

Life for Sex Workers in Ireland Under the Swedish Model of  
Client Criminalisation

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### **Declaration**

Declaration

‘I declare that this thesis that I have submitted to Dublin Business School for the award of BA (Hons) Psychology / HDip Psychology [delete as appropriate] is the result of my own investigations, except where otherwise stated, where it is clearly acknowledged by references. Furthermore, this work has not been submitted for any other degree.’

Word count: 8996

Signed: ADELIN WHITTNEY BERRY

Date: March 11<sup>th</sup>, 2020



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## Abstract

**Introduction:** In 2017 the Republic of Ireland implemented client criminalisation. This study seeks to explore the ways in which sex workers understand their experiences of working under the Swedish model and other Irish laws pertaining to sex work, as the effects of any of these laws cannot be studied in isolation from each other. **Method:** Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 6 sex workers from diverse backgrounds, ages 24-44, actively working in Ireland since 2017. Interviews were recorded and painstakingly transcribed. Transcriptions were used to conduct an Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis. **Themes that emerged from this study:** Law, mental health and relationships. **Subthemes that emerged from this study:** Policing, accommodation, clients, stigma, sense of self, isolation, living a double life and community. **Conclusion:** Current laws are not fit for purpose. Full decriminalisation would benefit the well-being and mental health of sex workers working in Ireland.

*Keywords:* Sex work, Swedish model, client criminalisation, Ireland, policing, stigma.

## 1. Life for Sex Workers in Ireland Under the Swedish Model of Client Criminalisation

### 1.1. Sex Work in Ireland.

Gathering accurate data for numbers of individuals involved in the various aspects of sex work in Ireland is difficult due to cultural stigma and fear of legal repercussions (Lazarus et al., 2012; Lyon, 2014; Dziuban and Stevenson, 2016; Huschke & Ward, 2017; Sweeney & FitzGerald, 2017; Ellison et al., 2019). Figures touted are based on conjecture rather than robust statistics. No typical profile is available, as workers themselves are as diverse as their experiences and the paths that led them to sex work (Valiulis et al., 2007). In Ireland sex work itself is not illegal but many aspects surrounding sex work are criminalised such as workers working in the same premises together (sexual offences, 1993) and the purchase of sexual services (sexual offences, 2017).

### 1.2. Historical Context.

It is beyond the scope of this study to delve into Ireland's particular history and relationship with sex work (Howell, 2003; Luddy, 2007; Kennedy 2012), though some explanation of recent history is warranted for the purposes of context. In March 2017, the government of the Republic of Ireland amended the Act of 1993 (sexual offences, 1993) to include criminalisation of payment, intention to provide payment, or offers to provide payment for sexual activity by money or other forms of remuneration for activity with another that might be considered sexual in nature to one or both parties (sexual offences, 2017). This model of policing is commonly known as the Swedish or Nordic model, having been introduced in Sweden in 1999 (Danna, 2012) with the intention of eradicating sex work by eliminating demand for it (Krüsi et al, 2014; Huschke & Schubotz, 2016; Huschke & Ward, 2017). Supporters share the belief that sex work conflicts with notions of equality between men and women; that acceptance of sex work leads to an increase in sex work, and that sex work costs society in terms of crime and disease (Gould, 2001). Proponents of the Swedish Model suggest

that by decriminalising the sex worker but criminalising the client, circumstances would be improved for the sex worker (Beegan & Moran, 2017), and demand for commercial sex would be reduced, thereby reducing trafficking for the purposes of sexual exploitation (Huschke & Schubotz, 2016; Huschke, 2017; Huschke & Ward, 2017). Proposals tend to be based on moral and ideological beliefs rather than research or data (Weitzer, 2007; Ward & Wylie, 2014; Ellison, 2015; Huschke & Schubotz, 2016). It is impossible to study the effects of the Swedish model in Ireland in isolation from earlier laws predating it.

### **1.3. Turn Off the Red Light (TORL) and the Path to Client Criminalisation.**

Circa 2006 Turn off the red light (TORL), a campaign comprised of more than 60 non-governmental organisations, was founded with the intention of eradicating sex work in Ireland (TORL, 2017; Huschke & Ward, 2017; McGarry & FitzGerald, 2019). TORL was spearheaded by Ruhama, Immigrant Council of Ireland and the Religious Sisters of Charity, an order responsible for founding and managing both Ruhama and Immigrant Council of Ireland in addition to historic ownership and management of “mother and baby” homes (Luddy, 2007; O’Rourke & Smith, 2016; Fischer, 2016; Flynn, 2016; O’Toole, 2017). In 2009, Immigrant council of Ireland published a report ‘Globalisation, Sex Trafficking and Prostitution: The Experiences of Migrant Women in Ireland’ (Kelleher, 2009). In the foreword, Sister Stanislaus Kennedy states, “there is no clear line between where the elements of trafficking end and “consent” to become involved in the sex industry begins.” Article 3. (a) of the Palermo Protocol (Annex, 2000) is employed to defend this obfuscation of the word “consent” throughout the study. The article states that Trafficking in persons shall mean the

use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation.

The report details that many women engaged in sex work are vulnerable due to extreme poverty, multiple forms of discrimination, disadvantage, abuse and life circumstances and therefore “had no real choice” (Kelleher et al., 2009).

#### **1.4. Carceral Feminist Perceptions of Sex Work.**

Weitzer (2007) details the ways in which anti-sex work activists often portray clients as “folk devils”. This is evident in the language used throughout the TORL report, “Themes of perversions proliferate, particularly those of acting out fantasies by buyers who associate sex with filth and bodily fluids.” In the report, accounts of sex workers “sound like some mysterious nightmare” where “voodoo is used in the recruitment process and in subsequently psychologically enslaving young women and keeping them in the grip of traffickers”. The report concludes that rather than tackling inequalities that leave individuals vulnerable and relying on sex work, as “Prostitution is about male sexual power. Without male demand, prostitution would not exist”, the priority must lie with the demand from men to buy sex.

The Swedish legislation aims to eliminate all forms of prostitution, based on the premise that consent and force are difficult to determine, and that prostitution and trafficking cannot be separated. In this perspective, working in prostitution is viewed as being the result of a lack of choice and, for this reason, cannot always be regarded as being voluntary, since it is the result of deep structural inequalities, poverty and the lack of agency of women (Kelleher et al., 2009).

During the 2012 Oireachtas review of Irish legislation regarding sex work, it was acknowledged by Vanessa Hetherington of the Irish Medical Organisation that sex work exists in Ireland as a “consequence of the range of inequalities that women face in Irish society, in particular socioeconomic inequalities, barriers to active participation and inequality of opportunities and outcomes” (2012). Concerns were expressed for the physical and mental

wellbeing of those engaged in sex work. Denise Charlton of Ruhama claimed that “some of the research and evaluation from the Swedish model indicated women feel safer in the Swedish context than they did prior to the introduction of the legislation” (2012). After a visit to Sweden to meet with relevant parties, Senator Ivana Bacik stated that

We were impressed not only by the enormous benefit it has provided to former sex workers, who had been the sellers of sex, but also to the positive good in society. The main point is that the Swedish approach protects sellers of sex - the sex workers - from the harm and exploitation that many people who work in the front line say is inherent in the act of prostitution (2013).

Ms. Linda Latham (2013), a clinical nurse with extensive experience in the field of women’s health as manager of the HSE's women's health services stated,

It has been suggested that if prostitution were decriminalised for women and the purchaser of sex were criminalised, that would make it harder for women. I believe the opposite. By decriminalising women, we will be relieving them of the pressure they are now under to be covert and they will not face court cases for prostitution-related offences as they do now. They would be encouraged to report violence, robberies and rape without fear of retribution or further incriminating themselves. They would not face fines, imprisonment or deportation, and would be able to access services such as women's health services and obtain full support to exit prostitution.

In a Dáil debate, Deputy Thomas Pringle (2013) suggested that “Prostitutes would be safer under this legislation because they would be the victims, and thereby could report acts of violence and seek medical treatment without ramification. Once people accept that prostitution is a barrier to gender equality and a form of violence against women, their opinion changes.”

### **1.5. Client Criminalisation.**

Amnesty (2016) stressed that in order for states to protect sex workers from harm, states must avoid passing laws that compromise the safety of workers by leading workers to take risks to protect their clients, such as agreeing to meet clients in more dangerous locations to avoid detection by law enforcement. Department of Justice officials and Police in Northern Ireland expressed concern that differences in legal and cultural frameworks between Sweden and Northern Ireland might render the Swedish Model inapplicable in their own country (Ellison et al., 2015). Trafficking and sex work still exist in Sweden despite having client criminalisation since 1999, with resources being directed toward pursuit of sex worker clients rather than tackling more serious criminal activity (Huschke & Ward, 2017). Workers claim that Swedish model laws designed to empower them have instead reversed the power dynamic, with the worker now focused on making their client feel safe (Vuolajärvi, 2019). Workers interviewed professed a preference for decriminalisation (O'Connor et al., 1996; Huschke & Ward, 2017), fearing increased involvement by organized crime and “pimps” seeking to exploit the newly increased vulnerability of workers under the law; a reduced ability to approach police because of fear of arrest; and reduced numbers of clients, with “decent” clients being scared away, leaving workers to rely on violent clients to earn a living (Huschke & Ward, 2017; Ellison et al., 2019).

To date, Northern Ireland is the only Swedish model country where research exists from both before and three years after implementation of the law. Ellison et al., (2019) found that rather than reducing numbers engaged in sex work as per the law’s intention, the industry has grown in size, with higher numbers providing than before the law, with little reduction in numbers of clients and little change in habits relating to purchasing sex. Numbers of reported robberies and assaults against sex workers were shown to have increased under the law, with no decrease noted in the numbers of trafficking victims (Ellison et al., 2019).

### **1.6. Criminal Law (Sexual Offences) Act 1993.**

Brothel keeping in the Republic of Ireland (sexual offences, 1993) is defined as persons who keep, manage or assist in the management of a brothel; are a tenant, lessee, occupier, manager, lessor or landlord who knowingly permits part or whole of a premises to be used for the purpose of sex work. This law forces sex workers to work by themselves in order to avoid arrest, fines or imprisonment. Amnesty (2016) advised against passing laws that prohibit organisational aspects of sex work such as renting secure premises, working together, hiring security or other support staff, as these laws penalize workers for attempting to operate in safety, denying their right to security of person. Sex workers previously reported that changes to sex work laws (Sexual Offences, 1993) affected their work negatively by making them feel less safe, forcing workers to get into cars quickly without having time to study prospective clients (O'Connor et al., 1996).

### **1.7. Health of Sex Workers in Ireland.**

Criminalisation and policing policy have been shown to have a negative effect on the health of sex workers. Sex workers report being likely to avoid accessing medical care or engagement with emergency services after an assault due to fears relating to their engagement in sex work (Valiulis et al., 2007). Migrants are likely to face barriers when attempting to access social and health services due to occupational stigma (Lazarus et al., 2012), precarious residency, language barriers and a lack of services to meet their needs (Sweeney & FitzGerald, 2017). Platt et al., (2018) found that policies that criminalise sex work discourage workers from accessing adequate healthcare and act as a barrier to accessing social care.

### **1.8. Stress, Stigma and Isolation.**

Prolonged stress has been shown to have a negative effect on memory, attention and decision-making abilities (LeBlanc, 2009). Stress has also been associated with poor performance, sleep disturbances and muscle pain sometimes followed by chronic fatigue

syndrome, depression and post-traumatic stress disorder (Danielsson et al., 2012). Isolation has been shown to lead to impairment of executive functioning, sleep and mental and physical well-being, leading to higher rates of morbidity and mortality (Stephoe et al., 2013; Cacioppo & Cacioppo, 2014). Outlets such as sharing work-related concerns or complaints with friends and co-workers are often denied sex workers due to stigma and brothel-keeping laws (Sexual Offences, 1993). Valiulis et al., (2007) found that sex workers reported relationship problems and inabilities to form emotional connections, though how rates of relationship problems and intimacy issues amongst sex workers compare to those of the general populace are not mentioned. Many reported reluctances to disclose their occupation to current or future partners due to shame and stigma. Goffman (2003) defined stigma as any physical or social attribute or sign that so devalues an actor's social identity as to disqualify him or her from "full social acceptance." Sex workers are often forced to live double lives, fabricating stories to tell friends and family in order to avoid marginalisation (O'Connor et al., 1996; Sanders, 2004; Valiulis et al., 2007) which can be a source of considerable stress in itself (Vang, 2010; Di Marco et al., 2020).

Irish workers reported working in fear of raids, being constantly moved on by Gardaí, working longer hours to make the same money they earned prior to the passing of Criminal Law (Sexual Offences) Act 1993. This has contributed to making working conditions more dangerous, with increased pressure to earn the same amount of money by taking greater risks (Sexual Offences, 1993; O'Connor et al., 1996). Sex workers describe hostility and harassment from community, services and Gardaí as sources of stress and stigma (Valiulis, 2007).

### **1.9. Research Aims and Rationale.**

A study by Sweeney and FitzGerald (2017), published some months after aforementioned changes to the law, explored psychosocial experiences of migrant sex workers in Ireland. They found that law and policy climate contributed to loneliness, poor social support

and isolation amongst migrant workers and that support services to meet their needs were non-existent. Stigma was found to exacerbate negative conditions for sex workers on multiple levels from poverty to vulnerability to disease. At the time of this writing there has been very little qualitative research into the experiences of sex workers published in the Republic of Ireland since the implementation of Criminal Law (Sexual Offences) Act 2017, exploring the effect of the law on the lives of sex workers. Sex workers are often spoken about and legislated for without being included in the conversations concerning them (McGarry & FitzGerald, 2019). It has been made clear that the intentions behind changes to sex working laws have been made with the intention of improving the health and safety of workers (Pringle, 2013; Bacik, 2013). A review of the Criminal Law (Sexual Offences) Act (2017) after 3 years was written into the legislation, scheduled for March 2020. It is the aim of this study to understand how sex workers in the Republic of Ireland understand their own experiences of working under current legislation.

## 2. Methods

### 2.1. Setting.

Participants were interviewed in a location of their choosing that was deemed to be comfortable and private, ranging from the living rooms of their own homes or that of the researcher, to quiet corners of bars that they frequented.

### 2.2. Sampling.

Sampling was purposive. Each participant was encountered during activist and volunteer work within the sex work community in Ireland and contacted by email (Appendix A). Each was informed of the nature of the study and their right to refuse to participate and their right to withdraw consent at any time up until one month before thesis submission. The researcher received confirmation by email of agreement to participate in the current study (Appendix B) and subsequently interviewees were emailed the interview schedule (Appendix C). All that were contacted agreed to be interviewed for this research. Interviews were expected to last approximately thirty minutes to one hour.

### 2.3. Participants.

Participants met the selection criteria suggested by Smith and Osborn (2003). They were all sex workers actively working in Ireland since 2017. 6 participants (4 female and 2 non-binary) took part in the study. The age range of the sample was 24 to 44 years of age. Participation was voluntary. No pay or incentives were provided in return for participation.

### 2.4. Research Question.

How do sex workers in Ireland under the Swedish model of law enforcement understand their experiences? The aim of this research is to learn from sex workers themselves how they understand their experience of working under the Swedish model of law enforcement. The interview schedule (Appendix C) was influenced by Shinebourne and Smith (2009) and altered to suit the requirements of the current research. The questionnaire (Appendix C) features

questions such as “*How does being a sex worker in Ireland affect your life?*” designed to elicit from the participant reflections on their circumstances, with “*How do you think being engaged in sex work elsewhere might be different? What different choices might you have made if you lived somewhere else?*” serving as possible prompts should the participant draw a blank or fall silent.

## **2.5. Variables.**

The goal of this research was to explore sex workers understanding of their own situation and identify the themes and variables that emerge from the interviews. Previous qualitative research with sex workers, including studies undertaken in Ireland prior to the implementation of Criminal Law (Sexual Offences) 2017 indicated sense of self, positivity for the future, sense of security, fear (O’Conner et al., 1996; Lyon, 2014; Huschke & Ward, 2017; Ellison et al., 2019), relationships with friends and family (O’Connor et al., 1996; Valiulis et al., 2007) and shame and stigma (Valiulis et al., 2007; Lazarus et al., 2012) as prominent variables.

## **2.6. Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA).**

Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) is concerned with the detailed examination of human lived experience (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009), and was chosen due to its ideographic nature. In a field of employment where the voices of those directly affected are often silenced by stigma and fear, it was important that an idiographic, qualitative approach be employed that allowed for an exploration of the ways in which sex workers made sense of their own realities, allowing their voices to be heard. The roots of IPA stem from the work of Edmund Husserl (1859-1938) and Martin Heidegger (1889-1976) in hermeneutic phenomenology, born of the need for a philosophical approach to the study of experience on its own terms, allowing for the participant to attempt to understand their own experience, presenting the researcher with an opportunity to explore factors and variables possibly

overlooked by the study and measurement of external, observable behaviours (Smith, 1996; Laverty, 2003; Zahavi, 2003; Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009).

### **2.7. Procedure.**

Participants were given a consent form (Appendix D) and demographic questionnaire (Appendix E) to be filled out and returned to the researcher, who reminded the participant of their right to withdraw, pause or stop at any time. The researcher asked questions from the interview schedule (Appendix C), and a semi-structured interview was conducted, allowing the responses of the participant to guide the researcher's subsequent questions, and the order of questions and prompts that followed. When the interview reached a natural conclusion, recording was terminated. Interviewees were handed a debrief and information sheet (Appendix F) with contact information for the researcher and their supervisor. Information on the debrief sheet included current information on the law in Ireland in addition to contact information for mental health support services and sex worker support services. Signed consent forms were separated from demographic questionnaires and placed under lock and key. Interviews were then transcribed into Microsoft Word for analysis, which was conducted as per the guidelines of Smith, Flowers and Larkin (2009).

### **2.8. Materials/Apparatus.**

Materials used in this research included a MacBook Pro, iPhone 6s Plus, voice memo app for iPhone, Microsoft Word, Microsoft Excel, questionnaire (Appendix C), consent form (Appendix D), introduction sheet (Appendix A), demographic form (Appendix E), debrief sheet (Appendix F), pens, paper and a Philips digital voice recorder.

### **2.9. Design.**

To facilitate a deeper understanding of the experience of sex workers working in Ireland, this study employed a qualitative research design, collecting data through recorded semi-structured interviews allowing the researcher to focus on asking questions while permitting

participants to relate their perspectives and experiences of sex work under the Swedish model of client criminalisation. An Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) was employed to analyse the transcripts.

### **2.10. Statistics / Analysis.**

As per the IPA guidelines of Smith, Flowers and Larkin (2009), transcriptions were read and re-read, initially while listening along to audio recordings of the interviews. Initial notation followed, with researcher commentary being divided into descriptive, linguistic and conceptual comments. From here, emergent themes were developed, followed by a search for connections across emergent themes. After one analysis was completed the process was repeated with each of the remaining interviews and patterns across cases were identified before being organised in Microsoft Excel.

### **2.11. Ethics.**

Participants were informed verbally and provided with a written document regarding the purpose of the study (Appendix A). Assurances were given that participants could withdraw at any time up until a month before research is submitted. Anonymity was assured. Participants were debriefed (Appendix F) after the interview was completed. Participants were not compensated for their participation.

### 3. Results

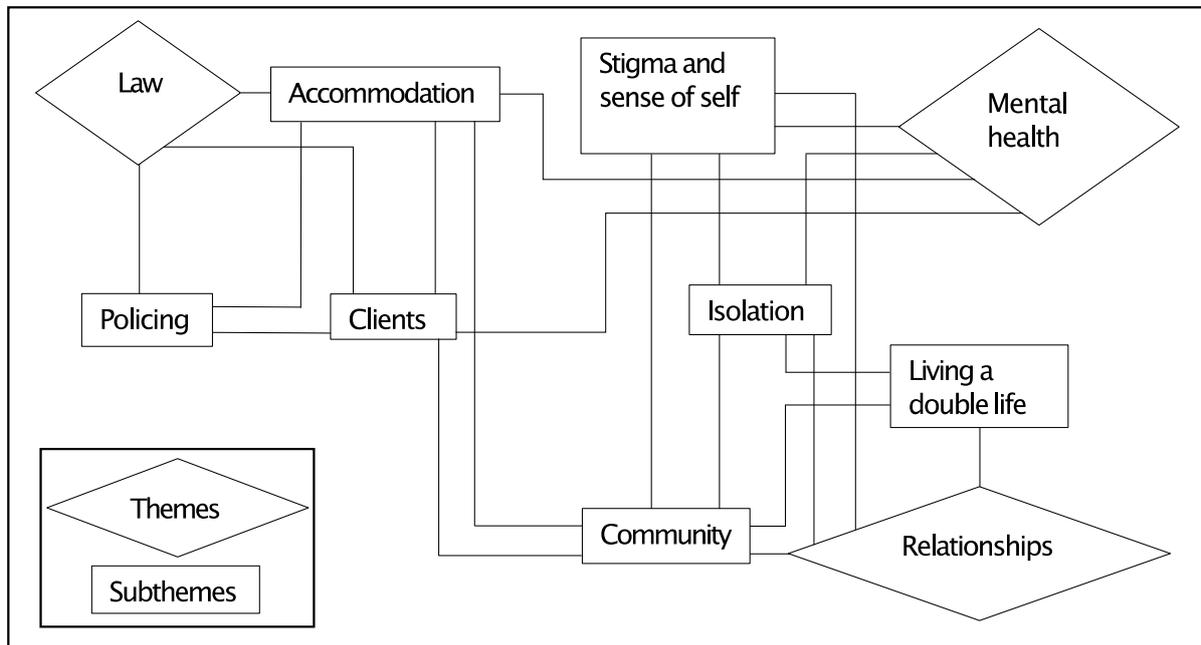
#### 3.1. Demographics and Descriptive Statistics

In accordance with Smith and Osborn (2003), 6 sex workers actively working in Ireland since 2017 were selected as participants. The age range was 24 to 44 ( $M = 30$  years old;  $SD = 6.66$  years old). Four sex workers reported their gender as cisgender female, and two identified themselves as non-binary. Three participants reported their nationalities as Irish while the remaining participants reported their nationalities as British, Croatian and Brazilian. One participant identified themselves as a street worker, one as a dominatrix, three as full-service escorts and one as full-service and online worker.

The analysis revealed a recurring number of themes and subthemes, the interconnected relationships of which are illustrated in the flowchart below (See Fig. 1). The excerpts presented were taken verbatim from transcriptions of interviews with participants. Pseudonyms are used throughout this section.

Figure 1.

Flowchart depicting interconnected themes and subthemes.



*Note.* This figure demonstrates the interconnectivity of themes and subthemes and the difficulty of examining each in isolation without relating it to another (e.g.) the *mental health* of sex workers living under client criminalisation in Ireland is interconnected with *stigma and sense of self*, just as *mental health* is linked to *accommodation* which is interconnected with *policing*.

### 3.2. Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA)

As per Smith, Flowers and Larkin (2009) guidelines, 6 sex workers from diverse backgrounds and areas of sex work, working in Ireland under client-criminalisation were interviewed employing semi-structured interviews with the intention that this would give participants an opportunity to reflect on their experiences of working under the Swedish model. Interviews were meticulously transcribed by the researcher firsthand which aided in familiarisation with the data, then read and re-read while listening to audio recordings of the interviews. Initial notation followed, with researcher commentary divided into descriptive, linguistic and conceptual commentary. From here, emergent themes were developed, followed

by a search for connections across themes. As soon as one analysis was completed the process was repeated with the next interview until all interviews had undergone analysis. Themes were then entered into Microsoft Excel to aid in determining patterns across cases. Predominant emerging themes were law, mental health and relationships. Each theme featured multiple subthemes which interconnected with other themes and subthemes (See Table 1).

Table 1.

<b>Themes</b>	<b>Subthemes</b>	<b>Interconnected Themes</b>
Law	Policing Accommodation Clients	Community Mental health
Mental Health	Stigma, sense of self Isolation	Community Law Accommodation
Relationships	Community Living a double life	Stigma, sense of self Isolation

*Note.* An Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis produced the themes *law*, *mental health* and *relationships*. The theme *law* produced subthemes *policing*, *accommodation* and *clients* which interconnected with the theme *law* and subtheme *community*. The theme *mental health* produced subthemes *stigma and sense of self* and *isolation* which interconnected with the theme *law* and subthemes *community* and *accommodation*. The theme *relationships* produced subthemes *community* and *living a double life* which interconnected with subthemes *stigma and sense of self* and *isolation*.

### 3.3. Theme 1: Law

Participants reflected on the way laws in Ireland affected their lives and their interactions with law enforcement under the Swedish model of client criminalisation. Some workers spoke about their experiences in Ireland before client criminalisation and others about working in non-Swedish model countries and how that compared to working in Ireland since

2017. Detailed below are subthemes *policing*, *accommodation* and *clients* generated under the broader theme of *Law*. Interconnected themes and subthemes are *mental health*, *relationships*, *community* and *stigma and sense of self*.

### **3.3.1. Subtheme 1: Policing.**

All participants expressed strong feelings regarding policing post client criminalisation. Sinead stated, “I mean like, it’s just, it’s like, again, it’s not the job it’s the legality of it, right?” echoing sentiments of other participants perceiving the law and policing as endangering workers and not the job itself. One participant reported having been evicted and another raped after being forced to work alone because of third party brothel keeping laws. All participants expressed reluctance to contact the Gardaí during an emergency. Sinead reflects on policing in Ireland.

I would probably never call them unless it was literally like, like life and death, like, like if I thought I was going to be killed I’m calling 911 but I think even then I might actually try to fight them off before I would call the police.

Like I would rather honestly be killed than call the cops, like there’s no question about that.

Rachel expressed their misgivings related to the role of the Gardaí as providers of state support for sex workers.

I think finding ways to bring, when you have to provide support to sex workers from the state, trying to offer that support through avenues other than the Gardaí whenever possible, because the Gardaí are often em, you know, I think Gardaí make things worse for sex workers more often than they make things better at the moment unfortunately.

Lucy expressed vulnerability, trepidation and fear regarding interaction with law enforcement as a migrant sex worker.

When it comes to interacting with the police, maybe that rea...that's probably, I could point that as the worst part, because I have to be very careful when I tr, when I deal with, em, authorities, even if I am the victim of someone in the streets that, you know, every time I, I think of, what if I'm raped? I'm very scared of dealing with the police, so that changed. Because before, before being a sex worker, I could just come into any authority, and say this happened to me and I'm a victim, do something about it, but these days, I'm terrifying of them framing me instead of the man, for whatever happens to me. It effects my life because, em, I'm a migrant, and I have to be extra careful with everything I do to em, avoid suffering con, legal consequences.

Jade reflects on policing since client criminalisation and its effect on the working conditions of street workers in Dublin.

It's like eh, eh, eh, simultaneously it's changed so much and yet it's exactly the same, yeah know, em... but... the... the Garda presence out on the beat is never helpful. Em... when they're targeting the clients that just increases the tension in the area. Em... ah, and it, it increases the tension between the working girls so that people are turning on each other.

Here Rachel reflects on problems they have perceived with police fulfilling dual roles of protector and persecutor.

While the Gardaí are arresting sex workers, and deporting sex workers, and locking them up for brothel keeping, that's not going to change, but if, you know, if support was being offered to sex workers, or, or sex workers, if the first point of contact between the

state and sex workers was more often social workers, or em... you know, the, if you were running a brothel and inspections were being carried out, inspections had to be carried out, excuse me, carried out by the health and safety authority rather than the Gardaí, that would be ideal I think, because the Gardaí are a vector of violence and discrimination and fear for sex workers.

Jade expresses a feeling of being overwhelmed as she ruminates on her experiences and those of other street workers post Swedish model.

Em... and yeah, it's just really is just a feeling of being squeezed, of being overwhelmed and trying to just... get enough to, to get by because nobody wants to go and take a write off of a night, yeah know.

One of the girls that is on crack and dying for a pipe, is, isn't going to turn down that job, you know, because she can't.

### **3.3.2 Subtheme 2: Accommodation.**

*Interconnecting theme: Mental health, interconnecting subthemes: policing, community.*

One participant related having been evicted under brothel keeping laws and expressed her fear of being evicted again, and how she feels her relationship with police has changed since the implementation of client criminalisation. Other participants expressed concerns in relation to eviction from hotels and apartments rented for the purpose of working from them. The interconnecting themes of policing and isolation will be present during this section. "...and so I constantly have to be moving in and out of hotels and like, be worried about clients, and be worried about Gardaí" (Sinead).

Sandra relates her feelings of helplessness and fear of losing accommodation again under brothel keeping, how she experiences policing after the implementation of the Swedish model of client criminalisation and how that compares to her experiences of police interaction before the change in law.

I felt like the police were on my side three years ago because I've, I've had, had, I've had, had interactions with the police before and I've always felt like they were on my side if something was happening because of the, you know, the liaison officers and everything? Now it feels like, you know, nobody's really on my side and I feel that, um, anyone who would seek to abuse me, they're more empowered because of, of, of the fear of getting kicked out because people managed to successfully get me evicted, and threaten my kids and all that kind of stuff before, so I've gone through that and not had the, not had the police protection and fear of social services and all that, it's like, it's totally, it definitely feels completely different, and I felt more respected by police when you know they, they were telling me myself, when you're working on your own out of your own home it's a privacy thing, it's not anything to do with us, but now it's like, I dunno, it just feels a lot more, a lot more hostility?

Tara reflects on her positive experiences of renting accommodation in Australia and Edinburgh and her fear of eviction in Ireland.

You didn't have to worry about whether your neighbours were going to report you, cause even when you work in apartments here, you have to be like so careful in case, like, something would happen to your apartment, and it's particularly more acute because the housing crisis, and landlords trying to find a reason to evict you, and being a sex worker is definitely a very good one (laughs) for, for them to get rid of you...

### 3.3.3. Subtheme 3: Clients.

#### *Interconnecting subthemes: Policing, accommodation.*

Jade muses on the how changes to Irish sex work laws and the increased presence of Gardaí on the street affect her wellbeing, safety and ability to work.

Em... you're competing for fewer and fewer clients, and... you, you start to, to get anxious that you're not going to get your money tonight, and so then you're... when, when clients come along you, you agree to drop your prices just that little bit and then you agree to do a little bit more than you wanted to do and you agree to go to a place that you're not really comfortable going to that wasn't your place, so your boundaries are just being eroded.

Sinead reflects on their perception of emboldened client behaviour after changes to the law and its potential to affect their health and wellbeing. Here subthemes *policing* and *accommodation* interact with subtheme *client* in the balance of power between worker and client and the fear of repercussions from contacting Gardaí.

Clients are bolder and the things they ask for and how they ask for them. Much more bold about asking for unprotected sex, much more bold for asking for cheaper prices, much bolder when, you know, with how they treat you, em... so, because they know, like you want to keep your business, they know you're not going to be calling the police. They know that shit. You know, more fear with attacks because this gives attackers like a nice way, an easy way for them to enter and attack us cause who wants to call the police so they can destroy your business. Nobody. I don't.

Lucy echoed Sinead's sentiments relating to client behaviour since changes to the law. "From, from the clients, yeah, from the clients. Absolutely. Abuse got much worse from the clients in the last few, in the last few years. And you could see that gradually changing. You could see the shift, yeah."

Here Jade reflects on the behaviour of clients post client criminalisation. "But the fact is like, on the street anyway clients always thought they were going to be arrested. You know the, the em... so... I'm not sure the clients know that there's been a change, not all of them."

Rachel recounted their reluctance to contact Gardaí after being raped and how brothel keeping laws had led to their feeling of vulnerability.

I thought, you know, there's no one else in the apartment, I was having to work alone because of the laws around sex work in Ireland, and I thought it's not safe for me to try and physically resist because if he becomes physically violent then I, I'm in a very dangerous situation. I don't think I can protect myself, em, but my reaction to that again was to feel angry. First of all angry at him. Em, you know, slammed the door when he left, em, and kind of just... you know, felt physically at that moment, but I also felt angry that I couldn't go to the guards about it. I felt angry that, em... I'd had to work alone, eh, which had... you know, made it possible for him to do that. Em, I felt angry that, em, I hadn't been able to protect myself in that situation.

Jade expresses her feelings on how changes to sex work laws in Ireland affect the balance of power between worker and client.

Em... but they always thought they were going to be arrested and they will always use that to... you know, any eh... any... pressure you put on them they're just gonna

transfer to... the working girls, you know, so, they'll just use that to their advantage, and see what they can gain from it. They did then, they do now.

### **3.4. Theme 2: Mental health.**

All participants related the ways in which changes to laws relating to sex work have affected their mental health and the ways in which engagement in sex work has improved their sense of self despite stigma related to sex work. Detailed below are two subthemes generated under the broader theme of mental health, *stigma and sense of self* and *isolation*. Interconnecting themes *law* and *relationships*, subthemes *community* and *accommodation* are present.

#### **3.4.1. Subtheme 1: Stigma and sense of self.**

A common subtheme amongst participants was their understanding of the role that stigma and shame played in their negative self-perception and their own feelings toward their profession supporting previous research (Valiulis et al., 2007; Lazarus et al., 2012). Participants reflected on how stigma towards sex work lead them to distance themselves internally, seeing other sex workers as lesser beings than themselves as well as the ways in which engagement in sex work helped them find strength, empower them and give them a sense of independence.

Sandra mused over having justified to herself that her motives for participating in sex work were more noble than those of other workers, although she had by then been engaged in sex work for many years.

So I was the same, I was as whorephobic as everyone else, because I was still whorephobic when I rocked up to work in a brothel I (laughs) convinced myself I was somehow not the same as everyone else, so you know, I'm only doing this because of babies, you know, I'm not like those other drug addicts.

Tara reflects on the role of stigma in her life, determining that she is not responsible for the stigma associated with her profession nor at fault for needing to be dishonest to survive. “I should not blame myself for the stigma around that, and I, I shouldn’t blame myself for the lying that I have to do because I’m doing it to protect myself.”

Sinead reflects on the part stigma and negative perception associated with sex work play in their being subjected to poor standards of care in healthcare settings by healthcare workers they have encountered.

Like you either have to pay a lot of money for a private practitioner, em, or you have to go to the really shitty cheap places where people treat you like shit ...they’re anti sex work, and um, yeah, and they’re constantly trying to paint, paint you as a trafficking victim, or you have to lie, and then it’s like “Oh why are you getting tested every three months? ...But like we are always constantly being shat on for doing it.

Rachel echoes Sinead’s experiences, relating how negative attitudes toward sex work result occasionally in healthcare professionals wanting to rescue them.

There’s always this sense that, you know... their first response is to try and get me out of sex work, rather than asking me what support work do I want, because yes, some people do need support, you know, they want to exit work and they need that support, but I would much prefer if the support was tailored to the person coming in and saying, “what support do you want? Do you want to exit sex work, or do you want support while continuing to do sex work.”

Jade relates how she was able to improve her sense of self and embrace the positives and her strengths that grew from her experiences.

I think I did a lot of work on myself to, to move... away from that place, but... eh... seeing sex work differently, and seeing my place in sex work differently contributed to that. Em... you know, so... not seeing... sex work as a, a kinda evil in my life, eh, helped. ...And also not... seeing myself as just some dirty little street whore, yeah know, em, moving away from that and being able to see the strengths that eh, come from being a sex worker, and actually, a lot of the most positive aspects of me have some foundation in my experience as a sex worker, yeah know. So yeah.

Rachel reflects on how engagement sex work facilitated and developed in them an improved sense of self, independence and empowerment.

Em, you know, running, essentially running my own business, and, you know, at the end of a week looking at, or going to the bank to lodge my money, and thinking, god, you know, I was able to make this money with, essentially no help from anyone, you know, not working within a company, not even working out of a hotel, but just working from my own apartment. Em, it's given me a sense of... power and independence that, you know, I didn't have before.

***Interconnected subthemes: Community.***

When Belle encountered other members of the sex worker community, she was able to see sex work differently, allowing her to cease perceiving herself as lower than other women and clients. She appears to have come to terms with negative perceptions of her in the eyes of others, improving her sense of self and embracing the positives in her life that her profession has afforded her.

I would avoid as much as I could doing anything sexual because I thought those men could be taking a part of me, or, or degrading me, or, or putting me in a, in a lower position by, em, them being sexual... I've met new people and progressed in my

profession, em, those beliefs are completely gone because I saw the reality of what I, what I do does not make me lower than anyone else. ...On the contrary, it allows me to not only support myself but have a great life, em, and to achieve dreams and to, and to just live a fair life... So, that's, that's what changed, whereas before I could say I'm a, I'm a poor person but I'm a decent person. These days em, these days men perceive me as lower maybe than other women, but which for me I don't care anymore.

### **3.4.2. Subtheme 3: Isolation.**

Most of the participants discussed feeling a sense of isolation related to shame and stigma prior to encountering other members of the sex worker community. Tara relates that "It's really important for me to be supportive of other people because, like, that isolation really negatively affected my mental health because I just didn't know anyone else, who was doing it (sex work)."

#### *Interconnected subthemes: Community, stigma and sense of self.*

Below Sandra recounts her experience of isolation, which she attributes to a lack of sex worker community and perceived stigma and negative perception toward sex work by society despite a feeling of control in her life.

but I'm pretty, pretty isolated. I don't socialize much with people that aren't sex workers really, I just don't feel (laughs) comfortable, em, around it, ...so you're always kind of cowering in that fear...I'm feeling it there, I'm different, I'm a dirty secret, I'm, you, you know, are people looking at me and thinking that? So it's sorta, you definitely get para, paranoid, and I'm thinking my paranoia is quite justifiable considering, you know, everything that I have experienced, so, yeah, paranoia...because of how people...act, or...treat you or whatever.

***Interconnected themes and subthemes: Stigma and sense of self, relationships.***

Tara compares the levels of stigma in Ireland she has experienced to working in Germany and Australia where she recalls workers having open and honest relationships with even older family members without negative repercussions.

When I was in Germany, working in Germany and in Australia, em, where they have like, more progressive laws around it, and there's like, not as much stigma, where there's a lot more people who were out to their families, or saying, particularly to older members of families that, like, "oh, I do sex work!" and it didn't have, like, and that they didn't have like a negative perception, and em, and particularly amongst kinda older members and stuff like that, it was mad that they were like, more... progressive in their views, and em, whereas like, here in Ireland that's definitely not the case, as well.

**3.5. Theme 3: Relationships.**

All participants related the importance of relationships and the positive role of sex worker community in their lives reflecting previous findings (O'Connor et al., 1996; Sanders, 2004; Valiulis et al., 2007). Most participants discussed the way in which they feel forced to live a double life and how that negatively affects their mental wellbeing. Detailed below are subthemes *community* and *living a double life*. Interconnected themes and subthemes are *stigma and sense of self* and *isolation*.

**3.5.1. Subtheme 1: Living a double life.**

Most participants described feeling a negative impact associated with living a double life to hide their engagement in sex work from friends and family. Here Lucy relates her fears for her reputation and future should her occupation be revealed.

It's terrible! It feels like... even though I know inside of me that I don't have a reason to be ashamed of what I do, it feels like this terrible fear that if people get to know about

it, they will, they will start thinking lower of you, em, and they might spread the word around and you're going to become a joke to people.

Rachel discusses the stress of living a double life and being forced to hide their profession from family members.

The main negative impact is with my family where, em, I've come out to them about being trans but I'm still ha, I'm still in the closet about being a sex worker. I've no plans to ever come out to them about being a sex worker, and I'm having to, you know, tell them a series of lies and then try and make sure all my lies match about what I'm doing for work. And that can be, em, that can be stressful. I won't lie. That is a negative impact.

***Interconnected subtheme: Accommodation.***

Sandra reflects on her fear of being disowned by her family as well as her fear of being evicted again under brothel keeping laws.

em, Ireland at the minute, like because of the law changes feels really scary just now, ... and you sort of feel like you're a target and you don't feel like I have the same rights as everyone else, I feel like em, don't have human rights. Em, you have to be very paranoid about where you live, I think that you know I'm gonna be outed, I'm gonna get kicked out again. ...there, there's a negative side that we are now being exposed to these brothel keeping raids and the fact that it's empowered these vigilante groups that out your details and out you to people and you know, being sort of, disowned by your family because people are vindictive you know, so, so that's, yeah shit's really bad. (Sighs).

Tara expresses how living a double life to hide her engagement in sex work has negatively impacted relationships with friends and family.

I feel like I don't always have like, the most honest relationships with people, and it makes it very hard to have an honest relationship with my family in particular, but also certain groups of friends and stuff, like, that as well, if I'm kind of engaging, I almost feel like I have to be lying, all the time, and I find that, like, really, really hard to deal with.

### **3.5.2. Subtheme 2: Community.**

Almost all participants related the value of having access to a community of sex workers. When asked about the impact of engagement in sex work on their relationships Sinead responded, "dunno, it enriches them to be honest. I've never had better friends, I've never had more healthy relationships than I do now, you know."

Sandra discusses the positive difference having sex worker community and co-workers made in her life.

I quite enjoyed working with other ladies because it was really helpful to be around other women, with, you know with questions, and like "is it normal? Is this, you know, what do I do about this situation?" So, so that was really good.

Similarly, Rachel reflects on how finding other sex workers lead to gleaning advice on keeping themselves safe while working.

I tried to look up things online, advice for sex workers and how to keep themselves safe, eh, in retrospect I, I probably didn't do enough research in that, there was a lot I learned later on after talking to other sex workers, when I kind of, em, came across other sex workers in Dublin online and, and met with one in particular who gave me a lot of very good advice about how to keep myself safe, and introduced me to things like UglyMugs, em, the app for sex workers.

***Interconnected subthemes: Stigma and sense of self.***

Here the subthemes *community* and *stigma and shame* interconnect as Tara reflects on life before finding community amongst sex workers.

I think it was really difficult when I didn't know other people who did the work that I did, and I felt a lot of shame around it, and when I met other people from the community it made me feel a lot better about it, em, and I think that definitely has, like, made a difference.

## 4. Discussion

### 4.1. Implications

#### 4.1.1. The law.

##### 4.1.1.1. *Policing.*

The findings of this study supported that of previous research (Valiulis et al., 2007; Lutnick and Cohen, 2009; Huschke & Ward, 2017; Platt et al., 2018; Ellison et al., 2019) with participants expressing trepidation relating to contact with Gardaí. Findings did not support Latham's (2013) or Pringle's (2013) supposition that workers would feel encouraged to report violence, robberies and rape without fear of retribution or incriminating themselves. Indeed, one participant had suffered rape and did not contact Gardaí for fear of making their situation worse. A migrant participant expressed fear of approaching Gardaí for fear of deportation.

##### 4.1.1.2. *Accommodation.*

This research supported previous research relating to laws that target sex worker accommodation (O'Connor et al., 1996; Lyon, 2014; Dziuban and Stevenson, 2016; Ellison et al., 2019). Rather than penalising third parties that live off the earnings of sex workers, these laws have seemingly been used to justify denying sex workers accommodation, whether in hotels or apartments, and to justify evicting workers themselves, increasing their vulnerability and stress.

##### 4.1.1.3. *Clients.*

Findings supported that of Vuolajärvi (2019) with most participants reporting a reversal of power dynamic. Additionally, the findings of Huschke and Ward (2017) and Ellison et al., (2019) were supported, with one participant reporting that workers felt that they had little choice other than to drop prices and see their boundaries eroded as they competed for fewer clients due to the presence of Gardaí. The findings of this research did not support Bacik's (2013) perception that the Swedish model protected workers from harm and exploitation.

#### **4.1.2. Mental health.**

##### ***4.1.2.1. Stigma and sense of self.***

Findings supported previous research (Valiulis et al., 2007; Lazarus et al., 2012) showing that stigma played a major and oppressive role in the lives of all participants. Contrary to suggestions by Charlton (2012) and Bacik (2013) as to the purported negative effect of sex work on the wellbeing of sex workers, all participants reported improved sense of self, having found a sense of strength, empowerment or independence from their experiences of engagement in sex work.

##### ***4.1.2.2. Isolation.***

This research found that contrary to Charlton's (2012) projections, workers did not feel safer working under the Swedish model. This research supports findings by Sweeney and FitzGerald (2017) demonstrating feelings of isolation experienced by migrant workers. This study found both migrant and non-migrants experiencing isolation due to stigma surrounding sex work.

#### **4.1.3. Relationships.**

##### ***4.1.3.1. Living a double life.***

Findings supported those of previous research (O'Connor et al., 1996; Sanders, 2004; Valiulis et al., 2007) with most participants expressing that the stress of living a double life had a negative impact on their mental health. Findings did not support suggestions by Latham (2013) that workers would no longer have to be covert.

##### ***4.1.3.2. Community.***

The findings of this research support previous research (O'Connor et al., 1996; Sanders, 2004; Valiulis et al., 2007) relating to sex workers finding support amongst the sex worker community. All participants report having experienced isolation before finding community.

#### **4.2. Strengths and limitations.**

A major strength of this research was the willingness of sex workers in Ireland to contribute and have their voices, opinions and perspectives heard. The researcher had access to a diverse sample of sex workers from diverse countries of origin, circumstances and entry points into sex work. The age range and types of sex work engaged in was broad and representative considering the small sample size.

Limitations would include the small sample size, though it falls within the numbers recommended by Smith, Flowers and Larkin (2009) for IPA studies. Time constraints were a limitation of the study in addition to restrictions on word count which makes covering such a complex subject difficult to achieve.

#### **4.3. Future research.**

The current study examines the mental wellbeing of sex workers in Ireland under laws that criminalise various aspects of the exchange. It would be beneficial to perform a similar study amongst sex workers living and working under full decriminalisation in New Zealand or New South Wales for comparison.

#### **4.4. Conclusion.**

The current study finds that current laws in Ireland relating to sex work are not fit for purpose and have failed in their purported goals of increasing wellbeing amongst sex workers supporting findings by Ellison et al., (2019). Decriminalisation would permit sex workers to work together for safety and contact police without fear of repercussions, greatly benefitting their health and sense of wellbeing. It could also serve as a major step forward in reducing stigma which would benefit sex workers both in their relationships with friends and family and in dealings with healthcare workers.

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## **Appendix A**

### PARTICIPANT INQUIRY

To Whom It May Concern:

I was wondering whether you'd be willing to be interviewed for my undergraduate research project.

It will be a qualitative study of life for sex workers in Ireland.

The interview should last between 30 minutes to an hour and can be conducted at a time and location of your choosing. Your identity will be kept anonymous with a pseudonym of your choosing.

There will be some demographic questions relating to age, nationality and the type of sex work engaged in.

You'll receive a copy of the questions in advance of the interview, which will be recorded and transcribed. Both the transcription and recording will be kept safe, accessible only to me and my examiners if necessary, and destroyed after completion of the examination process.

You're under no obligation to participate and are welcome to withdraw consent at any time up to a month before submission of my thesis for examination.

Warmest regards,

Adeline W. Berry



Appendix B

03/10/2019

Gmail - Research participation



Addy Berry <theaddyberry@gmail.com>

**Research participation**

To: Addy Berry

Tue, Oct 1, 2019 at 10:08 AM

Hi Addy,

Just want to confirm that I've recieved your above email and I'm happy to participate in the study.

Many thanks,

[Quoted text hidden]

03/10/2019

Gmail - Research participation



Addy Berry <theaddyberry@gmail.com>

---

**Research participation**

---

To: Addy Berry <[REDACTED]>

Fri, Sep 27, 2019 at 5:34 PM

Hi dear! I'd happy to participate.  
[Quoted text hidden]

03/10/2019

Gmail - Fwd: Research participation



Addy Berry <theaddyberry@gmail.com>

---

**Fwd: Research participation**

---

To: [REDACTED]

Thu, Oct 3, 2019 at 5:48 PM

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Date:** 28 September 2019 at 10:49:53 IST  
**To:** [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** Re: Research participation  
**Reply-To:** [REDACTED]

Absolutely! Can't wait :)

Sent from ProtonMail mobile

----- Original Message -----

On 26 Sep 2019, 14:36, [REDACTED] wrote:

Dearest friend,  
I was wondering whether you'd be willing to be interviewed for my undergraduate research project. It will be a qualitative study of life for sex workers in Ireland. The interview should last between 30 minutes to an hour, and can be conducted at a time and location of your choosing. Your identity will be kept anonymous with a pseudonym of your choosing. There will be some demographic questions relating to age, nationality and the type of sex work engaged in. You'll receive a copy of the questions in advance of the interview, which will be recorded and transcribed. Both the transcription and recording will be kept safe, accessible only to me and my examiners if necessary, and destroyed after completion of the examination process.  
You're under no obligation to participate and are welcome to withdraw consent at any time up to a month before submission of my thesis for examination.

Warmest regards,  
Addy

Sent from my iPhone



03/10/2019

Gmail - Fwd: Research participation



Addy Berry <theaddyberry@gmail.com>

---

**Fwd: Research participation**

---

To: [REDACTED]

Thu, Oct 3, 2019 at 5:48 PM

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Date:** 26 September 2019 at 15:38:12 IST  
**To:** [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** Re: Research participation

Hi Addy,

That is no problem at all. I am more than happy to participate. Let me know if you need anything more from me.

Take care,  
[REDACTED]

On Thu, 26 Sep 2019, 15:13 [REDACTED] wrote:

Dearest friend,  
I was wondering whether you'd be willing to be interviewed for my undergraduate research project. It will be a qualitative study of life for sex workers in Ireland. The interview should last between 30 minutes to an hour, and can be conducted at a time and location of your choosing. Your identity will be kept anonymous with a pseudonym of your choosing. There will be some demographic questions relating to age, nationality and the type of sex work engaged in. You'll receive a copy of the questions in advance of the interview, which will be recorded and transcribed. Both the transcription and recording will be kept safe, accessible only to me and my examiners if necessary, and destroyed after completion of the examination process.  
You're under no obligation to participate and are welcome to withdraw consent at any time up to a month before submission of my thesis for examination.

Warmest regards,  
Addy

Sent from my iPhone

## Appendix C

Interview schedule from project exploring the lives sex workers in Ireland.

1. How did you become involved in sex work? *Possible prompts:* How long ago? What brought this about? Can you describe how you remember feeling about sex work at that time?
2. How has your perception of sex work changed over time? *Possible prompts:* Is it better? Is it worse?
3. In what ways is your life different now that you are engaged in sex work? *Possible prompts:* In what ways has it improved your life? In what ways do you think it has made things worse?
4. How does being a sex worker in Ireland affect your life? *Possible prompts:* How do you think being engaged in sex work elsewhere might be different? What different choices might you have made if you lived somewhere else?
5. What do you think would be a positive change in your life? *Possible prompts:* What would improve your life? What would that improvement would feel like?
6. How does being a sex worker affect your relationships with other people? *Possible prompts:* Family, children, friends, partner, other sex workers?
7. Has sex work changed the way you feel about yourself? *Possible prompts:* Do you see yourself differently now than before? In what ways?
8. How do you think people see you? *Possible prompts:* Family, children, friends, partner, other sex workers?
9. How would you describe yourself? *Possible prompts:* How do you see yourself as a person?
10. How do you imagine your future?

Additional questions

11. How has the Swedish model of client criminalization affected you? *Possible prompts:* Is life different for you now than it was 3 years ago? How would you describe your life now compared to 3 years ago?
12. What changes would you like to see brought in? *Possible prompts:* What supports would you like to see in place?

Appendix D

Consent form

Please read the statements below, circle YES or NO as appropriate and then sign and date the form, before returning it to the researcher. Please keep the accompanying Participant Information Sheet.

I am at least 18 years of age YES / NO.

I, the undersigned, have read and understood the accompanying information sheet, and been given the opportunity to ask any questions I might have about the research YES / NO.

I consent to take part in an interview where I will be asked about issues relating to sex work YES / NO.

I consent to have an audio recording made of the interview YES / NO.

I consent to some of my answers being quoted in articles or presentations, with names and other identifying features removed YES / NO.

I understand my right to withdraw AT ANY TIME, and to request that my interview audio and/or transcript be destroyed. YES / NO.

I understand that if an article has been published it may not be possible to withdraw featured quotations at that stage YES / NO.

The laws as they pertain to sex work in Ireland have been explained to me in a manner that is understandable to me YES / NO.

I understand that all information provided is treated as strictly confidential and will not be released by the researcher unless required to do so by law. I have been advised as to what data is being collected, what the purpose is, and what will be done with the data upon completion of the research YES / NO.

I will refrain from speaking about or revealing information that might incriminate myself or others YES / NO.

PRINT NAME.....

Sign..... Date .....

Appendix E

Demographic Questionnaire

Participant # ..... Age .....

Gender (please check box):

- Cisgender Male:
- Cisgender Female:
- Transgender Male:
- Transgender Female:
- Nonbinary:
- Other:
- Prefer not to say:

Pseudonym.....

Nationality.....

Type of sex work engaged in  
.....

## Appendix F

Research Project Title:  
Life for sex workers in Ireland under the Swedish Model of law enforcement

My name is Adeline Berry, a Final Year student of BA (HONS) in Psychology at Dublin Business School. As a part of my undergraduate thesis, I am required to conduct a research study. The purpose of this research is to find out what life is like for sex workers working in Ireland under the Swedish model of law enforcement. If you are a sex worker and at least 18 years of age or older, I would like to invite you to participate in this research study. This study will include a brief a questionnaire with some demographic questions relating to age, nationality and the type of sex work engaged in. Participation will involve an interview, in which you will be asked some open-ended questions. This means that you can say as little or as much as you like. There are no right or wrong answers. If you prefer you can answer just some of the questions, and you are free to withdraw from participating any time. The interview itself should last between 30 minutes to an hour, which can be conducted at a time and location of your choosing. With your consent, an audio recording will be made of the interview. The recording will remain confidential, stored securely in a password protected file and computer. A transcript will be made of the recording. If you wish to withdraw from participation, both the audio recording and transcript will be destroyed.

Your voice is important, and as a sex worker you can make a valuable contribution to expanding understanding of sex work leading to better laws, policies, services and supports.

The results of the research may be published as a journal article, or presented at a conference. With your permission, your answers may be quoted in articles or presentation, but every effort will be made to remove any personally identifying information, and no names will be given as your identity will be kept anonymous with a pseudonym of your choosing.

Listed below are the laws as they pertain to sex work in Ireland:

<p>Legal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Working alone indoors/outdoors.</li> </ul>	<p>Illegal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Working in pairs/groups.</li> <li>• Advertising, hiring security, management or transport.</li> <li>• Living off the earnings of another person's sex work (including renting a room/apartment to a worker).</li> <li>• Paying for sexual services.</li> </ul>
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If you feel that this interview has raised some issues for you, please consider contacting some of the support services listed below, or speak to a friend, family member or professional.

Should you have any further questions about the study please contact:

Adeline Berry (Researcher): XXXXXX@gmail.com

Dr. Patricia Frazer (Supervisor): XXXXXX@dbs.ie

<p><u>SWAI</u></p> <p><a href="https://sexworkersallianceireland.org/">https://sexworkersallianceireland.org/</a></p> <p>13 Lower Dorset Street,</p> <p>Dublin 1</p> <p>085 8249 305</p> <p><a href="mailto:info@swai.eu">info@swai.eu</a></p>	<p><u>Chrysalis:</u></p> <p><a href="https://chrysalissexworkproject.ie/">https://chrysalissexworkproject.ie/</a></p> <p><a href="https://chrysalisproject.ie/sex-work-project/">https://chrysalisproject.ie/sex-work-project/</a></p> <p>Opening Times:</p> <p>Monday – Thursday:</p> <p>9.30am – 8.30pm</p> <p>Friday: 9.30am – 4.00pm</p> <p>Tel: 01 8823362</p>
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	Fax: 01 8683351
<p><u>Aware:</u></p> <p>The Aware Support Line: 1890 303 302 / 01 661 7211</p> <p>Available Monday – Sunday, 10am to 10pm.</p> <p>Email for support at: <a href="mailto:supportmail@aware.ie">supportmail@aware.ie</a></p>	<p><u>Samaritans</u></p> <p>116 123</p> <p>Available 24hrs a day, 365 days a year. Free to call.</p>