



East Lothian & Midlothian Public Protection Office
F28 Brunton Hall
Ladywell Way
Musselburgh
EH21 6AF
Tel: 0131 653 5150
E-mail: emppo@eastlothian.gov.uk
Website: www.emppc.org.uk

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Position statement on Commercial Sexual Exploitation

Dear Colleague,

We are writing to our partners on behalf of the East Lothian and Midlothian Critical Services Oversight Group (CSOG) to ask that you join multi-agency Chief Officers and Heads of Service in adopting the attached *Commercial Sexual Exploitation in East Lothian and Midlothian Briefing Paper* as your Position Statement and consider action to take this forward.

Sexual exploitation can be defined as sexual activity that breaches a person's human rights to dignity, equality, respect and physical and mental wellbeing. It becomes commercial sexual exploitation (CSE) when another person, or group of people, achieves financial gain or advancement through the activity. It involves offering drugs, food, shelter, protection, other basics of life and / or money in exchange for sex or sexual acts.

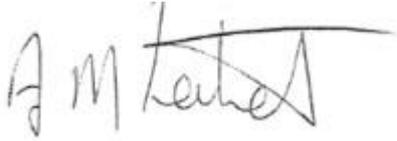
Both the East Lothian and Midlothian CSOG and the East Lothian and Midlothian Public Protection Committee (EMPPC) support the National Violence Against Women Network's (NVAWN) view that CSE is a gendered issue, stemming from gender inequality and is created and maintained by the demand from men to buy sexual access to women. We advocate measures that effect a shift in culture and challenge demand for sexual services from women, which includes decriminalising individuals exploited through the sex industry and providing long term support and exiting services for those exploited.

In line with Equally Safe, Scotland's Strategy for preventing and eradicating Violence Against Women and Girls (2016) CSOG and EMPPC supports a focus on prevention through the delivery of relationship education within the Health and Wellbeing Curriculum and also support the establishment of a legislative framework in Scotland that is founded on addressing the causes of commercial sexual exploitation (i.e. gender inequality and the demand from men to buy sexual access to women).

We would appreciate it if your organisation could take time to review the enclosed briefing paper and consider its recommendations and further action.

If you have any questions, please contact either: Veronica Campanile, Violence Against Women and Girls Co-ordinator, EMPPO – 01620 827 475 / vcampanile@eastlothian.gcsx.gov.uk, or Helen Smart, Senior Health Promotion Specialist, NHS Lothian -0131 537 9542 / Helen.Smart@nhslothian.scot.nhs.uk .

Kind Regards,



Angela Leitch
Chief Executive, East Lothian Council



Dr. Grace Vickers
Chief Executive, Midlothian Council

Joint Chairs of East Lothian & Midlothian Critical Services Oversight Group