

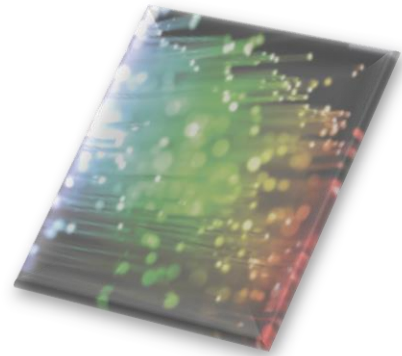
# BEYOND THE GAZE

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## Safety and Privacy

For Online Sex Workers

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ONLINE SEX WORKERS DEFINITION:

ESCORTS (IN CALLS AND OUT CALLS), PRO  
DOMS/SUBS, AGENCY WORKERS, CAMMERS AND  
ANY SEX WORKER WHO USES DIGITAL  
TECHNOLOGY TO FACILITATE THEIR BUSINESS.

# Beyond the Gaze:

## Safety and Privacy Information for Online Sex Workers

### Introduction

Beyond the Gaze (BtG) was a three-year study of the safety and working conditions of online sex work in the UK and is the largest study to date of this sector. By online we mean those who use digital technology to run their business and specifically to safety screen and protect their privacy. You might be an independent escort (in call or out call), pro dom, pro sub, webcammer or agency worker. Whilst the following information is primarily for those who offer face-to-face services, the safety and privacy tips can also be helpful to other sectors of the industry. We also have a section on camming.

Please share with other sex workers posting a link to this PDF on forums or send to other sex workers you know, especially those who are new to sex work. Maybe you work with someone whose first language isn't English, you might want to share some of this safety information with them, sharing our Romanian and Portuguese language flyers, available free online <https://www.beyond-the-gaze.com/safety-info/>

Our approach in producing these safety tips is to:

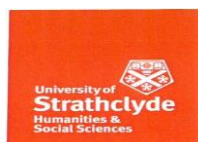
- **Value the expertise within the sex worker community:** The tips have been written by sex workers who work in the online sector and some have worked as part of the Beyond the Gaze research team. The tips are informed by responses from over six hundred online sex workers who took part in the BtG survey. Some other professionals who are not sex workers have contributed to areas of the information; these are people who have knowledge about safety or specific issues that can affect sex workers and have many years' experience of working with sex workers.
- **Recognise the diversity of jobs, experiences and preferences about safety and privacy measures amongst sex workers.** We share these tips aware that everyone has different preferences in the safety methods they use and will make their own choices.
- **Recognise some people are more IT savvy than others,** some have greater access to different equipment/technology and resources, so may be able to put in place tech related safety stuff others are not able to or might find it harder to. You can only do what you are able to do. Ask other sex workers on forums' private groups for advice.
- **Recognise that health and safety risk assessment is important in sex work as it is in all jobs** – in most jobs risk assessment is carried out and strategies are put in place to reduce risk, this is important also for people in sex work. Risk is part of everyone's work and non-work life and it's important to minimise risk where possible.
- Recognise that a large section of online workers are **lone workers** and some of the personal safety issues faced in the sector are also issues for lone workers in other sectors of the labour market formal and informal.

- **Recognise that the safety measures sex workers employ can be limited by the current law and policing.** Some suggestions may be difficult to apply in some work situations. Adapt the information and advice given to your own working situation. Periodically review your safety practices so you can adapt as any new risks emerge, your working practices change, or new technologies develop that you can use in your safety repertoire. Talk through any of the info with other sex workers or a local sex work project if there is one in your area. [National Ugly Mugs](#) can advise you about which projects are in your area. See resources section for contact details.
- **Know that most bookings go without incident** – these tips are to help protect against that minority of people who are a problem for sex workers.
- We are 100% clear that **crimes and other incidents committed against sex workers are the fault of those committing them.** Sex workers like all people in all areas of the labour market have a right to work free from harassment.
- **Be aware of your rights and options for advice, support and reporting** to third parties or the police if you need help. Later in the document you will find links to support and reporting services.

Within the sex industry, whether we are aware of it or not, we are carrying out risk assessments all the time. Sex workers are good at risk assessment. From the first enquiry to the actual booking, we are weighing up our potential clients for safety – will they respect our boundaries? Do they understand safer sex? What will their behaviour be like? Respectful? Aggressive? If for some reason a client has slipped through our screening net, or if they suddenly change their behaviour in a way that makes us feel unsafe, there are certain steps we can follow, as described in this safety document.

***N.B. The following safety information is not exhaustive, and things change all the time including the technology that can be employed in safety screening and crime prevention/reporting. We have also purposefully omitted some practices that some sex workers use, and we have avoided giving too much detail on some safety procedures to protect your practice. This is on the advice of sex workers. Whilst the authors have tried to ensure the accuracy of the text we accept no legal liability for any errors or omissions. This document is not intended to replace qualified legal, psychological or medical advice.***

*This information may be subject to revisions and updates.*



## Top Tips – The Basics

Here are some safety and privacy basics, before we go deeper into the screening process, that many sex workers use:

- Have a safety screening routine that you stick to, using practices such as:
  - Join sex worker forums and schemes such as [National Ugly Mugs](#), [Ugly Mugs Ireland](#) and [SAAFE](#) where you can check warning alerts about people who have created problems for sex workers. (See later section on warning and reporting schemes).
  - Use phone number and email checkers.
  - Using a buddy system for both in and out calls: let your buddy know when you or the client arrives/leaves. (See the later buddying section).
  - Always have a fully charged mobile phone (and if possible a backup in a place you but not customers are aware of).
  - Program it to a speed dial number which it can call at one press – make this the number of the police, your buddy or a friend.
  - Be alert and aware of your customer and the environment, plan your exit routes wherever you are working.
  - Always insist on payment up front.
  - Always trust your gut instinct.

Periodically review your safety practices so you can adapt as any new risks emerge, or your working practices change, or new technologies develop that you can use in your safety repertoire. We will look at crime specifically later but be aware of what is a crime. See the what's a crime and the reporting sections.

- Take steps to protect your privacy and identity online:
  - Have a work persona with separate phones, social media accounts and emails.
  - Don't reveal your real name.
  - Think about if you want your face in your advertising images.
  - Look at ways to accept payment and which options might compromise your privacy (see the privacy section).

Communicate prices, services you do and don't provide as part of boundary setting & safety messaging in your profile/wider marketing. (See the boundary setting, advertising: branding & safety section).

## Boundary Setting, Advertising & Safety

Based on the information BtG gathered from sex workers, we have produced some tips about language that can help right from the start:

- Think about the key points you want to communicate in your advertising which get across messages about your boundaries and expectations from customers.
- Being clear about boundaries is seen by many sex workers as key. In the first instance those boundaries will properly be communicated through your online profile or website.
- Be clear about the services you will and will not offer, your prices and where you prefer to work (in calls, out calls, hotel, etc.)

Some people have terms and conditions on their website that include specific things such as:

- Fees.
- Services and condom use.
- Confidentiality policy.
- Screening policy (without giving too much away).
- Deposit policy (if you charge deposits).

This is also an ideal place to give yourself an opportunity to limit service should you need to (say, for health reasons) so for example:

- I reserve the right to refuse or amend service.

Some crime takes the form of harassing or abusive texts, so you could lay your boundaries out here to by saying something like:

- Please don't use overly sexual or abusive language when contacting me. This is a professional service and I expect to be treated as a professional.

Using such wording can be useful down the line to refer back to if a person starts to be abusive or to harass you.

## Taking Calls and Boundary Setting

- Decide what you will and won't discuss on the phone and stick to it.
- Decide the hours when you will have your phone on and be firm in sticking to them.
- Some sex workers found the more timewasting or troublesome clients tended to call late night/early morning hours, including drunk or 'partying' clients. This might be something for you to consider.
- A lot of experienced workers choose to disengage from annoying, needy or demanding texts and emails and they also save the number as 'ignore' or 'problem client' or something else to warn them not to pick up the phone or respond to texts.

- You could also simply tell a troublesome enquirer/client that you are fully booked. This prevents unnecessary exchanges.
- If they persist, some workers use simple but firm words like: 'I'm sorry I don't think I'm the worker for you, I wish you well'. It's all about gentle but clear and neutral wording that hopefully will diffuse a situation before it happens.

## Industry Abbreviations and Safety

There is a huge array of terms used for adult services. These are readily available online so we have chosen not to include them in this document. It may be worth looking into industry specific language before negotiating services with clients, not being aware of some commonly used terminology could lead to unfortunate situations of agreeing to a service that you are not comfortable with. For example, one worker we consulted, who was new to the business, misunderstood A-levels to mean the client was requesting a role play session when "A-levels" is a common way of referring to anal sex.

## Language and Diffusing Situations

- When you are already in a difficult situation and the client is there standing in front of you, try to stay calm and try to diffuse the situation.
- The language you use can help you to diffuse or 'de-escalate' a potentially difficult or dangerous situation. So long as it isn't an emergency (in which case you would follow your own emergency system) you can be clever with your words, speak in a low but firm tone, use friendly sensitive language and try to show understanding.
- Use terms such as: 'I understand you're feeling frustrated, but I did make it clear I don't do that (activity)' or 'I think we've got crossed wires here, the fee is, I accept cash upfront' and 'Ah right, I understand now, no that doesn't feel right to me'. Note the language here, which are just examples.

Some assertiveness trainers and personal development coaches call this 'owning' or 'neutral language' or 'the quick diffuser'. What this means is, instead of using words like: 'you can't talk to me like that', 'you already know my fees, they're on the website' or 'stop harassing me, you're making me feel...', what you are communicating is your truth, your boundaries and the essential thing here is that you are '**not blaming**' the client with the language you use – this can diffuse a potentially difficult conversation.

- Even if you must bite your lip until you leave or the session ends, it is well worth it to prevent a problem.
- If they are asking you to do something you don't want to do, distraction is often a great remedy: 'How about we try... I think this would be fun...', that kind of thing. In the worst-case scenario if your client isn't listening, using the gentle, owning not blaming, technique can still help, and it might even be worth waiving your fee in order to encourage them to leave. Short term loss, yes, but you might be grateful for them shutting the door as they leave.

If you feel you are in danger calmly invite the client to leave. You may need to leave if this is the safest thing to do.

## Social Media and Your Safety

- Some workers have said that potentially troublesome clients had seen their posts on social media and sent them abusive texts, so try to keep your posts light and/or work specific.
- Be mindful what information you share. Most sex workers have completely separate social media accounts (for those who have them) for work and personal, with different personas. See Protecting your privacy section for further details.

## Pre-Booking Screening

People have lots of preferred ways to screen clients before a booking, here are some that you can use:

- Using phone number, email, website username and car registration checkers (see number checking section)
- Avoid making a booking without having spoken to the customer over the phone.
- Not making a booking if a withheld number is used.
- Not accepting bookings from people you have blocked.
- For those people who choose to have just email or text contact it is always still useful to run a number check (see below) for both in calls and out calls. Some workers who are okay booking via email or text only still make sure they explain their boundaries and many do not give their full address until the client is on their street. Whilst it's important to respect how different workers screen and keep themselves safe, some sex workers who advised on this document, would think twice before making an out call booking just by text or email.
- Googling clients to find out more about them including using professional networking sites and searching social media.
- Check the IP address of whoever is contacting you. Be aware people can try and find your IP address. It is best to know what info they can get about you and so you can decide if you want to prevent this by employing methods which hide your IP.
- Some sex workers charge deposits and see this as helpful in reducing the risk of timewasting or potentially difficult bookings.

## Number and Email Checking

- When you have the number of a client/prospective client, run it through google. This can bring up all sorts of helpful info on who your prospective client might be.
- Use number check applications linked to sex industry warning schemes (such as [NUM](#) and [Ugly Mugs Ireland](#)) and generic online and phone number ID and blocking applications.
- Check any phone number, email address, against the Ugly Mugs databases.
- Use email checkers – [National Ugly Mugs \(NUM\)](#) and [Ugly Mugs Ireland](#) have these and some other features (e.g. website username or car registration checkers).
- Some workers use apps such as [TruCaller](#) and [WhoCaller](#) where you can see if there is any identifying information linked to that person or if there is a nuisance call warning.
- Create and check your own personal ugly mugs/‘bad clients’ list. Once you have identified a potentially problem client, save this number in your phone or email address to your contacts. Some people find it useful to categorise clients who they are not keen on by saving them under warnings in their address book, e.g. ‘Timewaster or TW’, ‘Do Not See’, ‘See only if very quiet’, ‘See only when desperate’. Quiet times do exist, so being able to differentiate between callers who you would happily see again, you would never see again and who you might see at a stretch, can be particularly useful.
- For clients you definitely don’t want to see it is a much better tactic to simply ignore them – try not to retaliate or tell them you’ve already sussed them out. This may alert them, and they may change their number.
- Join a private sex worker group or sex worker forum where numbers of problem individuals are shared.
- You can also check WhatsApp, where you can sometimes see their picture.
- We know it is time consuming and sometimes you’re in a rush but checking with at least two of the above examples doubles your safety.

## Warning Schemes, Alerts and Ugly Mugs

Ugly Mug is a term used by some in the sex industry to describe a ‘bad’ or dangerous (or potentially dangerous) client or another problem individual. It is also used for clients and others who are committing fraud such as paying with counterfeit money. There are warning schemes and forums you can use to warn others and arm yourself with information.

- Checking sex work forums/ugly mugs schemes/advertising platforms to see if the potential customer has any warnings or negative feedback is an important part of screening.



- Sign up to and use free safety warning schemes and forums where warnings are shared. Through these you can keep up to date with local and national warnings about ‘ugly mugs’ and in some cases also timewasters. See the what’s a crime and the reporting sections for further information about your options to make a report to a third-party scheme for sex workers or to the police if you choose to. Here are links to some key warning schemes:
- National Ugly Mugs (NUM) <https://www.uglymugs.org> offers SMS alerts to your phone or to email and offers a number checker and email checker.
- Ugly Mugs Ireland <https://uglymugs.ie/> offers alerts, and you can check phone number, email address, website username or car registration against the database.
- SAAFE forum has a ‘Warnings & Wasters Board’ and through this you can link with other sex workers in your area: <https://saafe.info/main/index.php>
- Good Escort <https://www.goodescort.co.uk/> is a free, escort and masseur only advice and support forum for male, gay and bisexual escorts serving the male to male market. Amongst many other things, members can share info about problem clients, time wasters and scams. [SleepyBoy](#) lists dangerous clients and timewasters; it can be accessed by sex workers advertising on the site.
- As we mentioned in number and email checking, you might want to join or create a private online sex work community group. These use different platforms or apps such as WhatsApp, Facebook/Twitter/SKYPE to forms groups where sex workers can share information.
- Use more than one scheme, although time consuming, you are broadening your chances of protecting your safety.
- Reading reviews left by clients themselves is a safety precaution some sex workers use because it can give an indication of the client’s expectations of a meeting and of their attitude to sex workers and the booking.
- Some sex workers watch/read/browse the local news or police most wanted information online to keep aware.

### On the Phone

- Always trust your gut instinct: don’t make the booking if something doesn’t sound right.
- Check clients have read your profile to avoid timewasters. For example, do they know your name, are they asking for information that is available on your profile such as prices, services available?
- Most workers will not answer withheld or pay phone numbers.

- Be particularly wary of detailed outfit/roleplay requests; some of these callers may be entertaining themselves while on the phone and have no intention of taking it further.

### Payments, Safety and Spotting a Scam

- Many sex workers insist on cash payment. Always get the money up front with clients before 'anything' happens. Some clients may say they 'don't usually' pay until the end, be clear it's your professional practice to take payment at the beginning.
- During a booking it can be helpful to keep the money out of sight to avoid any attempted robberies or wandering hands. If you tour, look for a place with a safe or frequently deposit the money into a bank to decrease any chances of a robbery.
- Some sex workers take credit card details or a deposit into an account so there is a 'digital footprint' related to bank details.
- Some card processing companies do not accept accounts or close accounts if they discover the person is a sex worker. Consider this when choosing your payment options.
- Some sex workers and clients now use peer to peer money transfer apps for anonymous, fast money transfers, however many of these apps do not encourage payments for adult services so it is always worth checking the terms and conditions.
- Some workers use 'crypto currencies', there are many out there including for adult services. Some people like these because they can see if the payment has gone through. But they are anonymous, so you might want also to run extra screening and identity checks when booking your client's appointment.
- Credits on advertising platforms: much like deposits credits used on advertising platforms can be exchanged for money via cheque or bank transfer. While there is often a small admin fee to withdraw these credits, this can be another good way of checking the legitimacy of a booking and keeping an online record of where and when bookings are taking place.
- Some sex workers accept Amazon or other gift voucher as deposits. Many clients also prefer this option as well because it remains anonymous to both the client and the provider, similarly some escorts will have items on their wish lists of the same value as their deposit and request these in place of a monetary deposit.
- Be wary of 'too good to be true' offers: some people target new sex workers hoping to exploit their lack of experience. A valuable mantra to hold on to, despite the temptation of large amounts of money, is 'if it sounds too good to be true, it usually is.' Even experienced workers have been scammed or taken advantage of when lured in by offers of huge amounts of money, being lavished with luxury gifts, holidays, etc.

### Instinct and Gut Feeling

Trust your instincts pre-booking and at all stages: if you think someone sounds dodgy, like they're making the call to get kicks, or if you feel your boundaries are being pushed or you

feel in any way uncomfortable, end the call, and don't take the booking. Instincts can be invaluable in this line of work and are often undervalued.

### In Call Screening

- Have a sneaky peak – try to make arrangements so you are able to see the client arrive. This may be at a landmark you can see which you have asked the client to go to.
- If doing in calls at home or a work apartment install a peep hole and CCTV system. Many cameras can now be connected to your mobile phone and purchased at a reasonable price.
- Check there is not more than one person – some people can hide out of view of CCTV.
- Check the customer is not drunk or high.
- Stay vigilant, be aware of theft – look out for travelling hands, people seeming to 'scope out' the property on arrival, e.g. looking around at the room/flat (sometimes followed by leaving, 'look and walk')
- Always get the money up front.

### Buddying Arrangements – For In Calls and Out Calls

- Tell someone where you are going – consider using a buddy system to keep safe on bookings. This is letting a trusted person: the 'buddy' (another worker, friend or partner) know where you are going to be – 'checking in' with them when you arrive and leave for an outcall or when the client arrives and leaves for an in call. Some people check in not just when the client arrives but also when they feel all is ok or when they have received and checked the money payment.
- Some people send a description of the client to their buddy when the client is in the shower.
- Some check in when they are leaving and clear of the building (for an outcall) and some also when they are on their way home and safe, e.g. in the car with the door locked/on the train home. It can feel empowering having this as your security procedure. Again, a similar tactic can be used for in calls.
- Have an agreed plan in place if the checking-in system is not followed.
- For longer bookings, some sex workers check in on a periodic basis agreed with the buddy.
- People use different technology for buddying: for buddying remotely, you can message your buddy via skype, text, messaging apps or a phone depending what has been agreed with your buddy. Some sex workers may choose to use emergency devices like Suresafe fobs to send a message to a buddy discretely.

- Some people are using ‘covert’ technology alongside more traditional buddying systems, often through smart phones or key rings and disguised devices. GPS trackers and apps can be used to allow a buddy or group to see your real time location should it be needed. For those sharing a building, buddies often have keys, fobs, etc. to get into the apartment if needed.
- Do let your client know that you have a security system. Some sex workers let clients know or see that they are ‘checking in’ with a security buddy, so the client is aware the sex worker has back up and is being monitored by a buddy. You can tell them it is standard practice to check-in on arrival and leaving an appointment, mention your driver and/or security guard in your advertising – reassuring your clients/prospective clients that this is standard practice and their details still remain confidential. Similar procedures for in calls can be shared with the client.
- Some sex workers have a security partner in the next room. It is worth noting some sex workers feel that some clients may feel uneasy about this for perfectly innocent reasons, for example worrying about discretion, being concerned or afraid of coercive third parties, being robbed or simply shyness, so having a buddy in the hotel suite/apartment with you may not be ideal or an option for you. It’s for you to think through the pros and cons.
- Some workers’ buddies maintain a mutually informed list of blocked numbers/dodgy clients.
- For sex workers who do not have ‘real life’ buddies, and including situations where friends, partner or family don’t know about their work, online forums and ‘private groups’ of sex workers allow workers to make connections with one another and team up when working similar hours and in similar locations, and check in/out with each other. For example, SAAFE <http://www.saafe.info/main/index.php> offers a ‘buddy link up’.

### Mobile Phone Safety Tips

- Check your mobile phone is fully charged before starting work – take your charger or portable extra power supply – there are compact and cheaply-priced ones available.
- If possible have a second backup phone in a place you but not customers are aware of.
- Program your phone so it has the police emergency number 999 on a speed dial. Remember it is free to dial 999. 101 is the non-emergency number and it is not free.
- Install an app that will dial 999 in response to voice recognition. It is possible to use voice recognition apps to dial either a buddy or even the police e.g. ‘GPS bodyguard’ works even on the lock screen and from a reasonable distance.
- Use SOS Apps that can automatically send SOS SMS messages with GPS coordinates in case of emergency to your private emergency contacts or to a service – which can be the police. You program in the emergency contacts you want. ‘GPS bodyguard’ is an

example of such an app for Android phones which is free [https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=de.gpsbodyguard&hl=en\\_GB](https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=de.gpsbodyguard&hl=en_GB) There are similar apps for iPhone IOS devices <https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/send-help-sos-panic-button/id517707164?mt=8> <https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/sos-mobile/id1100252092?mt=8>

- Some workers use phone apps that can direct dial 999 or their check-in buddy's number. Some apps can send a 'call for help' text.
- Keep an eye on your customer's mobile phone, to check they are not using it to film, photograph or record you without your consent.

### Apps and Emergency Help Messages

- There are phone apps which can be used for emergency help messages – these can send an automated text for example: 'I need help' or 'SOS'. This is sent with your location via GPS (some in Google Maps). This is sent if you press a certain button on your phone or say a command. It is sent to all the numbers you set as emergency contacts. Some voice-activated personal assistants can be used in the same way.

### Physical Security Systems

If you work from home or a work apartment and can afford it, there are several things you can install for safety which are well worth it.

- Install secure door locks and a strong door. Make your windows and doors burglar proof.
- If the property and space enable it, install security lights to signal when someone approaches the property and so you can more easily check them out.
- Fit a video intercom so you can see the entrance.
- Fit a spy hole so you can see who is at the door.

**CCTV** can be installed at your work place. This can be a deterrent and also is important, so you can check who is at the door and in the vicinity of the building. **Be careful: there is guidance on CCTV and this advises that people have the** right to protect their property, this can be done by using a CCTV system where it is necessary, such as a security measure. However, the Surveillance Camera Commissioner recommends that users of CCTV systems should operate them in a responsible way 'to respect the privacy of others', for example, will it overlook the neighbours? Have a sign up that there is CCTV. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/domestic-cctv-using-cctv-systems-on-your-property/domestic-cctv-using-cctv-systems-on-your-property>

**CCTV also communicates to customers that there is a record of them arriving and that can deter crime.** Some sex workers have CCTV or webcam inside pointing to the entrance clients will use. But CCTV can bring up the issue of exposure for the client and may not be for everyone, depending on their confidentiality policy. Some camera systems can now be linked to your mobile phone and have a range of functions.

- Panic buttons: if you do work from your own home or work place, fit panic buttons. As with house alarms and personal alarms these may not attract other people but may shock and deter attackers. Some panic button systems can be linked to a central system office.

**Escape Routes:** wherever you are working from, be it home, short term apartment let, hotel, customer's home, always be aware of escape routes. Consider a building's layout and escape route options when you are making a booking for a short-term rental and a longer-term work flat rental. If doing outcalls and working in an unfamiliar building, assess your escape routes as you enter the building and from the spaces where services are provided.

## Personal Safety Alarms

Suzy Lamplugh Trust: <https://www.suzylamplugh.org/> specialises in personal safety advice, including work-related safety for lone workers. They advise all people to carry personal safety alarms and they produce specific info about which alarms to use and how to maximise their use. The following is mainly extracted from their website <https://www.suzylamplugh.org/FAQs/personal-alarms>

- Alarms are meant to shock and disorientate attackers so you have crucial seconds to get away. It is a common misconception that alarms will attract others but if there is no one around, or others are far from us, they may not be attracted to the sound.
- This is why the sound an alarm gives out is really important and it needs to be loud and shrill so it literally shocks the attacker enough, so they pull away.
- The most effective sound is continuous, **over 130 decibels**, (approx. 138db is ideal). You might find a nice compact alarm but it may not be loud enough. So before buying check the decibel level.
- Think about what alarm works best for you. You need one that is easy to carry and that you can set off easily in one hand. Is a push cap, push button or pull-out pin better for you? Don't get an alarm that is too fiddly. Think where you will have it so you can easily get it in an emergency. It's no use hidden at the bottom of your bag!
- Suzy Lamplugh recommend alarms that can be operated with one hand which enable you to activate it easily and covertly.
- The best way to use an alarm is to set it off and hold it as close to the attacker's face as is possible.
- Drop the alarm and make your escape, leaving as quickly as possible and moving to a busy place if possible.

- Some sex work support projects and organisations provide free personal safety alarms.

**Remember:** A personal alarm should be just one part of your personal safety plan. There are lots of other ways in which you can help to reduce the risk of violence and aggression.

## Work Clothing

- When dressing for work be mindful that certain clothing items can be used against you.
- Check your clothing is 'straight-jacket proof' and can't be pulled over your shoulders to lock your arms.
- Be aware a scarf or other item round your neck can be grabbed and used to choke you. Some people avoid scarves and necklaces altogether.
- If you choose to wear necklaces or earrings, try and make sure they are small, come off easily. Avoid large hoop or dangling earrings which someone can grab and tear off.

## Personal Safety and Self Defence

- Personal safety courses can be useful for raising awareness about safety techniques. So, if you have opportunity to attend, give it a go. Some sex worker organisations and projects offer courses for free which have been designed specifically for sex workers:.
- Some people in the sex industry learn self-defence or martial arts finding such training can help with confidence and assertiveness. **Yet it is important to consider that the Suzy Lamplugh personal safety trust advise that self-defence should only ever be used as a last resort and that the first aim should be to get away from an attacker.**
- Remember also that if you use excessive force, you could be legally liable. The law in relation to self-defence and reasonable force is outlined by the [Crown Prosecution Service](#).

## Weapons, the Law and Safety

If you have something to defend yourself remember it could be used against you. Also, you may be breaking the law, this will be case specific. But be aware in any event the use of any weapon could potentially lead to an allegation being made against you.

## Drugs and Alcohol at Work

- In the BtG survey, not using drugs and/or alcohol at work was identified as a safety strategy by many online sex workers.
- If you do use them when working, try to use in amounts that keeps you in control.
- Avoid accepting drugs from clients, you can't be sure what you are taking.
- Be aware drinks can be spiked – if you are offered a drink in private ask for an unopened can or bottle or serve yourself.
- Be aware if your customer is under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

## At the Booking: In Calls

- Keep an extra charged phone hidden in the space you work.
- Have a panic button fitted and/or personal safety alarm accessible in your home or place of work. (See the info on personal safety alarms).
- Some sex workers used 'criminal identifier' spray that is available legally on the internet.
- Have a clear plan for exit routes from your house or work space.
- Do not give the full address until the client is actually on your street. So, for example, give only the name of the street, postcode, general area or some landmark asking the client to confirm when they have arrived there.
- Only then will the worker give the full address.
- Doing in calls at home or at a rented premises used for work makes it a little easier to take a 'sneak peak' such as discretely looking out of the window to make sure the client is who they say they are, and is alone and not armed, etc.
- Consider installing and using CCTV at your place of work. Indeed, the Surveillance Camera Commissioner has guidance that needs to be adhered to including some relating to signage (see section on CCTV).
- Some workers prefer the extra security of having someone else on the premises when they are with a client to deter incidents and who is on hand to react if there is need. This can be a friend, partner, receptionist or other. Check out the legal situation at [Release](#).
- Some people have a co-worker as their security either by being physically in the next room or virtually via app or phone. Some sex workers work in pairs or small groups specifically for safety. Yet two or more people working in the same premises, even if they work on different days, means that the property can be defined as a brothel and those involved risk prosecution with 'managing or assisting in the management of a brothel'. [See Release](#). Police forces vary in their approach to such circumstances, as to whether they will act to close such premises or prosecute the sex workers.



- You can arrange with a co-worker to knock on your door if the booking has gone on for longer than agreed or use a code word.
- Some people ‘pretend’ another person is present, for example keeping a room closed with a radio or TV on and telling the customer that a co-worker or security is in the room next door.
- If working alone, a safe word system can be used as part of specific apps on your phone that can trigger an alert or even listen in to your conversation/session.

### Privacy and Safety When You Work from Home or Rented Accommodation

- Some workers did express a concern regarding their own privacy when working from home. If you are busy and have lots of people visiting, think about how you would handle being asked about this by, for example, your neighbours.
- Some workers who worked from home also had ‘civvy jobs’ that justified people calling, such as being a therapist or a work from home accountant. You might want to think about using a cover job if you want to avoid any difficult conversations.
- Some people prefer a specific room or area which customers will access. Plan how you will manage customers in your space and what areas you will permit them to access.
- Keep personal items that may identify you or people you know away from the areas customers access.
- Keep items of value out of sight, don’t leave keys for doors and cabinets visible to customers.

Working from rented accommodation can bring its own issues. In addition to those above, some workers have advised:

- Not giving the address or even local area out in their advertising.
- Not including pictures of the premises, no matter how appealing it might look.
- Some workers we spoke to had had problems with landlords secretly filming them working.
- If renting from a landlord regularly check for holes in the ceiling, small LED lights where they shouldn’t be, checking ornaments and furnishing provided by the landlord for holes or lights, etc. It is unlikely of course that this form of surveillance will occur, but good to know just in case.
- Some workers had experienced problems with their landlords raising the rent once they discovered the tenant was a sex worker. For some the rent rise was used as a form of blackmail, threatening to expose the worker if they didn’t pay. This behaviour is often a crime – see harassment section. It is good to keep this in mind.
- Regardless of who you rent from, or even if you own your property, there could also be a legal issue if you have someone else on the premises as part of your safety

procedures. This might be something to think about and of course your privacy would be particularly important in this situation.

## At the Booking: Out Calls

### Hotels

- A common method of security checking for hotel bookings is to ask for the client's real full name and room number, then to phone the hotel reception, asking to speak to said client in said room to check whether or not they are: a.) who they say they are and b.) in the room they say they are.
- Try and tell someone which hotel you are going to and when you are expected back.
- Have a buddy arrangement and check in and out with them. (See the buddying section)
- If you can, choose the hotel yourself.
- A benefit of hotel only outcalls is that many hotels will have CCTV recording you entering and leaving the premises as well as activity in the corridors. They also often have security on the premises. Indeed, if you can pick the hotel, get one that does have such.
- Be aware some hotels operate a covert but active anti-sex worker policy and will ask you to leave if they suspect you are sex working. Network with other sex workers on forums and private groups to get advice about hotels, their reception set up and policy on sex work.

### Out Calls to Customer's Homes

- Some sex workers prefer not to do out calls to a customer's home feeling they are on the customer's 'territory'. Others do visit clients in their homes. For home calls, always ask for a landline, street address and postcode. Verify client's name and address by checking directory enquiries or electoral registers.
- When taking a home outcall some sex workers, once they have the address, will check on apps like google streetview to see if the address is a genuine residential address with a clear exit or entrance, and to get a feel for the place before accepting the booking as well as to make sure the address is genuine. It may also be worth googling the address. Check that it is a real address by checking online (e.g. Google StreetView and Google Maps). Google Maps can also help you to scan the area/street and work out your approach/exit in advance.
- If it appears to be in an isolated area, have a think if this is safe for you.

- Our research found some sex workers ask for a utility bill (scanned or photographed and sent) and the name of the client to double check. Some also ask for a deposit, to have a digital trail.
- Have a buddy arrangement and check in and out with them (see the buddying section). Try to make sure the client knows you have spoken to someone.
- Avoid premises with dogs, especially if they are aggressive.
- Be aware of your surroundings, which way does the door open and lock, memorise the layout especially how you get to the door – plan your escape routes.
- Keep your mobile phone close.
- Look for mobiles, laptops, hidden cameras which may have cameras and be recording.
- If you are uncertain about a client get out immediately.

## Sexual Health and Safety

- Be wary of clients bringing their own condoms. This is entirely your decision, and some clients may have size issues, a latex allergy, a preference for a certain brand but this can also serve as a tactic to use a pre-punctured or ripped condom. Most workers have a wide range of condoms so that they always know they are intact and in-date.
- Beware the ‘wrong hole’ trick. Some customers may say they ‘slipped’, ‘got carried away’ or ‘didn’t realise’ in order to push your boundaries but always stay within your safe limits.
- Remember removing a condom or deliberately damaging it during sex, without explicitly asking permission from you, is a crime. Some people call this practice ‘stealthing’.
- Safe words are essential for many workers, especially in BDSM scenarios (see BDSM section).
- Always set your boundaries and stick to them. You can start this process by putting your safer sex boundaries on your website and/or online profile. Depending on where you live (which country) might depend on how much information you are comfortable sharing, taking legal issues into consideration.
- If you have a slip with your safer sex routine, don’t beat yourself up but get yourself checked and look again at your safer sex practices. Most workers use condoms for vaginal and anal sex. Many use flavoured condoms for oral.
- Many sex workers go to the sexual health clinic regularly for a ‘full screen’ sexual health check-up. It depends on how busy you are. Some visit every three months, some monthly.
- Always ask for a ‘full screen’ to make sure you get the correct tests.
- You can also go to sexual health services if you have concerns that you may have been exposed to HIV (for access to PEP) or that there is a risk of pregnancy and you want to prevent this by taking [Emergency Contraception](#).
- For information about sexual health services including screening services in your area go to: <https://www.nhs.uk/Service-Search/Sexual-health-information-and->

[support/LocationSearch/734](#) If you prefer to access a specialist sex work project or service contact [NUM](#) about services in your area.

## BDSM & Safety

- If you offer BDSM services they should be discussed beforehand and in detail, e.g. safe words, the extent of the bondage. It is not recommended that you allow anyone to bind you to the degree that you are completely immobilised and unable to speak/see.
- Some clients may try and push for 'no safe words'. Most pro doms do not accept this.
- Some pro doms have a legal disclaimer, written by a solicitor, that the client must sign before service begins.
- Whether dom or sub – know your craft and get advice from other BDSM professionals.
- Join a forum for BDSM professionals – there you can share and discuss issues of safety.
- These are just a few tips for BDSM professionals as the majority of this document will also apply to you.

## Some Tips for Webcammers

- Many performers use fake identities and back stories to hide their identity for safety reasons but also to create a different persona and separation between their work and real self.
- Join a cam forum led by other webcammers e.g. [Amber Cutie](#).
- Piracy (having your content stolen and used without your consent): [Cam Model Protection](#) will remove all your content if you pay for this service. This finds and removes pirated content. The service sends DMCA takedown notices to the file hosting sites, tube sites, search engines and internet service providers who are hosting or linking stolen content.
- DMCA.Com provide free labels to add to pictures making it easier to track any unauthorised use of pictures and videos.
- If you provide custom content, i.e. clips, films, pictures – keeping a record of who has purchased each item of content can be helpful in tracking down where any explicit content has been pirated.
- If offering live cam services from home, it is always a good idea to use a space free of any identifiable objects or sights.
- If offering skype always use a different skype account not linked to your personal account.
- Check a cam service or platform is genuine before signing up as there are scam sites.
- Many cam workers will check online porn sites for any leaked content or recorded shows, it is worth always remembering clients are able to record all shows for their own use or to share online.
- As with any form of sex work setting clear boundaries on what you are and are not willing to do is incredibly important.

- Drink and drugs at work: beware of losing your inhibitions and doing something you would not normally do. Many workers choose not to use alcohol or drugs whilst working.

## Agency Work and Safety

Before joining any agency ask what screening and security measures they have in place. Here are some things you should expect from agency security:

- For there to be an agreed exchange of calls or texts between you and the agency when beginning and ending a booking.
- An established procedure that will be followed in the event that you don't send the required check-in messages, or respond. What will happen, how long will it take, will the police be involved? Particularly important, will someone physically come to your aid or is it just a case of phone calls being made?

Choosing your agency:

- The most popular agencies will regularly be mentioned on local and national client review forums, though this is no guarantee of safe and satisfactory working conditions. The most popular agencies will have in call apartments in central areas and will not expect you to pay to join. Some charge for pictures but experienced agency workers advise not paying upfront, as this can be a scam. Reputable agencies let you pay once you are earning.
- Some agencies advertise themselves as 'female owned' or 'female run'; this is to flag that coercive or exploitative third parties are not hiding behind the guise of an 'agency' but do be aware that male or female run, it's important to look at the professionalism and safety of the agency overall.
- Most agencies will tell you that they are very busy and can give you lots of work – be wary of this, especially if the agency has little online presence.
- Agencies who advertise 'party girls' and late hours may require escorts who will both visit clients at their home and who will drink and take drugs, so consider whether this is something you feel is safe.
- Asking an agency if they keep up with ugly mugs reports is always a good idea! If they have never heard of the system, that can be an indicator of how seriously they take escort safety.
- If they offer in calls, what is the security there like? Is there a video intercom, a spyhole on the door, a system of locks, and CCTV? If agencies take physical descriptions and you can check what the client looks like before you let them into the apartment, you can protect yourself from people who, for whatever reason, are being deceptive.
- If you will be making outcalls to houses, it is vital to be aware of security procedures, such as will they take the client's address and double check it to make sure a person of that name does really live there? It is preferable on these types of bookings to be

taken by a driver, so you have someone physically on hand in case of emergencies; therefore, will the driver wait for you?

- Be mindful of agency expectations. Like many agency workers (whether in the sex industry or not) some find that the agency's pressures to meet targets and provide service can impact upon the escort. So be clear about your boundaries and only work when you choose, for rates you are happy with and within your safety and privacy boundaries.

### Tips to Protect Your Privacy

- Have a work fake name and work persona.
- Have separate phones, social media accounts and emails for work and personal life. Some people have different laptops/tablets.
- Some clients will ask your real name so be ready for this. Maintain your boundaries and personal space and explain that this is not information you give to clients. The benefit of this is that you are being honest and firm with clients immediately.
- Telling clients your real name is rarely advisable, it erodes your personal barriers and the defence mechanism and working strategy that having an alter ego can provide.
- Even without speaking it can be easy to give away too much about your real name and life, not just by what you say but also your surroundings especially for in calls; leaving out addressed letters, bills, items with your, your partner's or family's name on or details of other places of work/study and family photos can give away information on yourself that you may want to keep a secret and private.
- Always use separate photo images from your personal life and personal profiles on social media and remember that images, numbers, social accounts and names can be searched by anyone on the web. So again – fake names, separate numbers are always best.
- Know as much as possible about any app/website advertising platforms you use, how it works and its data protection policies. Specifically check the site's policies on external advertising and ownership of content and images.
- Watermark your photos with your phone number.
- If you do custom content it may be helpful to put a reference number for each photo/clip/sale and keep a note of who has bought them – so if they post elsewhere they can be identified.

While many sex workers don't experience situations with people trying to identify or out them, some do. It can be a worry especially for those who need or want to keep a higher level of anonymity online. One of the most common concerns for online workers is how images online could be used in the future, from being spotted by someone you know to having pictures stolen by other sites and posted elsewhere online. Some tips that can help with this could be:

- Avoid using faces or tattoos online as these can be the most identifiable type of picture.
- Cropping images can now be done with the click of a finger to remove faces but a more common and more aesthetically pleasing option is to blur or pixelate images. Most macs and computers have this facility already built in and just a click of a button away; on mobile devices there are a range of free apps that can be used.
- Some more tech savvy sex workers are now using programs to avoid their faces being “unpixellated” by others as an extra layer of security.

### Reverse Imaging and What You Need to Know

Reverse image searches – like Google and TinEye – make it possible for people to find out information from a photograph. So, some sex workers use software like batchpurify to remove identifying information from images and as a way of outsmarting the unpixelating programs. These programs can remove all information such as time and date taken, make and model of camera and other information that can be found from images.

One other way to avoid being reverse image searched is to mirror image a photograph, while not impossible for people to figure out, it could prevent the average reverse image searcher

Keep it simple – one of the most basic ways to monitor what is online about you is to frequently google yourself with your work and personal name. Most public privacy breaches can be found this way. It is worth noting that if you find a privacy breach steps can then be taken to have information removed.

### Removing Your Sex Work Digital Footprint

You might be planning a break from sex work or intending to leave and want to remove as much of the online info about your sex work as possible. Some of the privacy information we have already shared can help with this. More tips for removing your online presence include:

- You might be able to use the ‘Right to Erasure/be Forgotten’ rules, introduced as part of data protection law. The Information Commissioners Office is a useful source of info about this <https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/guide-to-the-general-data-protection-regulation-gdpr/individual-rights/right-to-erasure/>. You can ask internet search providers to remove links to information about you, so you can ask search engines like Google to remove material from their search results. The photos or videos or other content don't get removed but the link to the content is removed, making them much harder to find. The Information Commissioners Office is a place you can go for advice and to make a date about personal data breaches. <https://ico.org.uk/make-a-complaint/>
- You can contact platforms directly and ask them to remove your images and content. If they won't or if you prefer, go to the host and ask them to remove the content.
- If you own your own website – make sure you delete all content before taking down your site. This can speed up the removal. Do be aware though that people will still be

able to see the cached version of your site for some time. Applying most or all the remedies in this section and the privacy section can help to some degree.

- For cammers, services such as [Cammodelprotection](#) will remove all your content, this is for a fee. There are other content removal services for both cammers and other sex workers who advertise online. Most charge a fee.

Remember that it is not always easy to remove all content. Whilst many steps can be taken, it's always best to think about how much of your identity you want to share online first.

- See the information on protecting privacy and having separate devices for business – this makes it much easier to take a step back from your work life when you need to take a break or leave.

## Knowing What's A Crime

Whilst most bookings go without incident sex workers can be the targets of a range of crimes in their work and like all people can experience work-related crime. Most people are aware that certain things are a crime, for example physical assault, robbery and burglary. Yet people are less clear about crimes that have more recently entered law, some of these are forms of online or cybercrime, some of which, e.g. harassment, were the more commonly reported crimes experienced by sex workers in the BtG study. So, we've included some information about some of these and what you can do if you experience these. Being aware of what constitutes a crime puts you in a better position when considering your options and what you can do if you are a victim of such crimes.

## What's a Crime: Abusive Contact, Harassment, Stalking and Outing

**Harassment what it is?** It is a criminal offence for someone to harass you or put you in fear of violence. Harassment is a crime under the Protections from Harassment Act 1997. It is when a person behaves in a way which is intended to cause you distress or alarm. It is the distress element which makes it harassment, for example it has left you feeling nervous, anxious, thinking about it every day, feeling like you're looking over your shoulder.

The behaviour must happen **on more than one occasion**, so if the initial contact is distressing that is the first incident. If there is a second incident, that then becomes harassment. So only two incidents of behaviour which cause alarm or distress are needed for someone to be harassed. It can be the same type of behaviour or different types of behaviour on each occasion, so for example a phone call and a text message may be harassment as can two phone calls. The incidents may be recent or could have happened months apart.

The law prohibits a person from pursuing a course of conduct which they know or ought to know amounts to the harassment of another. A person is taken to know that conduct is harassment if a reasonable person in possession of the same information would think the course of conduct amounted to the harassment of the other.



It has a maximum sentence of six months' imprisonment and/or an unlimited fine. Causing fear of violence has a maximum of five years' imprisonment and/or a fine.

To read more about the law go to:

[http://www.cps.gov.uk/legal/s to u/stalking and harassment/](http://www.cps.gov.uk/legal/s%20to%20u/stalking_and_harassment/)

**Can harassment be online?** YES, the harassing behaviour can be in person, over the phone, in answerphone messages, email on SMS or other messaging. So, texts, SMS, WhatsApp messages, Snapchat messages and anything else with harassing content count – all can be harassment. An incident of harassment can be a range of other things as well, for example standing outside your house, damaging your property and maliciously or falsely reporting you to the police when you have done nothing.

There is also a specific offence '[Malicious Communications](#)', this makes it a crime to send a letter or any electronic communication which is indecent, grossly offensive, obscene or threatening which intends to cause distress or anxiety. One incident of this can constitute malicious communication.

Remember: whilst knowing the law on harassment and other crimes can empower you, the police don't expect you to know the law and what crimes have happened to you. You can if you choose, contact the police and tell them what is happening to you or you can contact National Ugly Mugs.

### Harassment: Dealing with Persistent, Unwanted and/or Abusive Communications

- Initially it is often advised to not respond to the message/communication – it may encourage the sender or make the situation worse.
- In phone, SMS, email and message communications you can say what is not acceptable for you if it persists, but be aware of the language you use, to prevent escalation.
- When you face an initial incident of harassment it is acceptable for you to say you will not accept this and the client/enquirer could be reported for harassment. Set your boundaries. *Remember the contact does not have to be abusive it just has to be unwanted.*
- Another option is to block or mark the user as spam – how to do this will vary on different phones/devices/apps/email services, but most have a filter/block function which means that you don't need to see or receive calls or messages from specified numbers. Be aware though that the person may then use another number.
- If the communication is via social media you can contact the social media provider and report it directly to them.
- Keep a record of the contact – keep copies of letters, texts, emails, and screenshots of other forms of communication. This information helps to show the bigger picture and provides a record of what has been happening, should you report it.

**Stalking what is it?** Stalking has been a crime since 2012. Things which can be part of stalking include: following a person, watching or spying on them, forcing contact with the victim through any means, including social media. Victim Support describe stalking as: ‘persistent and unwanted attention that makes you feel pestered and harassed. It *includes behaviour that happens two or more times, directed at or towards you by another person, which causes you to feel alarmed or distressed or to fear that violence might be used against you*’.

The Digital Trust say that most stalking contains a digital or technical element. They describe cyber stalking in the following way: ‘stalkers who stalk offline will usually assist their activities *with some form of technology as a tool e.g. mobile phones, social networks, computers or geolocation tracking. This can be characterised as “digitally assisted stalking”, as opposed to cyberstalking*’. *Abuse can take place over social networks/media, online forums.*

The Digital Trust describe the most common tactics for stalkers and bullies as:

- Monitoring you and friends – looking at what you post, photos, where you go, who you go with, etc.
- Spyware – putting spy software on your phone or computer, so they can track victims, listen in to conversations or see what’s going on via a webcam
- Sending text messages – sending hurtful or threatening messages to you over and over again
- Putting tracking devices on a victim’s car
- Account takeovers/hacking – accessing your online accounts
- Denigration – sending, posting, or publishing cruel rumours and untrue statements to damage your reputation
- Distributing photos or videos – to embarrass you
- Creating fake profiles or a website about the victims
- Exclusion – contacting or inviting everyone but you
- Flaming – posting an abusive response so everyone can see it
- Outing – telling people something embarrassing about you
- Threats and Dissemination – they threaten you and then tell everyone
- Confidence tricks – getting you to reveal information about yourself and then using it against you
- Impersonation – pretending to be the victim either online or via email, etc.
- Spamming – signing the victim up for junk email
- Trolling – say something online to get you to provoke you into responding
- Bullying by proxy – getting others to join in
- All these can be experienced by sex workers

For further information, advice and support on stalking you can contact:

- [National Ugly Mugs](#) have much experience of advising and supporting sex workers who are being stalked or harassed. Tel: 0161629 9861 [admin@uglymugs.org](mailto:admin@uglymugs.org)
- [National Stalking Helpline](#) run by Suzy Lamplugh Trust on 0808 802 0300 Calls are free from all landline telephones and mobiles using the O2, Orange, T Mobile, Three (3), Virgin, and Vodafone networks.

- The Digital Trust provide tips about what to do if you think you have a stalker. For further info go to: <http://www.digital-trust.org/stalking/2014/12/23/what-to-do-if-you-think-you-have-a-stalker>
- Your local police – including the sex work SPOC in your police force area – you can get advice from the Police if you believe someone is stalking you.

## Reporting Harassment and Stalking

**Reporting to the police:** harassment and stalking are criminal offences, if you think you have been targeted then you can report to the Police. This can be via 101 or in an emergency, 999.

**Sharing information** with the police: The police can record the harassment and this will help their intelligence systems – even if you don't want to make a formal report or take things further it helps the police to know what has happened to you and can help other sex workers. This will help them investigate the harasser if they continue to do this in your case or if they harass someone else. You and other sex workers often don't know who the harasser is or what their history is, but once the police check they may well be known to the police. And the more you report people anonymously or with a full report, the more harassers are in the police system!! Reports made to NUM giving permission to pass on details of the harasser anonymously to police are useful to the police.

**National Ugly Mugs:** if you live or work in the UK you can report to NUM via the online reporting scheme or call tel: 0161629 9861, or email: [admin@uglymugs.org](mailto:admin@uglymugs.org) if you want to talk to someone.

**UglyMugsie:** if you live or work in Ireland you can report to UglyMugsie.

**Sex work support projects:** you can report to a sex worker outreach or support service in your area. They can if you wish report this on your behalf to police or to National Ugly Mugs, should you wish and give consent.

**The National Stalking Helpline:** can advise on reporting harassment or stalking 0808 802 030.

**Remember: Online and in person abuse, harassment and stalking are serious crimes and you should not have to tolerate them in your work. You have the right to report them to the police if you choose to do so. Third party reporting schemes like NUM and UglyMugsie very much encourage sex workers to report such incidents to them and seek support if they wish to receive it. Do not feel you are bothering the police or other organisations who you may report to. Harassment is a crime, it is the police's job to take your report and investigate the crime! If you get an unsatisfactory response, call NUM for advice.**

## Outing: What to Do When You Are Threatened with Outing

Whilst 'outing' (when someone informs others, or publicly exposes, that you are sex working without your consent) and threats to out are not crimes in their own right, various offences may be committed. Outing or threatening to out sex workers can be part of criminal behaviour that meets the definition of harassment or may be part of blackmail.

If someone is threatening to out you, you can consider the following practical tips and options;

- If you are receiving threats of outing or have been outed, remove as much identifiable advertising as you can. This can be practically beneficial but also provides a psychological crutch whilst you address the situation.
- If possible take time off from work, this will give you some breathing space.
- If your accommodation is at risk from being outed, it may be advisable to offer only out calls for a period or to tour away from any local issues.
- Outing can be an upsetting situation for anyone in any branch of sex work. If possible seek support from someone who can support you through this time, some people look to peers or support services they use. Look at our resources section.
- You can contact a local project, NUM or the police to speak to them about your situation. The outing or threats to out you may be part of criminal behaviour such as harassment or blackmail. They may be breaching data protection law by using your images or personal details without your consent. If crimes are being committed against you– consider reporting to NUM, police or complaining to the Office of the Information Commissioners Office where you can go for advice and to make a complaint about personal data breaches <https://ico.org.uk/make-a-complaint/>
- To remove images that may have been used without your consent you can also try going down the copyright breach route.
- If there has been a backlash from the outing – such as neighbours, clients or friends taking the outing badly – and they are behaving in a way that harasses or threatens you, again consider reporting to the police, or NUM.
- Some sex workers choose to take a deny, deny, deny approach to being outed. If there are no identifiable images or evidence this can be a preferable option for some.
- Something to note: families and loved ones can sometimes be upset or even angry when they find out a loved one is a sex worker. Try to remain calm and explain your own experience of sex work. Many sex workers who have either been outed or 'come out' have told us that the calmer they remained, the more positive the response. Some sex worker blogs and sites may also help loved ones understand what you are going through and how they can be accepting of your work.

## What's a Crime: Voyeurism and Revenge Porn

Voyeurism: filming, sharing photos and or videos *without your consent* is a crime.

Revenge porn: across England, Wales and Scotland, revenge porn is a criminal offence (in Northern Ireland, it is due to become law). Revenge porn is the sharing of private, sexual materials, either photos or videos, of another person without their consent and with the purpose of causing embarrassment or distress. The offence covers photos or videos showing people engaged in sexual activity which would not usually be done in public, or with their genitals, buttocks or breasts exposed or covered only with underwear. It includes sharing the material as well as posting it online.

Some tips that can support your privacy and safety could be:

- Be aware of filming without your permission when in a booking: this can be done by laptops, computers, phones or hidden cameras. Be aware.
- Key an eye on your customer's phone to check they are not using it to film or positioning it to record you. Some may sell/share online or use it to try and blackmail you. Blackmail is a crime.
- Some workers allow consensual filming during a booking. Be aware of the risks. Once the film is out there, it can be a challenge and, in some cases, impossible to control (say, if your client has saved it to their memory stick/hard drive).

The Revenge Porn Helpline <https://revengepornhelpline.org.uk/> advises people who have experienced this to:

- Make a record of what has been posted online, take screenshots of what you've found and where it's been shared. Even if legal matters aren't your first thought, it could be important later. Social media can remove pictures when they are reported, but that could leave you without proof of a crime.
- Report the photos or videos to the website/application/platform.
- Be aware that the main social media platforms have strict guidelines about revenge porn and how users can get intimate content removed.
- Be aware of sites that are there specifically to show revenge porn, it can be harder to deal with these sites.
- If you need to report revenge porn, here are just a couple of options:
  - The Revenge Porn Helpline offers practical assistance in reporting and removing content online (where possible). They provide coaching and advice on how and when to gather evidence and approach the authorities but cannot undertake criminal investigation or report to the police on the victim's behalf. The helpline number is 0345 600 0459 or you can contact them via a secure email link <https://revengepornhelpline.org.uk/contact/> Their website is: <https://revengepornhelpline.org.uk/>

- [National Ugly Mugs](#) can also offer support, advice and may suggest other organisations you can go to for support. Their contacts can be found in the resources section.

### Privacy: Copyright Breach

If a website has published your images, phone number, email, text messages (often taken from screen shots) without your permission, you can contact the internet service provider hosting that platform and ask them to take down the content. Details for the host will be somewhere on the platform, they are obliged by law to provide the host's details.

It will depend on where and for what use your content and images are being used and which, if any, law is being broken. It is best to get advice (especially if there is an abusive/harassing use of your content) from:

- Your local police service.
- The non-emergency police number (101).
- Information Commissioner's Office <https://ico.org.uk/> helpline 0303 123 1113.
- National Ugly Mugs [admin@uglymugs.org](mailto:admin@uglymugs.org)

General information around copyright law and what you can do to challenge a breach can be found easily online.

### What's a Crime: Blackmail

A person is guilty of blackmail if, with a view to gain for themselves or another with intent to cause loss to another, they make unwarranted demand with menaces and for this purpose a demand with menaces is unwarranted unless the person making it does so in the belief that

- a) They had reasonable grounds for making the demand.
- b) That the use of menaces is a proper means of reinforcing the demand.

Like extortion, blackmail is a crime under theft legislation, it is when someone obtains money or property from someone using coercion. Coercion includes the threat of violence or destruction of property or improper government action. If you think you are being blackmailed or are a victim of extortion, you can seek advice from the Police, and the Police can collate all the relevant information to ascertain what crime, if any, has been committed. You can always seek advice from or report to National Ugly Mugs.

### What's a Crime: Rape and Sexual Assault

Be aware rape applies to non-consensual penetration of a person's vagina, anus or mouth with a penis. Non-consensual penetration with any other object is 'sexual assault by penetration' and can carry the same penalty as rape. The overarching definition of sexual/indecent assault is any act of physical, psychological and emotional violation, in the form of a sexual act inflicted on someone without their consent. Further information about

what constitutes rape and sexual assault can be found at <https://rapecrisis.org.uk/rapesexualassault.php>.

## What You Can Do After A Sexual Assault

- Remember that the attack is not your fault.
- Know that your work does not entitle anyone to harm you in any way.
- Find a safe place away from the attacker.
- Contact a friend or work colleague to stay with you while you think through your options.
- Get medical attention. Even if you have no physical injuries, it is important to get checked and for those to whom this applies, the risk of pregnancy addressed (emergency contraception which some people still call the 'morning after pill' is actually good for 4-5 days after, also an IUD can be fitted up to 7 days after) and to obtain any forensic evidence left by the attack.
- Sexual Assault Referral Centre's (SARCS) can help you with this.
- If you choose not to go to a SARC. You can go to your local sexual health service or Accident and Emergency for free sexual health screening and PEP (we mentioned this in the sexual health section). Both are confidential services that will not pass information to the police unless you want them to.
- Go to our resources section for sources of support for people in sex work who have experienced rape and sexual assault.
- You can contact [National Ugly Mugs](#), a national safety organisation for sex workers who can support and put you in touch with local projects who have experience of supporting sex workers who have experienced sexual assault. You can also report rape and sexual assault to them, and they can alert other sex workers, share anonymous information with the police and support you to report to the police if you want to.
- If you want to report directly to the police **call 999 in an emergency, 101 is the non-emergency number. See the resources section for more about reporting to the police.** Most police forces now have specially-trained officers who deal with victims/survivors of rape and sexual assault.

## Preserving Forensic Evidence

It can help to be 'forensically aware' so you can preserve evidence from the attack in case you report to the police or a Sexual Assault Referral Centre.

It will be very tempting to wash after an attack but your clothes, as they are, and your body will need to be examined by police (if you report to them) and medical staff (they are as sympathetic and understanding as they can be and will do everything possible to maintain your dignity, you will not be naked and exposed) when you report this. So, please try not to bathe, shower, brush your teeth or change your clothes. However, if you already have or feel you must, all is not lost. It can still be possible to recover forensic evidence, and your local SARC can advise.

It's helpful to know:

- For vaginal rape, evidence can be recovered usually up to 7 days after.
- For anal rape it is 48 hours.
- Oral rape is 12 hours.

If you feel you have to change your clothes:

- Don't wash the clothes you were wearing at the time of the attack.
- Put them into a clean bag (paper bags are best if you have them) and tie it closed.

This will help to avoid contaminating the evidence. If the attack happened in the home, do not disturb the scene as there might be vital evidence there.

- **Reporting the sexual assault:** you should seriously consider reporting the attack to the police. They are there to help you. Police forces now have specially-trained officers to deal with victims of rape and sexual assault. Some forces have sex work liaison officers who have lots of experience of supporting sex workers. Go to the resources section for more information on reporting to the police.
- **Good to know:** even if you report to the police initially, you are free to withdraw at any point – all decisions should be yours and based on what is best for you.

**Where to find support:** It's really important to know where to get help if things go wrong, that's why we have provided a range of information useful to online sex workers in the resources section. This includes: where you can go if you experience crime (including rape and sexual assault) and want support or want to know your options for reporting. Please see the resources section.

## The Four 'W's

If something happens – any crime or incident of concern – try to remember the four W's in case you choose to report to the police, to third party schemes (like National Ugly Mugs or Ugly Mugs Ireland), or to a sex work project, or you share some details via a sex worker forum.

- **Who:** physical details of the perpetrator, e.g. hair colour, height, voice, any markings or tattoos, did they smell of anything, what they said, words they used, anything distinctive that stood out.
- **When:** time and date. This can help police inquiries for example CCTV, addresses that might be on police systems, ANPR, securing the scene and forensics.
- **Where:** as above.
- **What:** what happened? What did they do? Rape? Sexual Assault? Robbery? When you get more time or feel up to it, write down as much detail as you can.



Write these details down or put a note on your phone as soon as you are able and feel safe to do so. This will help the police in their enquiries if you choose to report and will be useful if you report to a third-party scheme at a local project, National Ugly Mugs or you share some details with other sex workers online.

## Self-Care, Wellbeing and Safety

We hope that the information so far has supported you in adding to or fine-tuning your safety and privacy practices in your work. Here we look at the bigger picture of wellbeing as many sex workers felt it can have an effect on safety. It is helpful to know who and where to go to for general ongoing support in your job and to manage your physical, mental and emotional health. So here are some tips, provided by sex workers, on self-care in your profession.

- Some sex workers feel that when they are stressed, pre-burn out or at the point of burn out, it can impact on safety. For example, when we are feeling pressured with stress sometimes that can cloud our judgement and this can perhaps affect our decisions, such as which clients to see, what screening processes to use and how many clients to see in a day.
- Burn out can happen in any job so it's important to take time out. This can be taking a holiday or making sure we get a day off on a regular basis.
- Financial pressures can add to this but again, like most professions, we need to take a step back and see how self-care can really boost our health, our energy levels and in the longer term – our business.

### Preventative Self-Care:

- If you are a high volume worker (a sex worker who sees lots of clients in one day or in one week) how can you balance this out? Some workers we spoke to either 'feast or famine' by choice or see this as part of the job. So, if this is you, how can you prepare. Food and nutrition, exercise, plenty of sleep, social activities with your support network (friends, family, colleagues) can really give you a boost from the inside. It might sound weird to suggest some basic things, but we all know that feeling when we are on a health drive and begin to feel more energised. This can be an ongoing self-care routine.
- Low volume workers who might see less clients but charge more, can also experience stress that is often linked to financial insecurity. Some lower volume workers we spoke to have learned how to manage by paying rent in advance, saving a percentage of their fees and/or getting a none sex work job that is less intensive. They then see the 'in between bits' as opportunities to socialise, relax, unwind, study... and save their money until their next booking/s.

## General Self-Care:

Some sex workers we spoke to regularly attend classes to support their well-being such as yoga, mindfulness, Pilates, gentle movement, dance. Going to the gym or attending an exercise class is also a great way to recharge your batteries.

### Did you know:

- Stress and anxiety can be made worse by a lack of oxygen in our systems.
- Breathing slowly into your belly (abdominal breathing) is a relaxation technique used by many and is often taught in stress management and relaxation classes.
- Gentle exercise increases your endorphins (happy chemicals) and helps to reduce the 'stress hormone' called cortisol.

Protecting your health in and out of work is an ongoing process and sometimes we need a little extra support. If our self-care routine isn't working for us and we are in a state of stress, anxiety or physical burn out, some sex workers tell us that they seek outside professional support such as:

- Seeing a therapist, counsellor or attending a support group.
- Visiting/calling a supportive sex work project.
- Seeing their GP.
- Accessing a non-sex work specific mental health organisation.
- Some people described how important online or in person peer support from other sex workers or none judgmental friends, was important to them for well-being.

When you feel you're in crisis: If you reach a point where you begin to feel ill and you are concerned about your mental or physical well-being, it's a good idea to:

- See your GP (Doctor) and talk this over with them. If you are in crisis, tell the receptionist and ask for an emergency appointment.
- Call 111, the NHS number where you can speak to a medical professional.
- If you are worried at all for your immediate safety due to poor mental or physical health – go to Accident and Emergency and ask to see the on-call mental health practitioner (this is usually a mental health nurse or doctor).
- If you are unable to do this call 999.

Some sex workers tell us that they have found it difficult to find a sex work friendly counsellor, medical professional or GP. Be aware of this – you might not want to disclose your job to begin with. Remember that you have the right to receive the same level of care as anyone else. To protect yourself in the immediacy – you might want to just discuss your symptoms. Later on, you can look for a sex work friendly practitioner once you are back on your feet.

We hope that the information in this document makes a positive difference to you in your work. Please do take a look at the following section on resources, links and useful contacts. This section includes information about where you can go if you want information and support generally, including if you have experienced a crime.

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# Resources

[More about How to Report Incidents](#)

[Support for Victims of Rape and Sexual Assault](#)

[Sex Work Support Services, Organisations and Forum](#)

[Links](#)

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## Reporting to National Ugly Mugs and other Third-Party Reporting Schemes

### National Ugly Mugs (NUM) <https://www.uglymugs.org>

NUM is a not-for-profit national organisation which aims to promote the safety of sex workers. It runs a national third-party scheme where sex workers can report crime and other incidents; they send out warning alerts to members of the scheme and can offer advice and support to sex workers who have experienced crimes.

NUM is a confidential service. It will only share your report with the police if you want that and give consent for them to do so. This is so important to NUM because it would lose its credibility and trust with the sex work community if it did not do this. NUM works with the police on crimes committed against sex workers, but is independent from the police.

There are various things NUM can be used for:

- You can directly report any crime or incident you feel uncomfortable with to National Ugly Mugs via the NUM website, app or call the office if you want to speak with someone. NUM employs experienced staff, who are trained to support sex workers who have been victims of crime, including harassment, and they have advised and supported hundreds of sex workers. So, you can talk to someone experienced, in confidence, who knows about the sex industry and will not judge you.
- National Ugly Mugs will just listen to you if that is all that you want.
- You can make a report to NUM and give them permission to record that information, create an alert which will be sent to all scheme members and alert other sex workers to the ugly mug, which can then help them avoid the ugly mug.
- If you wish and give permission, information about the incident you have experienced and reported can be shared with the police anonymously without any details that identify you.
- NUM can arrange for you to speak anonymously to your local police force (including to sex work liaison officers) or will speak to them on your behalf.
- The NUM scheme gives you the option of making a full formal report to the police. You can submit a report and tick that you want the report information to go to the police and that you want to make a formal report to the police. You can be supported and advised by NUM after the incident or at any point in the future.
- You can talk to somebody who is very experienced at dealing with crimes against sex workers about what has happened. This can involve talking through any info or support you might need from NUM or another organisation in your area.
- If you want, NUM will signpost you to services in your area that can support you.
- You can also report to NUM via a local project you know which is a member of the NUM scheme. They can make a report on your behalf without giving any of your details.
- Sign up or NUM online at: <https://www.uglymugs.org>
- Call the NUM office on 0161 629 9861 or email NUM at: [admin@uglymugs.org](mailto:admin@uglymugs.org)

Ugly Mugs Ireland <https://uglymugs.ie/>

Ugly Mugs Ireland is a not-for-profit technology initiative that improves the safety of workers in Ireland and reduces crimes committed against them by bringing workers together to share information about potential dangers. It is a free and confidential service for workers in Ireland and the UK. Sex Workers can join and then can:

- Receive warnings about potential dangers.
- Make reports about 'bad clients' and other dangers and be able to search and browse all reports.
- Check any phone number, email address, website username or car registration against the Ugly Mugs database.
- Use the uglymugs.ie app.
- Police Watch, share and view worker experiences of police.
- Access safety advice, health and legal information, and industry news.
- Anonymous third party reporting to police.
- Get details of Police Liaison Officers.

Contact via: [info@uglymugs.ie](mailto:info@uglymugs.ie). Sign up at: <https://uglymugs.ie/register/>

## Reporting to or Contacting the Police

### Emergency

In an emergency when you feel at threat of harm, call 999 for police assistance and tell them what has happened, and get to a safe place. Program your phone so it has a speed dial to 999. Install an app that will dial 999 in response to voice recognition. It is free to ring 999.

If the person has left by the time the Police have been called, try to give a full description of clothing, physical description, direction of travel, mode of travel (if in a car, vehicle registration), any weapons used or threatened to be used.

You might want to call someone who you are comfortable with to go with you to a Police station. The police may wish to speak to you alone especially if this person is a witness or potential witness.

Police should be sensitive to your situation as a sex worker and the fact that some people may have other jobs or be students. Be as open and honest with the Police as you can be; they will only ask questions relevant to the matter that you are reporting. It cannot always be possible to speak to someone not in uniform but you can ask for that if it helps. All officers should be compassionate, understanding and professional but police should understand there may be some things which you wish to discuss with an officer of your gender.

### Non-emergency

101 for non-emergency response and non-urgent – this is for reporting that isn't an immediate threat or danger to life.

Online reporting: most forces can now accept reports online, but remember that this leaves a digital footprint.

## Options for police contact/reporting

Contacting the police does not mean that you have to make a formal report or that your case will have to go to court. There are various ways of sharing information with the police:

- A report of intelligence to assist the police: intelligence is very important to the police. The police will welcome intelligence about individuals you have concerns about and the information you have could be a part of a wider picture. They should not let the person who you have passed concerns about know that you have done so. On occasions police may come back to you to ask you more, this is usually to aid their investigations.
- Contacting Crimestoppers: this is anonymous – 0800 555 111. Crimestoppers is not the Police but an independent charity working to help communities. Sometimes there is a cash reward for intelligence given. You can also do this via their website; you do not have to give your name.
- A direct report of crime to the police.
- A report through your local project or NUM.

**Sex work liaison officers:** Some police forces have special sex work liaison officers or dedicated liaison officers. Find out if there is a sex work liaison officer in the area you live or work – [NUM](#) can help you with this, or your local support project, if you have one they can pass on contacts or contact them for you. If you are in [Ireland UglyMugs.ie](#) have a list of police Garda liaison officers which their registered members can access.

All police forces in the UK have a single point of contact for sex work, these are not necessarily sex work liaison officers. You can ask NUM to contact that person for you or for the contact for your area.

If you have experienced a rape or sexual assault most police forces now have specially trained officers who deal with victims of rape.

***But remember every police officer should treat you appropriately and deliver a professional policing service whether they are a specialist officer or not.*** Police officers should take your report seriously, recognise your right to be safe and treat you with respect and dignity like all members of the community.

### ***Making a complaint about the police***

If you want to make a complaint about the police you have a few options:

- Contact NUM or UglyMugs.ie and they can advise, as can sex worker rights organisations and some local outreach and support projects.
- Complain directly to the police force involved.
- Make a complaint through your local MP.
- Make a complaint through a solicitor.

Most complaints are dealt with by the Professional Standards Department of the police force involved; all forces have one. They will record your complaint and decide how to deal with it.

#### Data Protection Concerns: Information Commissioners Office

You can make complaints to the Information Commissioners Office about concerns about various matters such as; how your personal data has been handled, if you have asked an internet search provider to remove links to information about you and they have refused and nuisance calls and messages. <https://ico.org.uk/make-a-complaint/> They have a live chat facility and a helpline Tel: 0303 123 1113.

#### Support for Victims of Rape and Sexual Assault

##### Sexual Assault Referral Centres UK

If you have been a victim of rape or sexual assault in many areas of England and Wales you can go to a Sexual Assault Referral Centre or SARC. **Sexual Assault Referral Centres or SARC's are** specialist services for people who have been raped or sexually assaulted. At SARC's specially trained staff will examine you, preserve all the evidence, offer you counselling and support, and support you to decide if you want to report to the police. You can have all these services even if you choose to have no police involvement.

You can find your nearest SARC by going to the NHS choices website and typing your postcode into the search engine at: <https://www.nhs.uk/Service-Search/Rape-and-sexual-assault-referral-centres/LocationSearch/364> or calling the [NHS 111 non-emergency service](#).

Some areas in Scotland have SARC provision, in other areas the support provided by SARC's is provided by other services. Go to <https://www.mygov.scot/rape-assault/support-for-female-victims/> or <https://www.mygov.scot/rape-assault/support-for-male-victims/>

The Rowan <http://therowan.net/> is the SARC for Northern Ireland, they can be contacted on their 24 hour advice and information line: 0800 389 4424.

#### Other services

##### Rape Crisis

Rape Crisis England and Wales <https://rapecrisis.org.uk/> has a free phone help line open daily 0808 802 9999 and on their website has information about how to get help if you've experienced rape or any kind of sexual violence, including the details of local support services.

Rape Crisis Scotland <https://www.rapecrisisscotland.org.uk/> has a free phone help line open daily 08088 010302 and on their website has information about how to get help if you've experienced rape or any kind of sexual violence, including details of local support services.

Rape Crisis also provides information about specialist support for men: <https://rapecrisis.org.uk/supportformenboys.php>

The **Survivors Trust** website also has information about SARC's and other support services for people of all genders: <http://thesurvivorstrust.org/sarc/>

## Republic of Ireland

**Dublin Rape Crisis Centre (DRCC)** <http://www.drcc.ie/> provides a wide range of services including a national helpline 1800 77 8888 email COUNSELLING@RCC.IE

## Independent Sexual Violence Advisors for Sex Workers

Independent Sexual Violence Advisors are advocates who are specially trained to support people who have experienced rape and sexual assault, and they provide support from first report to going to court. In some areas of the country there are ISVA's who work especially with sex workers, and who understand the additional barriers and issues sex workers may face when reporting such crimes. Here is a list of trained sex work ISVA's in the UK<sup>1</sup>;

## National

Shona	National Ugly Mugs	<a href="mailto:shona@uglymugs.org.uk">shona@uglymugs.org.uk</a>	0161 629 9861
Kerri	National Ugly Mugs	<a href="mailto:kerri@uglymugs.org.uk">kerri@uglymugs.org.uk</a>	0161 629 9861

## London

Jacqui	Open Doors	<a href="mailto:jacqueline.vennard@nhs.net">jacqueline.vennard@nhs.net</a>	07852918404
Anca	Open Doors	<a href="mailto:anca.doczi@nhs.net">anca.doczi@nhs.net</a>	07506740566
Pamela	Spire Trust	<a href="mailto:pamela@spires.org.uk">pamela@spires.org.uk</a>	

## Midlands

### *Birmingham*

Claire	Rape & Sexual Violence Project	<a href="mailto:pw@rsvporg.co.uk">pw@rsvporg.co.uk</a>	
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### *Coventry*

Katrina	Coventry Rape & Sexual Assault Centre	<a href="mailto:katrina.kavanagh@crasac.org.uk">katrina.kavanagh@crasac.org.uk</a>	
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### *Nottingham*

Victoria	POW	<a href="mailto:victoria@pow-advice.co.uk">victoria@pow-advice.co.uk</a>	
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## South West

### *Bristol*

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<sup>1</sup> NB This may not be a comprehensive list and is only those we are aware of at the time of writing.





**Beyond the Gaze** website has some information about local projects who offer support services to online sex workers <https://www.beyond-the-gaze.com/resources/sex-work-projects-uk-reaching-out-to-internet-based-sex-workers/>

## Sex Worker Forums

**SAAFE.INFO** <https://www.saafe.info/>

SAAFE (Support And Advice For Escorts) was established, and is run, by and for sex workers. It is a website and forum which provides peer information and advice on a range of topics including safety, health, the law, working with a range of practical information for example about ways of working, where to advertise, money etiquette, and touring amongst others. The SAAFE forum has discussion threads on a number of topics through which sex workers can share experiences and support each other. SAAFE has a popular Warnings and Wasters board where sex workers can access warnings. It also has an area where sex work projects can post information about their services, so sex workers can contact them if they wish. Join the forum at: <https://saafe.info/main/index.php>

**Good Escort** <https://www.goodescort.co.uk/>

Good Escort is an advice and support forum for gay and bisexual male escorts and masseurs who sell services in the male to male market. It was set up by escorts to provide a safe space on the web to chat and discuss escort related matters. It offers a range of forums and community resources.

## UK Sex Worker Rights Organisations

**English Collective of Prostitutes (ECP)** <http://prostitutescollective.net/>

The ECP is a self-help group of sex workers who campaign for decriminalisation of sex work and safety. *On the ECP website* sex workers can download the ECP resource [“Know Your Rights”](#) in English & seven other languages, Romanian, Bulgarian, Spanish, Italian, Portuguese, Chinese and Thai. Contacts: Email [ecp@prostitutescollective.net](mailto:ecp@prostitutescollective.net) Tel 020 7482 2496 Twitter @ProstitutesColl

**Sex Workers Resistance and Rights Movement (SWARM)**

<https://www.swarmcollective.org/>

SWARM is a collective founded and led by sex workers who believe in self-determination, solidarity and co-operation. SWARM campaigns for the rights and safety of everyone who sells sexual services. They organise skill-shares and support meet-ups just for sex workers, as well as public events. They are UK based and part of the global sex worker led movement advocating the full decriminalisation of sex work. Contacts: Email [contact@swarmcollective.org](mailto:contact@swarmcollective.org) Twitter @SexWorkHive

**SCOT-PEP** <http://www.scot-pep.org.uk/>

Scot-Pep is a sex worker-led charity that advocates for the safety, rights and health all who sell sex in Scotland. SCOT-PEP provides sex workers with opportunities to have a voice in policy and issues affecting sex workers and their website hosts a range of useful resources for sex workers including the 'Sex Workers Toolkit' with information about advocacy, safety at work, sexual health, the law & sex work in society. Contacts: Email [voice@scot-pep.org.uk](mailto:voice@scot-pep.org.uk) Tel 0131 622 755 Twitter @ScotPep

**Umbrella Lane** [www.umbrellalane.co.uk](http://www.umbrellalane.co.uk)

Umbrella Lane (UL) is a sex worker-led service based in Glasgow, providing services and support to sex workers across and visiting Scotland. UL are committed to a rights-based approach; as well as providing peer support services, they campaign for sex worker rights and carry out work to influence policy and law related to sex work. Contacts: Email [umbrellalane@outlook.com](mailto:umbrellalane@outlook.com) Twitter @UmbrellaLane Fb <https://www.facebook.com/umbrellalane>

**Sex Workers Alliance Ireland (SWAI)** <http://sexworkersallianceireland.org/>

SWAI promotes the rights, health and safety of sex workers in Ireland and campaigns for sex workers to be part of decision making which impacts their lives. Contacts: Email [info@swai.eu](mailto:info@swai.eu) Tel 085 8249305 Twitter @SWAIreland <https://www.facebook.com/sexworkersallianceireland/>

**X: Talk Project** <http://www.xtalkproject.net/>

A sex worker-led workers co-operative which approaches language teaching as knowledge sharing between equals and regards the ability to communicate as a fundamental tool for sex workers to work in safer conditions, to organise and to socialise with each other. X: Talk organises free English classes for sex workers in London and other workshops. It supports critical interventions around issues of migration, race, gender, sexuality and labour, and is active in the struggle for the rights of sex workers. X: Talk website includes the downloadable resource 'Safe Calls, Screening and Buddy Systems for Sex Workers'. Contacts: Email [xtalk.classes@gmail.com](mailto:xtalk.classes@gmail.com) Tel: 07914 703 372

## Links

This information does not cover everything, and things change quickly, we encourage you to do a little research and add that information to your toolkit for keeping you safe in your work. Here we have pulled together some links which could be helpful for information relating to safety and privacy, or options for support.

**Dublin Rape Crisis Centre (DRCC)** <http://www.drcc.ie/> provides a wide range of services including a national helpline 1800 77 8888 email [COUNSELLING@RCC.IE](mailto:COUNSELLING@RCC.IE)

**Good Escort:** <https://www.goodescort.co.uk/> is a free, escort and masseur only advice and support forum for male, gay and bisexual escorts serving the male to male market.

**National Ugly Mugs (NUM):** <https://www.uglymugs.org> If you live or work in the UK you can join NUM, receive safety alerts, report any incidents, receive support and get info about local support services. Call the NUM office on 0161 629 9861 or email NUM at: [admin@uglymugs.org](mailto:admin@uglymugs.org) if you want to talk to someone.

**NHS Choices:** <https://www.nhs.uk/> can be used for any health and health service queries including info about sexual health services in your area: <https://www.nhs.uk/Service-Search/Sexual-health-information-and-support/LocationSearch/734> and to find your nearest sexual assault referral centre: <https://www.nhs.uk/Service-Search/Rape-and-sexual-assault-referral-centres/LocationSearch/364> or call the [NHS 111 non-emergency service](#)

**Rape Crisis England and Wales:** <https://rapecrisis.org.uk/> for info about how to get help if you've experienced rape or any kind of sexual violence, including details of local support Services. Free phone help line 0808 802 9999. Also provides info about specialist support for men: <https://rapecrisis.org.uk/supportformenboys.php>

**Rape Crisis Scotland:** <https://www.rapecrisisscotland.org.uk/> for info about how to get help if you've experienced rape or any kind of sexual violence, including details of local support Services. Free phone help line 08088 010302.

**Release:** <https://www.release.org.uk/> provides free non-judgmental, specialist advice and information to the public and professionals on issues related to drug use and to drug laws. They have also produced resources on sex work and the law. **For help** or advice **email** [ask@release.org.uk](mailto:ask@release.org.uk) **telephone** 020 7324 2989. For info on sex work and the law: <https://www.release.org.uk/publications/sex-workers-and-law-booklet>

**SAAFE website and forum:** <http://www.saafe.info/> and: <http://www.saafe.info/main/index.php> is a website and forum which provides peer information and advice on a range of topics. It has a 'Warnings & Wasters Board' and offers a 'buddy link up'.

**Survivors Trust:** <http://thesurvivorstrust.org/sarc/> for info about support services for people of all genders who have experienced rape or sexual abuse.

**Suzy Lamplugh Trust:** <https://www.suzylamplugh.org/> a charity offering a range of free personal safety advice resources. They run the free National Stalking Helpline 0800 802 0300.

**Terence Higgins Trust:** <https://www.tht.org.uk/> is a national HIV and sexual health charity which offers a free helpline 0808 802 1221.

**The Digital Trust:** <http://www.digital-trust.org/> aims to help people understand how abusers use technology, and they provide advice about how people can make their devices safer.

**The Information Commissioners Office:** <https://ico.org.uk/> you can get information and advice, or make complaints to the ICO, about various privacy and data protection matters. For example how your personal data has been handled, if you have asked an internet search provider to remove links to information about you and they have refused and nuisance calls

and messages Call their helpline: Tel 0303 123 1113 or access live chat <https://ico.org.uk/make-a-complaint/>

**The Revenge Porn Helpline:** <https://revengepornhelpline.org.uk/> advises people who have experienced revenge porn.

**The Rowan:** <http://therowan.net/> is the SARC for Northern Ireland, they can be contacted on their 24-hour advice and information line: 0800 389 4424.

**UglyMugs.ie:** <https://uglymugs.ie/#top> if you live or work in Ireland you can join UglyMugs.ie and receive safety advice, make reports and access their 'Support Services Directory'. Contact via: [info@uglymugs.ie](mailto:info@uglymugs.ie) Sign up at: <https://uglymugs.ie/register/>

**Victim Support:** <https://www.victimsupport.org.uk/> is a charity which supports people who have been affected by crime and their service is free and confidential to anyone in England and Wales. You can contact them via their helpline 080816 89111 or fill in an online support request form and someone from one of their services will contact you.

### *And Finally...*

Beyond the Gaze would like to thank all the wonderful sex workers who took part in, promoted or championed our study of online sex work. We could not have produced this information without you! The research team, some of whom are current or recently retired sex workers, would also like to extend our heartfelt thanks to our working partners during this three year study.

If you would like further information on the BtG study, please visit:

[www.beyond-the-gaze.com](http://www.beyond-the-gaze.com).

# BEYOND THE GAZE

