Act because it is well out of date, it is twelve years out of date and things have changed a hell of a lot. And I think they should stop it happening to other people what's happened to me.

I think they need to sort their attitudes out and try and be more understanding, just the way that people are treated, just like to have a bit more respect and give people a time so they can talk. If the police come in like they do, rushing in with their attitudes, the girls won't sit down and talk to them. But if they gave the girls a bit more time to help them then maybe they'd do a lot better.

One thing I would love to see and that's more people opening their eyes, right, and not just looking at a working girl and going, yuch! filth, turn a blind eye. Give that girl a chance, talk to that girl. Blank out what that word means, that's an old-fashioned word and it's an old-fashioned word and it's a dirty word as far as people who are looking at it are concerned, which it is. You say that word to anybody and it's filth, it's dirt. Forget that word, forget that filth, give the person who's doing it a chance. Doesn't matter what chance you're giving them, whether it be work, whether it be college, whether it's back at school, give that person a chance without the sarcasm and that will make a difference.

This is not to say that they had not been helped by other agencies, some of them had had positive experiences of social service, housing and drugs projects, however they stated that they needed much more *joined up service provision*.

Everybody deserves more than one chance at the end of the day. It's not everybody's fault that they're into drugs and they come off it and they get dragged back into it, it's not that easy. They've got to need the help to get off of it and stay off of it. Because you're all right, you're coming off it and then they just throw you into the world and you've got all these problems, all these debts.

They need to help you like Street Reach's doing now. Do you know, doing people's detox but getting them into like, doing stuff after your detox, you know, like a plan? That's what they need to do, yeah.

I think they should sort of have initiatives just like for working girls. They should try and house us to get us off the street basically, because like the quicker we're off the

street the less we are going to be working anyway. Because like basically because I've got nowhere to go and nowhere to stay I just keep working and the rest of it. There should be more detox services and like the genuine people which would be quicker to get in because it's difficult. I think they should have a special unit for working girls like me, where they offer assistance with housing, benefits, sexual health. Housing is the most important, that is like one of the main problems with like nowhere to live basically.

They had a lot to say about drugs and the need for *better and more focused drug treatment services*, and about *drug awareness and prevention*. Our participants were keenly aware that drugs were responsible for their problems and many were desperate for help.

Everybody, like I say, for the same reason I've just said, everybody looks at it wrong, they think the prostitution is the problem. It's not. It's only certain areas of prostitution and those areas; the only ones that work in the surroundings that are dangerous are the drug addicts. It's drugs and prostitution together, drugs are the problem. Because you wouldn't work the streets otherwise.

Well it's the drug bit first you've got to solve, isn't it, because that's the reason why most of the girls are out there working. They're on drugs. You've got to get rid of the dealers, stop them from taking the drugs and that will stop them from working because they are all addicts out there.

You've got to do something about the drink and drugs because that is the baseline now for where the prostitution's coming in. And that's why the police have got no proof when a guy is putting a girl at work. Because they haven't got the evidence any more. Before they had the physical bruises constantly. Nowadays they haven't got the physical bruises because they don't need the bruises. It's getting them into a habit, whether it drink, whether it drugs, they're getting them into a habit. The girls think they're going out for the habit that they've got. Half the money that they do doesn't buy a quarter of what they get but because they're so hooked now they don't see that, so when they come and say lock him up, look what he's doing to you, 'but he's not, I've got to go out there for my habit'. They can't see the true reason why they are out there, because they're one step ahead all the time.

In terms of the messages that are being given and who they are given by, our respondents thought they were not delivered early enough and were much too 'soft':

I was taking drugs at twelve. They didn't give me a drugs talk at school until I was thirteen.

It's far too late sometimes. A lot of these kids now are picking up their first drink when they're twelve, ten. There's kids of my kid's age with joints in their hands now, they're smoking at seven and eight because they're picking the stumps up out of the bloody ashtray or pinching the parents' fags. It's all about going to these children before they start, not afterwards. And, instead of somebody in a suit or in a nice skirt and top or a nice fucking suit and tie that goes in and says, right, this, these are drugs, these are bad, don't get. Send in one of the ex-druggies to tell them what it did to them. Send somebody in that's only got one leg because they injected into the groin for so long they had to have their leg amputated. That's how you advertise, that's how you educate the children.

People are going in and doing fancy little drama bits and a nice little poem, about how bad it was to be on drugs. And like I say, the kids don't even understand it most of the time but what they will understand is like I say, somebody going in with half an arm hanging off, or a big hole in the groin or one leg missing and saying this is what

drugs do. This is what you will be. Or somebody that goes in and says I stole from my mother, I beat my own mother up, I beat my girlfriend, I took my children's piggy bank money. That is what drugs do to you. That's what they need. It needs to be hard core. Slap you in the face, this is what drugs do because you've done your drama and that, I've seen loads of stuff like that, they've been doing it since I was a child and did it stop anybody?

They wanted people like themselves to go into schools and talk to young people about drugs and prostitution. And in some cases they did mean young.

I think if they could speak to little kids before they start on heroin.

They acknowledged that it was difficult to keep some young people out of involvement in drugs and prostitution, but what was needed was a *sufficient safety net* for them to exit. They wanted to help and be involved in *awareness raising and campaigning*:

I think they should go around schools more and discuss it more with people in schools and in children's homes. Basically to be there and show them that they are important and they are worth better than this.

Yes, to get people who it's happened to. They are not victims - they are survivors of this. Want to send a message out there to other people that, you know, it happens. We need to educate and train people on the issues around prostitution and under-age prostitution, sexual abuse that goes on in families and the fact that men can actually take young girls away from their families and groom them to be prostitutes and women who are sold for sex, you know. Women and children who could make their lives so much better by not even being introduced to it. I mean, it can be so damaging, it can, it can affect you in so many ways that it needs to be addressed with the issues, everything needs to be talked about openly, you know, issues on sexual health has to be about stuff around prostitution.

Other areas which they felt was a priority for them was *safe and appropriate housing* which could help them exit. This meant having a place in an area away from the red light district and their abusers, coercers or drug dealers and which offered support for them as they worked through their problems was seen as essential to reduce their vulnerability.

It's not going to stop quick, but having safe houses for the "girls".  
So you think that they could be working the street and be looked after.

You should just like get them off the street, chuck them in care as far away as possible and then set them up in a place like this...

Big improvements with the housing, a big improvement is needed with the housing. Especially for the young girls. I mean there's so many young girls out there, really young. I mean some of them are only 17 and 16's out there, I mean I know I'm only 23 but to see those 16 year olds.

Standing on the corner you'd tell them if you've got nowhere to sleep, she sleeps on the corner and then she ends up getting taken over by some drug dealer.

Or filthy old man because she's standing on the corner, she's so young and vulnerable, you know what I mean?

*Training, community work, education and facilities:* Many commented on the need for support to help them re-enter education and training. They valued the help offered by the voluntary sector projects they accessed.

Not really, no. Allowing Protect to have a bit more...

Resources?

Yes and more people to help them to spread the word because some of the girls still up to this day it's hard to reach them because of the kind of lives they live, it's so difficult to get them there. But more resources and more helpers that we get at the Protect is the best thing. But the best thing they need like I say is the courts to make the girls put something back into the community. That way the girls learn what they're capable of like me, I didn't know I could paint and decorate until they made me learn.

Activities not just for them but also for bored young people:

I think they should fund it more for places like this. I mean they could do this place up properly, you know what I mean? Get one room for computers and that with the Internet and everything. That would really help; do you know what I mean? But they should also, I reckon, do some more places for young people because there's not enough. For people more my age like this. It's not just for prostitutes but for like youth and that. That's why most of us go out robbing and that because there's nothing else to do. It's boring and parks are no good to 16, 17 year olds apart from smoking but we need to go out and make some more useful or something, like discos and that for our age. I mean they have some out here for under 18's and they're only once a fortnight, something like that, and that's not good enough.

There were some discussion about legalisation – but largely this meant decriminalisation. There was a lot of condemnation about why it was the girls who were being targeted and not the abusers.

They need to clamp down on kerb crawlers, paedophiles.

I think nicking girls all the time. I have noticed in the evening, it's always girls they go for and not the punters, it's just not fair and that and sometimes you get nicked by the same person all the time and things like that. I think they should be watching over the prostitutes cause there's some funny men out there.

However one older woman who had exited stated:

Yes I have, I think... I do think that definitely never legalise it because it's an abuse of women and children. There's nothing nice, nothing empowering, nothing glamorous about prostitution, it destroys you, it destroys your soul, it's an awful way of life and I think that it should be up there with violence against women, you know, and children, I think it's abusive and damaging. I've met lots and lots of women while I worked as a prostitute and since I've left prostitution because of the support that I do and never once have I met a confident, happy, contented hooker, I've just met very devastated and damaged people and drug addicted people, you know. And people get out and can rebuild their lives, you know, and be happy, but when you're in it it's a very sad and lonely world.

Finally, they want to be involved in arriving at the answers:

I think they should start listening to you and other people who have got a common, you know, instead of, realising there is a problem and it's not about fining girls, it's about doing something, trying to keep the girls off the street and help people more than anything and the reasons behind why they're there in the first place a lot of them.

People who know how it feels, you know, not those who read and learn and go to college and get a degree and university and stuff; people who've got the experience in there that know that... it happened to me, it can happen to others. Something like that it would need to be addressed in schools and publicly. All round the world it needs to be shown that look it's going on, this is what's happening, how can we stop it, we need to find ways of stopping and preventing at the same time. And if there is services available then maybe a lot more women and children who are going through this can access the services and use them and be able to get away and feel that there's somebody there that they can turn to. Not to feel like me where I felt like there was nobody there, there was nothing there for me, you know, if I locked him up that was it, you know what I mean? The end of my life basically. Nobody at all there to show or we're here for you, we'll support you, you know, we'll do this for you, we'll do that. It needs addressing, it needs help, it needs to be like twenty four hour all round care kind of thing.

## Section II

### Literature on participation

#### 1. What is participation?

What is participation? As Boyden and Ennew (1997) point out, there are two interpretations of the term 'participation'. It can mean simply 'taking part in', or being present, or it can mean a form of empowerment – having a real say in decisions.

Although it is primarily this second definition of participation with which we are concerned, the first is by no means easy to achieve particularly when working with excluded groups. Some disabled children and young people for example, lack the opportunity even to participate in everyday activities.

There have been various attempts to arrive at a typology of participation, summarised below by DoH (2000).

Arnstein (1969)	Thoburn, Lewis, Shemmings (1995)	Hart (1997)	Shier (2000)
Citizen control	Delegated power involvement in service design	Child-initiated, shared decisions with adults	Children share power and responsibility for decision making
Delegated power		Child-initiated and directed	
Partnership	Partnership Participation	Adult initiated, shared decisions with adults	Children are involved in decision making process
Placation	Involvement Consultation	Consulted and informed	Children's views are taken into account
Consultation	Keeping fully informed	Assigned but informed	Children are supported in their views
		Tokenism	Children are listened to
Therapy	Placation	Decoration	
Manipulation	Manipulation	Manipulation	

In more concrete terms participation can mean a number of different roles and activities open to young people. Cutler & Frost (2001) specify a number of levels and forms of participation:

- youth service – where interns volunteer to work on projects
- peer education – e.g. drug awareness
- youth leadership development
- youth governance
- youth philanthropy – where young people make funding decisions
- youth organising or civic activism.

The ConneXions service (DfEE, 2000) has identified the following roles for young people:

- Helping to define performance measures

- Contributing to decisions about strategic direction
- Helping to develop plans
- Helping to assess the bids of potential contractors
- Helping to select key personnel
- Helping to plan and carry out evaluations, in reviewing complaints and in internal quality monitoring
- Contributing to the planning and design of services
- Delivering the service to other young people as volunteers or paid staff
- Taking roles as peer supporters and educators, brokers to existing provision, advocates (individually and collectively), and contributors to promotional activity; and
- Contributing to improving quality acting in the roles of monitor, inspector and evaluator.

Similarly, Mackenzie (2000) suggests that there is scope for participation within a number of structures:

- Membership/representation on governing bodies/management committees
- Advisory Boards/Steering groups
- Young peoples forums
- Conferences/workshop events
- Working groups
- Children's Participation Champion/Officer
- Consultation/Research Exercises
- Values statements/policy

ECPAT (1999) describe the various roles available for young people:

- Administrators
- Advocates
- Counsellors and peer support
- Decision makers
- Mentors and educators
- Income generators
- Perform monitoring and evaluation functions
- Managers of their environment
- Researchers in participatory action research projects.

## 2. Why do it?

### ***2.1 The participation of young people can be a very powerful way of getting a message across to important people.***

Singleton (2001), describing work by Barnardo's in this area, noted that:

Our service users have made very powerful presentations to a number of high profile audiences, including last year's Labour party conference, Northern Ireland's review of the Criminal Justice system and a consultation on the Human Rights Commission. Public speaking often significantly boosts their confidence and self-esteem.

### ***2.2 It is felt that it has the potential for the targeting of resources more effectively.***

McNeish (1999) states that it has been argued that participation can avoid wasting time and money on services young people don't want to use; it improves quality; gives young people greater ownership and commitment to

services and enhances skills of adults involved in planning and providing for them.

### **2.3 There are significant benefits for the young people.**

The benefits are seen not only at an organisational, but an individual level. For children and young people, involvement helps them to support and positively influence each other; provides opportunities for them to gain experience, skills and confidence and encourages young people to take responsibility and control of their lives. Singleton (2001) states that participation is an essential component in the development of young people's citizenship skills without which the cycle of social exclusion cannot be broken. ECPAT (1999) identify these skills broadly as:

- The development of social competence and social responsibility;
- political determination;
- capacity building; and,
- empowerment

Studies show that participation can strengthen academic achievement in the classroom and increase problem-solving capacity in the community. Indeed, some young people perceive that community service teaches them more than they learn in the classroom, including skills to challenge the conditions that perpetuate poverty, analyse the causes of racism and critically reflect on important issues.

Cutler and Frost (2001) sum these benefits up as follows: All this kind of involvement is, in effect, informal social education of a most powerful kind, and contributes to the acquisition of experience and skills invaluable in the community at large:

'I think we've learned a lot of new things and met a lot of new people. We've had new opportunities, like being helped to look for jobs. We're also more confident and get on better with adults. (Young person, West Lothian Youth Action project).

### **2.4 It may promote social inclusion.**

Studies, including Barnardo's (1996), have examined the way that disadvantaged young people are excluded from key areas of society, and have indicated that the psychosocial benefits of youth participation may have particular importance for at-risk or socially oppressed youth. Community participation provides them with structure and discipline, a sense of personal identity and social supports unavailable elsewhere.

Checkoway et al (1995) examines a number of studies and argue that

'Youth participation involves individuals in ways which produce positive psychosocial results. Studies show that participation can contribute to open mindedness, personal responsibility, social and civic competence, moral and ego development and a sense of efficacy and self-esteem. In contrast to the pattern of frustration and alienation in which youth withdraw from participation, these initiatives increase their interaction in the community'.

### **2.5 Because we are committed to do so.**

Participation has been a right of young people in the UK since 1991 under Article 12 of the UN convention on the Rights of the Child. Article 12.1 of the Convention requires that states...

Shall assure to the child who is capable of forming his or her own views the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting the child, the views of the child being given due weight in accordance with the age and maturing of the child.

In addition, signatories to the Agenda for Action for the World Congress against the Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children have committed to: promote the participation of children, including child victims, young people, their families, peers and others who are potential helpers of children so that they are able to express their views and to take action to prevent and protect children from commercial sexual exploitation and to assist child victims to be reintegrated into society.

The various UK governments have taken this forward. For example the Policy Action Team 12 set up by the Social Exclusion Unit in the Cabinet office (SEU, 2000) produced the Young People report. It made two recommendations regarding young people's participation:

#### Recommendation 22.

All government departments and agencies whose work has a significant impact on young people should have a policy of consulting and involving them in policy development and service delivery that affects them.

#### Recommendation 23.

Local authorities in keeping with Best Value principles, and the voluntary sector should also have policies for consulting and involving young people.

The Children and Young People's Unit was created in the DfES with a strong commitment to participation (DfEE, 2001). The Connexions service (DFEE 2000) is also committed to engaging young people. The voluntary sector has set up a UK Youth Parliament that had its first meeting in February 2001.

Cutler and Frost (2001) note that as a result, local authorities have been spurred on to involve young people as part of the best value reviews. When local authorities begin to plan their new Children and Young People strategies that will be submitted to the Children and Young people's Unit of the DfEE they will be required to ensure that young people's participation is central to these. The DoH Quality Protects initiative requires that social services departments conduct Management Action Plans (MAPs) that include the involvement of children in the looked after system (DoH, 2000).

### **3. Does it work?**

Cutler and Frost (2001) pose the question - Why participation? And answer; because it works. The Youth Forum Wales has asserted that young people's

solutions are both simpler and cheaper than our own and more effective because they own them.

However, these statements may need to be qualified. Whereas the psychosocial effects on young people have been positively evaluated, there is a disappointing lack of evaluation of the effects of involvement and participation. This may be partly a consequence of the difficulty inherent in the techniques of formative or process evaluation. In the future, Cutler and Frost (2001) argue that all evaluation if it is to be effective and lead to improvement depends on being clear to the answers to two basic questions:

- What is the existing state of things, its strengths and weaknesses? And
- What will things look like when we have achieved what we set out to do?

A number of examples where youth participation has taken place and has been judged to have been of significant value are included in 'Learning to Listen' available from the Children and Young People's Unit. (CYPU, 2001)

#### *4. What are the pitfalls?*

##### **4.1 Selection criteria.**

It is widely recognised by Cutler and Frost (2001) and others (e.g. ECPAT, 1999), that some young people are more likely to be included in any consultation than others – a recurring theme in discussions with young people was a concern that the same young people were asked to represent all young people time and time again. The real worry, is that some are very much more likely to be excluded from participation and to be marginalized in our society. Socially excluded groups of young people are least likely to be involved, for instance from rural and deprived communities, ethnic minorities and young people with disabilities.

##### **4.2. The right to participate is not enforceable.**

The right to participation is not enforceable in terms of standards or legislation. This has led to a great deal of variation in practice and in who is 'invited' to participate. Cutler and Frost (2001) argue that the most important reason for this unacceptable level of variation is that involvement is rarely seen as a right. Instead it is conditional - on whether it is seen as appropriate for a young person or whether there is enough time or energy. Progress in this area will always be too limited and vulnerable while participation is viewed as an optional extra.

##### **4. 3. The difficulties faced by young people.**

Of specific interest to this project were the following pertinent points:

- The crisis situation of young people. These damage the capacity of young people to participate in projects. Young people today struggle

with drug addiction, violence, and psychological problems as a result of environmental stresses and other societal problems. They need help in order to regain the capacity they have lost.

- Lack of self-confidence, stress and fatigue
- The controlling nature of pimps which prevents young people's participation.
- Situational difficulties such as childcare and travel.

#### **4.4. Organisational and funding difficulties.**

A number of these have been identified by various authors and relate to youth participation in any organisation or on any issue.

- Lack of funding. Many young people had expressed the desire to become more involved in conducting research, advocacy work and other activities but lack of financial resources prevent them from doing so.
- Lack of due recognition of the role of the young people and their recommendations
- Lack of trust by adults
- Lack of training and support for young people *and* adults in the organisation(s)
- Coordination with and between community based organisations
- Lack of information needed by the young people
- Problems working as a group
- A shortage of human resources/facilitators
- A lack of clarity in objectives and parameters for decision making which results in tokenism
- Most funding is one off or short term
- Projects are organised on adults' terms rather than young people's agendas
- Initiatives are patchy at the local and national level and across different sectors
- Practice is rarely evaluated
- Initiatives tend to be specialist and marginal rather than brought into the mainstream.

#### **5. The potential for the participation of young people involved in CSE**

The above sections have identified some issues particularly pertinent to young people involved in CSE. These have the potential to be exacerbated by other risks: e.g. Singleton (2001) notes that exposing vulnerable children and young people to political lobbying and media can be more problematic, because distorted reporting can cause distress. Cutler and Frost (2001) cite other risks including:

- imposing responsibilities for which young people have not been prepared;
- exposing them to over intensive peer pressure;

- involving them in tasks for which they do not have the confidence or skills;
- involving them in public presentations or media activities where they have not fully understood the possible implications; and,
- involving them in project activities to the exclusion of other interests in their lives.

However, it can also be argued that this group of young people are probably most in need of the skills which genuine participation can engender. The small group of young people who are not in school for part of the period of compulsory education (e.g. those in pupil referral units) would probably benefit most from these skills and are least likely to be exercising them later. Other young people can be seen in some way 'unworthy' such as young offenders, young people excluded from school or drug users. It is vital that they continue to be treated as citizens and especially that their views are treated seriously as to the services they are using.

Experience of this project and of others has found that it **is precisely these** young people who are keen to participate. Cutler and Frost (2001): "contrary to the despairing or dismissive views of some people, our work has shown us a real hunger by young people to take greater responsibility for their own lives, and frustration when this is thwarted".

Mackenzie (2000) argues that the participation of survivors of commercial sexual exploitation is very important for two reasons. First, this gives survivors a chance to share their experiences when they have been silenced for so long. Second, this celebrates their success in overcoming their situation.

In fact, the mandate and the mechanism are already there for consultation. Within the Quality Protects Initiative Objective 8 is: To actively involve users and carers in planning services and in tailoring packages of care, and to ensure effective mechanisms are in place to handle complaints about services.

8.1 To demonstrate that the views of children and families are actively sought and used in the planning delivery and review of services.

8.2 To demonstrate that the satisfaction of users with services provided is increasing. Every local authority will carry out a local survey of user and carer experience of and satisfaction with, social services.

This does not mean that young people involved in CSE and the organisations working with them will find it particularly easy to set up participation mechanisms. Young people at risk may need special attention when it comes to helping them develop their capacity to participate. There are physical, developmental, social and profound psychological and emotional problems as consequences for child victims of commercial sexual exploitation. These included lack of self-esteem, lack of confidence, self-hate, feeling like an outcast, feeling unworthy, unloved and unlovable, and feeling degraded and violated. This self-concept and feelings may severely limit the child victim's capacity to participate. They may need to undergo a rehabilitation process before they can participate meaningfully in any kind of activity. Depending on

the extent of the damage the experience of CSE has had on the child, it may be possible to encourage participation as a parallel process to rehabilitation. In this way, the child's rehabilitation becomes a part of the process of developing their capacity to participate.

## **6. The way forward?**

What is implied from the discussions above is that in order to achieve genuine participation, a number of areas will need attention. Cutler and Frost (2001) summarise the common ingredients which, put together, guarantee the success of an initiative:

- A culture shift in an organisation
- Involving the marginalized
- Clarity of objectives
- Leadership from management and policy makers
- Acknowledging the contribution of young people and according them respect
- Issues of transport, time and expense
- The permanence and sustainability of work
- Meeting young people's needs and agendas
- Feedback
- Training
- Tested methods of participation
- Drawing up good practice guidelines and
- Evaluation and review.

In more detail these include the need for:

### *Organisational change*

New ways of working which incorporate young people need to be developed. It is important that they have as key features, accountability, feedback and transparency of working. Cutler and Frost (2001) identify a number of good practices which can make participation more likely to be successful. These include clear objectives and parameters for decisions, training for adults and young people, acknowledging and celebrating young people's contribution, targeting more marginalized young people and giving timely feedback.

Methods for two-way dialogue and feedback could include:

- Websites for children and young people
- E-mail/ mailing lists
- Newsletters

Mackenzie (2000) argues that the most important things to keep in mind are that 1) if we are serious about participation we have to be prepared to try a few different approaches to meet the needs of a range of different children and young people and ii) we need to consider how we might integrate a number of structures to best reflect our needs and to draw out as much in the way of contribution and involvement as possible, and iii) making a start

somewhere is more preferable to waiting until we are convinced we have found the perfect structures.

### *Training and communication*

Young people may need training – as may service providers. This could include communication and assertiveness, decision making skills, project management, committee skills and aspects of practical citizenship. Training specific to the project can include drama, volunteering, first aid, peer education, research, cultural awareness, peace building, media, monitoring and evaluation, and financial and general management. In some projects leadership skills were an important component.

A range of roles available to young people needs to be developed – these can include researchers, peer educators and governors, to chair people, grant givers or campaigners. NIACE ([www.niace.org.uk](http://www.niace.org.uk)) has listed the top ten generic skills and are providing outcomes, examples, tools, techniques and processes for developing them.

- Finding and using information;
- Understanding contexts and situations
- Thinking: problem solving, prioritising, forming an opinion and argument;
- Planning and organising meetings and events
- Campaigning and lobbying
- Working in teams and networks
- Communication; listening, getting your message across, dealing with the media, making a presentation
- Negotiating, representing and advocating on behalf of others
- Ensuring equal opportunities and access; making people feel accepted and valued;
- And raising funds and managing money.

Training for those adults in an organisation who meet young people is equally desirable, if at present, much less common. Checkoway et al (1995) note that adults play key roles in encouraging young people to participate, but there is a shortage of adults who are able to work effectively with youth. Lessons could focus on the skills needed to communicate effectively with young people, to encourage their participation

### *Resourcing and funding*

In order to seriously involve children and young people in participation it must be acknowledged that this is time consuming – it needs to be well planned and requires dedicated staff. Resources must be given to these activities.

In addition, many organisations recognise that incentives may be desirable to encourage young people to give up their time to participate in decision-making. A small minority of projects pay young people for their contribution, generally when they act as peer educators, part-time staff and casual researchers. Help with transport costs is often essential – particularly if young

people are in rural areas. Among other incentives are opportunities for learning new skills and gaining new experiences that can be added to CVs. In some cases qualifications can be gained, and visits, residentials, vouchers, awards and prizes are offered.

## **Conclusion and Recommendations**

It is clear from the interviews that despite having rarely been asked their opinions on their experience's, young people wanted to voice their views. They wanted to help bring about change, both in terms of better service delivery and in a broader 'awareness raising' capacity. Interviews revealed that a combination of facts led young people into being abused through prostitution. Once involved, exiting has proved difficult for a number of reasons, including having a drug habit, a pimp/coercer, or multiple problems that seem too difficult to deal with.

Eklblom (2000) refers to these as combinatorial elements of trajectories. His work on the Conjunction of Criminal Opportunity (CCO) and the stages described by CLAMED (see [www.crimereduction.gov.uk/cco.htm](http://www.crimereduction.gov.uk/cco.htm)) offers a framework for seeing how agencies can most effectively intervene at appropriate points both to prevent the abuse of young people through prostitution and to assist them in their decision to exit this 'lifestyle'.

### **Prevention and education.**

Young people abused through prostitution and older women want to be involved in *prevention activities* and to tell vulnerable young people about the risks and the realities. Peer education has been judged to be an effective medium for delivering this message (Taylor-Browne, forthcoming) Some of this work can be delivered through PHSE classes, other target groups are young people in the looked after system, in youth clubs, through voluntary sector projects and through mentoring schemes.

Barnardo's (2000) have produced a resource pack for girls aged 11-18 about relationships and sex; this publication tackles difficult issues such as abusive relationships, sexual exploitation and abuse through prostitution.

### **Early intervention**

There is a strong link between *running away* and sexual exploitation, whether as a means of survival (food or accommodation) or through coercion by adults or peers. The findings of this report illustrated that vulnerable young people were identifying themselves through running away behaviour. It is essential therefore for schools, social services, the police and the voluntary sector to work together by targeting services and identifying vulnerable children through running away behaviour.

There should be a network of services for children who run away, which include:

- a systematic and recorded interview to assess the reasons for running;
- mediation services;
- family group work;
- respite care; and a
- strategic response to those running from the local authority looked after system.

Early intervention through *schools* is key to identifying and tackling this problem. There must be a rigorous investigation into the underlying causes of truancy and exclusion, followed by multi-agency work to re-integrate young people into the education system.

*Multi-agency* working is really important in order to prevent children falling through the net. Police and Social services need to develop joint strategies alongside education, health and the voluntary sector to provide a dedicated response and service to children at risk.

In order for there to be early identification and intervention there should be *training and awareness raising* amongst relevant agencies. This can be delivered by a combination of voluntary sector projects working in this area, young people themselves or those who are older and have exited. Part of this should address the need to listen to children's views – even when they are still very young – still have a voice that needs to be heard. Many of those interviewed for this project felt that they were not listened to or taken seriously.

## **Drug services**

This report has identified the prevalence of serious drug addiction in this group of young people. Ideas suggested by the respondents and the steering group include:

- a specialised fast track drug service;
- residential drug rehabilitation services for young people - currently only one place in the country that takes those aged under 16;
- provision needs to be made for child care to enable this group to be able to tackle their drug addictions;
- there is a need for flexible services. Young people abused through prostitution have a chaotic lifestyle, and may not be able to attend clinics and appointments as currently set up;
- specialist accommodation for those involved or at risk of CSEC; which takes into account drug addiction problems;
- resources desperately need to be applied to this area.

## **Support for exiting and recovery**

The respondents in this study revealed to us the extent of the problems they had to overcome to exit prostitution and stay out of it. These include:

- financial difficulties;
- drug addiction;
- single parenthood;
- lack of qualifications and training;
- housing problems;
- existing social networks;
- criminal convictions that prevented them taking on relatively lowskilled work such as childcare;
- lack of family support; and,
- abusive partners/pimps/boyfriends.

On top of these, young people are also likely to be suffering from extreme low self-esteem, depression and other mental health problems, rooted in difficult childhoods and the abuse suffered through prostitution.

This report has shown the key role that voluntary sector projects are able to play in offering non-judgmental friendship and support that can address some of these difficulties. In addition, they offer advocacy and access to a number of statutory and private sector agencies that can help address the other problems suffered by the young people. Key opportunities offered by these projects have included fun activities such as social outings, Duke of Edinburgh schemes, voluntary work, education and training and other areas aimed at the reintegration of the young person from a marginal to more mainstream way of life.

Yet the report also revealed that many of the projects which take this vital holistic view of the problems faced by these young people projects are those that are very short of funds and are at risk of closing down. In fact, one, the Barnardo's Phase project in Wolverhampton closed down during the research. Many have very limited resources and accommodation and are only able to open at very specific times. It is imperative that the work of these services, which perform a key role in engaging young people and brokering their access to services while offering emotional support, is recognised. Many of the young people felt unable to exit prostitution until they found someone to turn to.

### **Participative development and delivery of services**

The final key area for helping young people abused through prostitution is to set up participatory processes that facilitate an implementation and monitoring forum for service delivery and can give a voice to young people on the issue. The experience of this research is that young people are able and willing to participate in the design and delivery of services. Agencies must, however, be aware of the need to implement consultation and participation activities with appropriate sensitivity and awareness. There is a risk that young people could feel 'labelled'. The researchers for this project recommended setting up a 'youth campaign' that facilitates participation for young people; representing their views in decisions on policy and practice as well as enabling young people to campaign and raise awareness about the commercial sexual

exploitation of children. If set up correctly, as the literature indicates participation could both empower and enhance the skills of young people and offer a genuine way forward out of a life where they have been unheard, disempowered and marginalized.



## ***Appendices***

### **Appendix I. Methods**

The project began in May 2001 with the formation of a steering group. This was formed from the organisations that had originally supported the project proposal, Barnardo's, NSPCC, NCH and The Children's Society. In addition, representatives of the Home Office Sentencing and Offenders Unit and the Research, Development and Statistics Directorate also sat on the group. The project partners had committed to providing some access to their youth networks to recruit researchers and access to relevant prevention and recovery projects to identify interviewees.

A research director was appointed to produce plans, manage the youth researchers, advise on the methodology, keep a strategic overview of the work, agree the scope, milestones and deliverables of the project, and advise on, and contribute to, the final report plus dissemination.

It was initially intended that only two youth researchers would be appointed. However, early on in discussions with the steering group, it was felt that it would be a good idea to interview an older sample of women, some of who would have exited and who might have had the opportunity to look back and reflect upon their experiences as a young person involved in CSE.

Therefore it was decided that two youth researchers (i.e. under 25 years old) would interview a sample of 15 each, the same age or younger. Two older researchers (i.e. older than 25) would interview a sample of 10 each. The appointed researchers underwent training in research methods, carried out semi-structured interviews using a tape-recorder, and participated in analysing the data using WinMax, a qualitative analysis package. The youth researchers also took part in the Youth Conference and the main 2nd World Congress, and helped to write the final report collaboratively with the research director and the other two researchers.

Because of the sensitive, and sometimes, upsetting nature of the research, the project provided each researcher with a supervisor, chosen by the researcher. This was in order for the researchers to receive confidential emotional support and guidance.

### ***Recruitment***

The first hurdle was to recruit suitable young people as researchers. We considered the possibility of using young people who had been involved in CSE, and we advertised the posts throughout the partner projects. This netted us one applicant. We then advertised through a number of universities as well for graduate students. In the end most of our applicants were people working for the projects in either a paid, or voluntary capacity or who had worked for them in the past. In the end we appointed two youth researchers, both with a first degree and some experience of qualitative interviewing. One worked as an evaluation officer for Leeds Health Authority and the other as an assessment officer for Westminster social services. One of our adult

researchers is a qualified social worker and had run a project for young people involved in CSE and the fourth is a campaigner and support worker for adults involved in prostitution. She had been involved in CSE from the age of 13 until exiting in her early 20's. The four researchers covered Manchester, Yorkshire, the northeast of England, the Midlands and London.

We selected our interviewees on the basis of application form, experience and interview. In the interview we put hypothetical situations to them and asked interviewees how they would react. The most common we used involved a young person telling you that she was frightened to go home, as her boyfriend was aware that she kept some of her earnings. She was worried he would be violent, as he had been in the past. What we were looking for was an awareness of the legal and moral positions as well as a focus on the young person's safety. This had to be combined with a willingness to consult with the young person and to discuss the best way forward and agree it with them.

Our successful candidates coped well with this difficult scenario. However, we also asked all of our applicants what they understood by youth participation. On this point they all, without exception, struggled with the concept and how this might be put into practice.

### ***Management and participation***

The steering group made the decision that the whole research would be about participation, and we would jointly use this as an opportunity to learn. This caused us to look at our decisions, practices and habits almost incessantly. The implications of this were that all of our researchers were invited to attend the steering group meetings – and were paid for their time to do so. All agendas, minutes and reports were circulated to the researchers for comment and consultation.

The steering group were all fairly senior managers in their own organisations, and we all learnt that working in a participative way was very different from traditional management. For example, all documents, policy statements and decisions were ratified (and frequently amended) by the research team.

### ***Training, communication and team-building***

One of the techniques used to facilitate communication and team working was not just through e-mail, e-groups and telephone calls, but intensive weekend meetings. We had two long weekends away as a group, just working, carrying out training and going through a very packed agenda. In this way the questionnaire, the methodology and the ethical guidelines by which the team were going to operate were jointly developed as were the presentations to be given.

The training consisted of questionnaire development, discussion on the semi-structured questionnaire method, the issues around use of a tape recorder and a long session on interviewing in sensitive areas. Questions were addressed such as; what would happen if the interviewees disclosed abuse?

What would happen if they denied being involved? What would happen if either (or both) the interviewer or the interviewee got upset?

Mock interviews were carried out – with the questionnaire and with real volunteer subjects on sensitive areas. The subjects fed back their experiences to the researchers.

The research team carried out 47 interviews with young people and adults aged between 14 and 32. These interviews were tape recorded, transcribed by an agency and then put into Winmax, a qualitative analysis package. The researchers were trained on how to use the package, and at another long weekend began carrying out the analysis into themes on the young people's backgrounds, their involvement in CSE, their experiences of services and on exiting.

There was more to the weekends than work, however. The intention was to try to create a team at these weekends that would support each other. It was felt important that as relatively inexperienced researchers were being employed to do a difficult job with very little other than telephone support, it was important that they were a resource to each other. This, judging by the telephone bills, worked well.

## **Appendix 2. Reflexive account**

This is an account written by Lyndsey Broadhead and Anna Downie (the youth researchers). It was presented at the 2<sup>nd</sup> World Congress against Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children. December 2001. Yokohama.

L=Lyndsey Broadhead

A=Anna Downie

### **L What we did**

We are two young people who were employed by ECPAT UK to explore the views and experiences of young people abused through prostitution in Britain, in a piece of research funded by the Home Office. In Britain there is a growing understanding that participation engenders a feeling of empowerment that must be harnessed. More practically, where participation exists, service users receive a more tailored and appropriate response, leading to value for money. Therefore, the research also aimed to find out if young people were interested in becoming involved in a campaign to give them a voice.

**A** In Britain much of the research done around sexual exploitation has not involved the voice of young people involved in CSE. Instead it has relied on interviewing professionals who work with them, or older people who have been involved. We feel that this is a further marginalisation of young people who are already on the edge of society. People were talking *about them* as a problem, perhaps because they didn't feel it worthwhile to ask the young people themselves, or perhaps because they did not know how to go about

it. So this project was a challenge, but an important one

- L Between us we carried out 28 interviews with young people aged between 14 and 25 from around the country. 2 adult interviewers were also employed to gain the views of adults who had been abused through prostitution as young people.

The research aimed to be as participative as possible and involved young people in carrying out the research. Anna and I were the two researchers employed to do this, although neither of us has been involved in prostitution.

- A I'm 23 and am a researcher working at a Health Authority in the North of England. I've done some work doing research with vulnerable young people in Britain - but I hadn't had any direct experience of working with young people involved in CSE. I was actually involved in a previous project researching CSEC in London, but in that project we had not carried out any research with young people who were involved. I wanted to get involved in this project because I feel very strongly that we should ask young people their views. Often people are too nervous to do the research because there seem to be so many difficult issues to consider, but I feel it is really important to at least try.
- L I am 24 and work for a London social work team concerned with child protection. I also work for a charitable organisation called Safespace, which supports young people abused through prostitution. We have a drop-in centre and do street outreach work. I was particularly interested in this research as it would be tricky to do, because many of the young people's lives are chaotic. Although it might be a struggle to get their information from them, they still have the most vital things to say – their experiences.

### **A How we did it**

The researchers all came together for a training weekend at the beginning of the project, which was great for getting to know each other and discussing the potential issues.

As a group we discussed the potential pitfalls and the ways that we would overcome them. We also devised the interview schedule in line with this. As young people we had equal weight with the adult researchers and the research director. A steering group, made up of senior research staff from the UK major children's charities, was also able to provide advice.

It was decided that the young people would only be accessed through projects working with them. This way we had in-built support and counseling for the young people before and after the interviews through the project workers. We individually approached projects, generally visiting them first to talk through all the issues. They would then approach the young people to set up the interviews.

I was very lucky and the majority of projects I approached were very positive and helpful. It may have helped that I often visited the projects with the 'adult' researcher - she knew many of the people already and so was able to introduce me.

- L My experience was very different. The problem of CSEC in London is a sizeable one, yet most of the projects that I approached were not willing to give me access. A number of reasons were cited - that the project was not working with anyone at the moment; that the young people the project were working with were very vulnerable and not stable enough to answer questions; or that the young people had taken so long to engage, that the project were not willing for the research to jeopardize the relationships which they had built. All these reasons were fully justified. But to restrict young people's choices of whether or not to share their stories with us, was in effect restricting young people's options for participating.

However, many projects were very keen in supporting us, and it was encouraging to hear that project leaders accepted that there was a lack of knowledge on participation with young people involved in CSE. These projects were instrumental in gaining access to the histories of the young people, and often went to a lot of effort to enable these interviews to take place.

The interviews were conducted at the project offices, although the quality of the venues varied considerably: sometimes we interviewed in rooms next to band practice, or in the back of a car. However, regardless of distractions, we were surprised with how open and honest the young people were when sharing often traumatic experiences.

It was always difficult to predict if the young people would turn up. They have very chaotic lives and we had to be flexible and hang around the projects.

- A Each young person was paid £20 for the interview, although this caused much discussion. There were many concerns - what if the young person went away and spent the money on drugs? How are we different from a 'punter', paying these girls for their time?

However, if we are to be truly participative, how the money is spent should be irrelevant. Nobody questioned us how we spent the money we earned from the project, so why should we question them? Whilst the money was definitely a motivator for many of the young people to turn up, many would have talked to us without this incentive. No one just took the money and said nothing. We also gave thank-you cards and a friendship bracelet. The young people were often very appreciative of this and it gave a more personal touch than just handing over money. Also, where appropriate, we were in a position to point them in the direction of further support, if they gave their consent.

## L Our reactions

It's been a really interesting project and we have got a lot out of doing it. The young people have, on the whole, been extremely open and honest - taking the time to tell us about very difficult and traumatic experiences. We have learnt a lot about the young people's lifestyles when they are involved in CSE, and how isolated they can be. We have been inspired by their resilience and bravery.

It's difficult to tell how well it worked to have young people interviewing young people, as we weren't able to ask them how they felt. However our own observations gave us quite mixed feelings about the process.

It felt quite strange being considered a young person. In our daily lives we do not feel that we are considered young, by our colleagues in our jobs, or by society necessarily.

- A** Although we both had some level of experience in this field, part of the idea behind recruiting us was that the young people would respond better to us as young people than they would to someone older. I'm not sure that this was the case. I didn't feel I really had anything more in common with a 14-year-old than someone older. Often it felt like it would have made more of a difference if I had shared a similar background to the young person.

It did feel like I connected better with the young people who were closer to my age - those that were in their 20's - but even this was sometimes difficult. When asked about their aspirations, two interviewees in separate interviews replied that they just wanted to be like me. That was quite hard for us - where we were obviously fairly similar ages it seemed to highlight the difference between us. Just the fact that I had a job and they didn't seemed to be something they often picked up on. One young woman said to me:

*I was a proper healthy person, you know? Proper job and everything. You wouldn't think it like, to look at me but... I was like you before.*

- L** Many of the young people who I interviewed were homeless and living on the street. On one occasion I was asked where I lived, and whether it was my own place. This was difficult again to feel that although we were the same age, we were so different, and this was quite uncomfortable.

It felt to us on these occasions, that if someone older interviewed the young person, the older person is almost expected to have a stable life, job, partner and home, and it would not have been such an issue.

Not that they were ever hostile, and I don't know whether us being young people was a negative experience for the young people being interviewed, but I'm not sure that it always felt like a positive one to us. Our view is that if you are trying to be truly participative, age alone is less important than experiences, skills and personal qualities. We may have had these characteristics, but they were not there simply because we were young.

What I feel I have most got out of it is that I really liked every young person I spoke to. They all had good qualities and strong opinions. Their dreams and ambitions were so reasonable - they didn't want the world, but just to settle down and have a job, a house or a family. I just really hope they get it and that are supported by our government to achieve their dreams.

## **A How young people reacted to being interviewed by young people**

I hope they found it interesting, and not too stressful. Some were very happy to be asked. One girl, after the interview, decided to seek more support and is now seeing a counselor twice a week. One girl also disclosed [for the first time] to being involved in CSE when approached by the project to do the interview. We hope this will allow the project to offer her more useful support in future. However, as we have already said, it would be difficult to say whether this was because we were young people interviewing, or whether it was simply being asked their views that was important.

It was difficult to know how much some young people had been told about the project before we arrived to interview them, which questions the amount of informed choice they had in taking part. Some seemed to be there at the wrong time, as they were feeling very withdrawn from drugs, or were very sleepy, as the interview had been arranged for the morning.

We had expected the young people to be less open with us, and perhaps deny their involvement more than they did. This meant the interview schedule we had prepared was not always as relevant as it could have been. However, we tried to be as flexible as possible responding to the information that the young person told us.

## **L Campaign- how young people felt**

Generally the young people we interviewed had never really been asked their opinions before. Decisions had been made affecting their lives which they had had very little say in. When asked about messages they had for the government, frequently the young people said that they should just listen to them more.

Almost all were interested in getting involved in some kind of campaign. However participation is quite a difficult concept and it was sometimes difficult to put across what the possibilities were, without putting words into their mouths. Different ways of participating appealed to different young people. Whilst a few were interested in being part of some type of panel, others felt that writing, art or drama appealed to them more. This sometimes reflected their lack of confidence at working in groups. Several young people said that they would most like to go and talk to children in schools about their experiences.

## **A The common thread was that they all had a great deal to say about their**

experiences and the services they had received, and they were concerned others would not follow the same path that they had. One young woman had already been asked by the project she is supported by to act as an interviewer for a new member of staff. Although she was very nervous, she was given training and support and she was clearly very proud that she had taken part and had got a lot out of it.

It would be very important that the young people received enough support to take part in some sort of campaign. Many had not finished school and were not very confident at being in groups. Every young person is different and finding a way for them to take part will have to take into account their skills, likes and needs.

- L Another issue is that it might be quite difficult for some young people to find the time to get involved. It was quite difficult for Lyndsey and I to fit this research work in with our main jobs, and many of the young people we interviewed had young children.

When asked about getting involved in a campaign two young people commented that it would depend. They were involved in so many other things and had a young child to look after. Participation should take into account the time involved and whether this is possible or convenient for people and allows them to get involved. Many of the young women complained that they had been asked to be interviewed in the morning- they work all night and mornings are not the best time to be talking to them. Some young people have lives that are very chaotic, with homelessness and drug use playing a big part.

- A However, excuses have always been found to avoid consulting with young people. A campaign involving young people would need to be flexible; working at convenient times for them, providing child care, training and support. But as long as the young people have a say in how the participation process is set up, it should be a massive success; they were keen to be involved and have so much to say. We hope that we are not at the next conference on CSEC. We hope that one of the young people we have interviewed will be there – voicing their own views.

### **Appendix 3. Ethical Guidelines**

#### *1. The purpose of the research*

The purpose of the research is to learn more about young people's views and experiences of being involved in CSEC and agencies and policies with which they may have come into contact.

The research is designed to service the interests of the funders (the Home Office), the proposer's (ECPAT UK) and the young people themselves in exploring the potential for the participation of young people involved in CSEC in determining the provision of services and the content of policies relating to them.

The research findings are designed to benefit young people involved in CSEC, as well as policy makers and service providers. It is hoped to provide insights into policies and service provision and will inform these to more effectively meet the needs of young people involved in CSEC.

The question(s) the research is intended to answer concern:

- Information about perpetrators' methods of recruitment and retention
- Family background
- Views on statutory agencies and the services provided
- Views on youth participation
- Messages to policy makers

The questions are worth investigating because we know very little about a) prevention and b) exiting. There is a foreshadowed problem that the services currently being provided are not as effective as they could be in effective early intervention, or helping with exiting strategies.

Earlier research has not answered these questions.

The chosen methods – are one-to-one semi-structured interviewing, repertory grid analysis is currently being explored and with the issue of youth participation – focus groups may be used. Young people may be unwilling to speak frankly on their experiences in front of others; therefore a semi-structured interview is considered the most effective method. Repertory Grid Analysis is a participative method driven by the respondents according to their personal constructs, and very suitable for this research sample.

## *2. Researching with children – costs and hoped-for-benefits*

Young people will be interviewed using a semi-structured interview schedule and may complete some repertory grid work. If feasible to be organised (depending on numbers and location of the sample) they will be invited to attend a focus group and results fed back to them. A discussion will be led on the future possibilities for participation.

The semi-structured interviews will be recorded. The researchers will take notes from the focus groups.

### **Risks or costs**

This is a difficult and sensitive subject matter. We will be asking young people to give up time to be part of what could be an embarrassing interview for them. However, young people will have the choice on whether to participate or not and will be rewarded with £20 an interview. The appropriateness of whether to give cash or a voucher will be agreed with each project prior to the interviews being conducted. The interviewers will be trained in interviewing in sensitive areas, and will be selected for experience they have had in this area. Young people will, hopefully, get a sense of participation and may benefit both from the RGA analysis, which elicits the respondent's personal constructs, and from the research interview.

There are no risks and costs if the research is not carried out – although it could be argued that we need to know more about this area to encourage young people to exit prostitution earlier and to prevent young people becoming involved in it. Their participation in the research may lead to better policies and services.

How can the researchers promote the possible benefits of their work and prevent or reduce any risks? This is why we are working with partnership with the project partners – to both obtain access to the projects and to promote the rationale and *raison d'être* of the work. Our other strategy is to use local research managers both to explain the research to the target group and to help deal with any local issues which may arise.

Responding to children who wish to refuse or withdraw or become distressed – No one has to participate in the interview. If they become distressed the interviewer needs to allow them space to be upset, must be understanding. At the outset of the interview they should offer to turn the tape off at any time during the interview should the respondent wish it. Should they become distressed and it seems appropriate do to so they should offer a pause and to turn the tape off. The tape recorder will be placed between the interviewer and the respondent and the respondent will be shown the off button and told that they may turn it off at any time. Should the respondent become distressed they should be comforted, offered a space before continuing or time to go to the bathroom, have a cup of tea, or just sit for a while. If they are too distressed the interview should be terminated. Depending on the circumstances the interviewer may wish to discuss this with the research supervisor immediately or at a later stage.

The welfare and the safety of the interviewee should be paramount at all times. The researcher may need to offer to see the respondent back to their home safely, or spend some time with them until they are sure they are recovered.

At the end of the interview the interviewee should be asked how they feel and if there is any support or help they need at that stage, and local support may be offered at that stage (previously agreed with project and/or research supervisor)

The researcher should not attempt to conduct any form of therapy or counselling as they are not qualified to do so. If the need for this is identified – this should be referred to the research supervisor. However, the researcher is expected to be non-judgmental, supportive, friendly and empathic when conducting the interviews, and it is their responsibility to identify suitable forms of local support to which the young person could be referred or informed about, should the need arise.

The research methods were tested with a pilot group. Each researcher carried out three interviews; the tapes were submitted as soon as they were completed to the research director. There was a debriefing after these three

interviews have been completed. No further interviews were be carried out until this debriefing has occurred.

#### Privacy and confidentiality

Names of young people will be obtained through the projects themselves. They will be aware of the source, as they and others are likely to be accessed through the projects.

They will be notified of the opportunity to participate in the research using methods agreed between the project and the researcher. One suggestion would be to put a notice on a notice board informing young people of the research, giving them contact names and numbers if they wish to participate as well as details of the £20 they would be given for participating. Information about confidentiality will be given at this point.

The young people would agree with the youth researcher an appropriate time and place for the interview to take place. At this point the researcher will inform the young person that the interview will be taped with their permission, and may also involve RGA as another form of data collection. They will be given a number (probably the number of the project) that they would be asked to ring to cancel/alter the date or time of the interview. Reminders would not be sent.

The research should be conducted in a quiet private place. The projects will be asked to facilitate this.

Parents can be present or absent as the young person prefers, alternatively they may bring along a friend or project worker to the interview.

There may be cases when the researchers feel that they must report the young person's confidences, e.g. when they think that the young person or someone else is in danger. In this case they should discuss this with the young person first. The research supervisor may be informed of the identity of the young people interviewed as part of their duty of care for them.

At the outset of the interview the researcher should ask permission to tape the interview and should explain that their names will be changed in all the records, and that they will be anonymised for all data recording, analysis and publication purposes. Only the researcher themselves will keep a record of both their real names and the pseudonyms they assign them. This information should be stored by the researchers in a lockable storage space when not in the field with them. Only the researchers will have access to this information. The Research Director may request copies of this information, which will be stored in a lockable storage space and not stored on computer.

Researchers should also explain that they are bound by ethical guidelines that have been agreed with the project partners concerning confidentiality and child protection guidelines, and that disclosure of this confidential information might take place in circumstances when there is a risk of serious and/or immediate harm.

If young people wish to be named in reports, this wish will be respected. When significant extracts (e.g. more than half a page) from the interviews are quoted in reports, the researchers should, where possible check the content and obtain permission from the young people. If the young people want the quotes changed then this should be respected at this stage.

Police records should be checked before young researchers spend time alone with young people.

Research records, which identify the young person, should be destroyed when the research is completed. i.e. when the final report is submitted and accepted by the Home Office. The research director and ECPAT will retain the research data that is anonymised.

However, those who have indicated a willingness to further engage in participative exercise will be recorded and contact details given to ECPAT with the young person's permission. This research is about youth participation and will be asking young people about their willingness to engage in a dialogue with service providers and policy makers. It is therefore possible, and in fact likely that they will be contacted again for these purposes.

Selection, inclusion and exclusion

The young people concerned have been selected to take part in the research because a) they have some contact with a service provided by the project partners, and b) they have consented to be interviewed.

It is anticipated that they will belong to disadvantaged groups. The researchers must ensure that their welfare and safety is paramount at all times. The research supervisor is responsible for ensuring that there is a route to advice and counselling for both the interviewer *and* the interviewee, and that should child protection or other legal issues arise that there is mechanism for resolving these. If these cannot be resolved at local level the Research Director (Julie Taylor-Browne) and the Project Manager (Helen Veitch) should be consulted in the first instance, who may then decide that this is a matter of principle to be decided by the steering group consisting of project partners. However, the guiding principle should always be to protect the welfare and safety of the young person being interviewed.

Young people will not be excluded because they have speech or learning difficulties

The research does not include only young people. A sample of adults will be interviewed and asked to reflect on their experiences as young people; it is envisaged that this sample will be no more than fifteen in size. The young people (up to 18 years old) will form a sample size of up to 30.

The sample selected due to the time and cost constraints are not intended to be representative of all the young people abused through CSE in England and

Wales. However, it is believed it will inform the project about the feasibility of youth participation by accessing young people through projects run by the project partners.

The research design and planned numbers of children does allow for refusals and withdrawals. The time planned for the research study is three months, at a number of sites in England and Wales. By allowing a relatively long period of time, and by providing funds for researchers to travel to other sites it is anticipated that the numbers will be met.

### *Funding*

The research funds have been raised by ECPAT and granted by the Home Office. The project partners are all members of national children's charities.

Funding allows time for the researchers to liaise adequately with the young people, and to collect, collate and analyse the data efficiently, effectively and accurately.

The young people will be given £20 for the interview and the research supervisors will be paid for their time as well. This is now common practice in this type of research as part of the 'research bargain'.

### *Information for children, parents and other carers*

The young people and the project will be given details about the purpose and nature of the research, the methods and the time and the possible benefits, harms and outcomes. This will be explained in a) a briefing to the projects themselves, b) in the invitation to be interviewed and c) before the interview commences with the young person.

The young person should have explained to them what they are consenting to (i.e. to be interviewed on tape, to carry out RGA and for the anonymised analysis to be published), and that they have a right to withdraw consent at any time.

They should be given information about the research to take away. This should include information about the purpose of the research; contact details of the research team and of the research in case they wish to comment, question or complain.

The researcher should explain the research, and encourage the young people to ask questions. The research is participative - questions, discussions and feedback to the interviewees are part of the process.

### *Consent*

Young people should be encouraged to discuss the project with project workers, other young people and the research supervisor before deciding to consent.

They should be informed that if they don't want to participate in the research or withdraw consent this would not be held against them in any way. The fact

that it is up to the individual concerned to volunteer for the research should mean that they do not feel coerced into participating.

Some young people may be too shy or upset to express their feelings freely. In some cases the tape recorder may cause this shyness. Switching this off may help. In this case the interviewer will have to make notes, particularly when the interview is over. This should not be conveyed to the young person as a problem. However, if the face-to-face interview has not generated adequate material, an additional interview with another young person may need to be conducted. RGA if used, may be better at eliciting information, and there is no reason why the young person should not be included in a focus group to feedback information and to lead a discussion on participation.

Consent will be given orally. The interviews will be taped and transcribed thus recording what the young people have stated. The researchers will be trained in interviewing in sensitive areas and in not using leading questions, or imposing their own views and experiences.

#### *Dissemination*

The research design has allowed time to report and publicise the research. Much of this will be carried out by ECPAT, once the final report has been submitted to the Home Office. There will also be a seminar held for the partners, young people who wish to participate, the youth researchers and for policy makers. The youth researchers will also be giving a presentation at the World Congress in December.

Children and adults and the projects will receive copies of the findings. It is also hoped that the youth researchers will have the opportunity (funds and time permitting) to feed back to the young people, informally, the findings of the research, prior to publication.

The research will be reported to the Home Office for consideration for publication as a Home Office Research and Statistics Directorate report. This will be made available free on publication. ECPAT UK will be producing its own report and findings, funded by the organisations represented on the steering group. This will be the main publication output.

There may be press coverage of both of these documents. The press offices of the Home Office and ECPAT UK will manage this.

The seminar discussed above will permit researchers to meet practitioners and policy makers to talk to them about practical ways of using the research findings.

#### *Impact on young people*

The conclusions of the research aim to affect wider groups of young people at risk of, and currently engaged in, CSE, by identifying better methods of prevention, intervention and consultation.

Models of childhood assumed in the research.

The research aims to investigate potential models of childhood to assess the potential for participation and consultation. It is assuming that for young people to contribute to service delivery and policy development they may have to have some time to reflect on their experiences and the choices they made or were forced into.

This lack of a model and the foreshadowed problem has informed the choice of the three methods which will be explored in the research. 1) Face to face semi-structured interviewing, 2) RGA and 3) Group discussion and feedback.

The research will be reflexive. All researchers will be asked to write a reflexive account of the research process, and they will be encouraged to critically discuss their own prejudices.

The data analysis will be led by the research director and will use WinMax, a qualitative analysis tool. This will be used to analyse the transcripts of the interviews. This means that the analysis will be data driven, and conclusions will be drawn from this material. The interviewees only can complete RGA. The interviewer cannot affect the outputs from RGA. The research director will carry out the synthesis of this data.

The research team will endeavour to use positive images in the reports and will attempt to avoid stigmatising, discriminatory terms. The reports will be approved by the steering group prior to any presentations or publications.

The aim of the research is to empower young people and to report findings on young people's own terms, it is currently aware that young people can only speak in public through channels designed by adults. This research aims to explore the potential for altering this situation.

The research is wholly aware of the need to balance impartial research with respect for children's dignity and worth. This is not the traditional 'objective' research. It aims to find new ways to enable young people to be able to speak and to be heard.

#### **Appendix 4. Questionnaire – young people**

*Introduction:* I'm carrying out this research on behalf of ECPAT, an organisation working with 6 of the major children's charities to end child prostitution, pornography and trafficking. ECPAT has been funded by the Home Office to interview young people at risk of prostitution about their experiences. We want to find out what you think, and give a voice to your views.

We are working on the basis that everything you tell us will be confidential and your name will be anonymised, although if you tell us anything that might make us think that you or someone else is at risk of serious or immediate harm, we might have to break that confidentiality. We will discuss this with you first, however.

In terms of what will happen to the interview – the tapes will only be heard by myself, the research director and the person transcribing the tape. Your name will be anonymised for publication in any reports.

Is there anything you want to ask me before we start the interview – or can I get you anything to make you feel more comfortable? I'd like, if it is possible to tape record the interview, but if at any time you don't want me to tape anything it is fine to turn the tape off. Also if you want to have a break, or a cup of tea or anything during the interview please let me know and we'll stop for a while.

Is interviewee male or female?

Can you tell me your name – just your first name is fine.

How old are you?

How would you describe yourself?

White

Black African

Black Caribbean

Black Other

Indian

Pakistani

Bangladeshi

Chinese

Other Asian

Other ethnic group – please fill in:

Do your family come from – name town/area. If not – how long have you lived here?

Where do you live? Who lives with you? (If not home – how long have you been living there?)

Would you say that you had a good relationship with your family? Who do you get on best with? Who do you get on worst with? (Why is that? – can you tell me why?)

(If not family – foster parents – residential care workers)

Have you ever run away? How many times have you run away? Why? What happened when you did? What do you wish had happened?

Can I ask you about other relationships you currently have –

Are you in a relationship now? Who with? How long have you been seeing him?

How old is he? What is his ethnic background? (refer to earlier list) What is he like? What does he do for a living?

Is he ever violent to you? How often?

Do you take drugs? Does your boyfriend? What do you (both) take?

How did you meet him?

Have you ever been in love?

How old were you when you first had sex? Was this with your current boyfriend? If not, how old was the person you slept with then. How did you feel?

Since then, have you ever exchanged sex for drugs, somewhere to stay or anything else?

Would you say that you were involved in prostitution?

Could you tell me about how you started – how old were you? Why did you start? Has anyone else in your family been involved in prostitution?

Have you ever done any clipping?

Where do you meet punters? Where do you have sex with them? How do you feel about them?

Do you have any other sources of income?

How much do you make in a week?

How do you spend your money? Where do you like to go for fun?

Who is your best friend – what do they do? Do you have other friends who are involved in prostitution? Do you have friends who aren't?

Do you go to school? How often? When did you last attend? Where you happy there – why not? What qualifications have you got?

Could you describe a typical day for me – for example what did you do yesterday?

Have you ever thought about leaving prostitution and doing something else?

What would you do if you did?

What would help you leave it?

What is stopping you?

How do you think being involved in prostitution has affected your life – what difference has it made?

What do you like about this project?

What don't you like – or find difficult?

What do you like about this project and what do you find difficult – what doesn't it provide that you need. What are the benefits that you gain from the project? Are there any improvements you would like to see?

Have you been involved with any of the following services? What were your experiences like – good or bad?

housing

health workers

social services

drugs services,

the police

the courts.

Do you use any other services or projects – why?

Have you ever been asked before what you think about the services you have received? If so what did you say and did it make any difference?

Do you have any messages for the government on improvements they could make or services that could help young people involved in prostitution?

As I mentioned earlier, ECPAT wants to set up an organisation that lets young people voice their views. Do you think it is important that young people are asked about the services they use?

Do you think they would have something to say? What sort of thing do you think they would say – what would you say?

If there were to be an organisation which asked young people their views about their experiences would you like to be involved and how: For example;

- Messages through drama, art, poetry and literature?
- Being on a panel where other organisations could ask you how services could improve?
- Being part of the organisation and helping to improve services?

Would you be interested in talking to other young people who have had similar experiences, perhaps from other parts of the world?

Finally, could I just ask you three last questions...?

What is the best thing that has ever happened to you?

What is the worst thing?

What are your dreams – for example what would you want for yourself when you are 25? What do you think you will have?

Is there anything else I haven't asked about and you think I should know?

Thank you for taking the time to talk to me. It has been really interesting and will be really useful. I'd just like to reassure you that everything you have told me will be anonymised and no-one will be able to identify you. I also want to check that you are feeling ok, and you don't want to have a bit more time before leaving...

Would you be interested in being involved in any follow up to the interview for example a group session where we feedback the findings or being involved in a campaign with ECPAT on helping young people voice their views?

If yes – what would be the best way to contact you? Address, Telephone number – through the project?

## **Appendix 5. Questionnaire – adults**

*Introduction:* I'm carrying out this research on behalf of ECPAT an organisation working with 6 of the major children's charities to end child prostitution, pornography and trafficking. ECPAT has been funded by the Home Office to interview young people at risk of prostitution about their experiences. We are also asking a sample of older people to reflect on their experiences when they were younger. We want to find out what you think, and give a voice to your views because ECPAT wants to set up a campaign for young people.

We are working on the basis that everything you tell us will be confidential and your name will be anonymised, although if you tell us anything that might make us think that you or someone else is at risk of serious or immediate harm, we might have to break that confidentiality. We will discuss this with you first, however.

In terms of what will happen to the interview – the tapes will only be heard by myself, the research director and the person transcribing the tape. Your name will be anonymised for publication in any reports.

Is there anything you want to ask me before we start the interview – or can I get you anything to make you feel more comfortable?

Is interviewee male or female?

Can you tell me your name – just your first name is fine.

How old are you?

How would you describe yourself?

White  
Black African  
Black Caribbean  
Black Other  
Indian  
Pakistani  
Bangladeshi  
Chinese  
Other Asian  
Other ethnic group – please fill in:

Do your family come from – name town/area. If not – how long have you lived here?

When you were younger, would you say that you had a good relationship with your family? Who did you get on best with? Who did you get on worst with? Why?

Did you ever run away when you were younger? How many times did you run away? Why? What happened when you did? What do you wish had happened?

How old were you when you first had sex? How old was the first person you had sex with?

Can you tell me a bit about your involvement in prostitution?

How old were you when you started?

How did you get involved, who or what were the influences on you then?

Did anyone else in your family been involved in prostitution or in the sex industry?

Or friends?

How did they react when you started working?

What difference did this make to you?

Where did you live at that time – how old were you when you left home?

When did you leave school – did you miss a lot of school through being involved in prostitution? Where you happy there? Why not? What qualifications do you have?

Could you describe a typical day for me when you were working?

Did you ever do any clipping?

Where did you meet punters? Where did you have sex with them? How do you feel about them now? How did you feel about them then?

Were you in love with any one at the time you were working as a prostitute?

Would you say that you had a pimp? How did you meet him/her? What was their ethnic background (refer to earlier list)? How long were you in a relationship with him/her. When did you leave him/her? What made you decide to leave him/her?

Were they violent towards you? How often?

Did you take drugs? Did your boyfriend/pimp? What did you take?

What made you decide to leave him?

Did you have another pimp after him/her? How did you meet them?

Who were your friends? Were they also involved in prostitution? Did you have friends who weren't?

Did you have any other sources of income?

How much did you earn a week?

How did you spend the money you earned? Where did you like to go for fun?

What kept you working – what were the pressures on you?

Did you feel trapped?

What made you decide to leave?

Who helped you the most?

Who helped the least?

Had you ever tried to leave before – what prevented you? What would have helped you leave?

Have you had any problems with the following or have you found them helpful in any way?

housing

health workers

social services

drugs services,

Insert name of project you accessed interviewee through

the police

the courts.

Did you use any other services or projects – which ones and why? Where they helpful? How?

Have you ever been asked before what you think about the services you received?

Do you have any messages for the government on how to help people involved in prostitution?

As I mentioned earlier, ECPAT want to set up a campaign for young people on this issue, do you think it is important that young people involved in prostitution are asked about the services they use? Why is that?

Do you think they would have something to say?

How do you think they could be involved?

- Messages through drama, art, poetry and literature?
- Being on a panel where other organisations could ask you how services could improve?
- Being part of the organisation and helping to improve services?

Did you find it difficult to change your life and exit prostitution? Why was that?

How did you do it?

Overall, how do you think being involved in prostitution affected your life?

Do you access any services now? Do you find them helpful?

Is there any support that you would like now that you are not getting and would find helpful?

Are you in a relationship now? Do you have children?

Finally, can I ask you three last questions?

What is the best thing that has ever happened to you?

What is the worst thing?

What are your dreams – for example what would you want for yourself in 10 years time? What do you think you will have?

Is there anything else I haven't asked about and you think I should know?

Thank you for taking the time to talk to me. It has been really interesting and will be really useful. I'd just like to reassure you that everything you have told me will be anonymised and no-one will be able to identify you. I just want to check that you are feeling ok, and you don't want to have a bit more time before leaving...

Would you be interested in being involved in any follow up to the interview for example a group session where we feedback the findings or being involved in a campaign with ECPAT on helping young people voice their views?

If yes – what would be the best way to contact you? Address, Telephone number – through the project?

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