Executive Summary

Violence against sex workers: Analysis of National Ugly Mugs (NUM) reports
Laura Connelly, August 2014

What is National Ugly Mugs?

National Ugly Mugs (NUM), managed by the UK Network of Sex Work Projects (UKNSWP), is a pioneering and innovative project which provides greater access to justice and protection for sex workers throughout the UK who are often targeted by dangerous offenders but are frequently unwilling to report these incidents to the police.

NUM acts as a third-party reporting mechanism connecting local projects and escort forums, and enables individual sex workers working in all sex markets throughout the UK to become members and access information. All reports made to NUM go to one centrally coordinated web-based hub and members receive legally compliant warnings. If consent is provided, intelligence is shared into police national intelligence systems, including the Serious Crimes Analysis Section (SCAS). NUM also support victims in reporting to the police and signposts them to appropriate local services.

Leeds University Analysis of NUM Reports

Leeds Social Sciences Institute at the University of Leeds funded a six week placement to analyse the reports received by NUM from July 2012 to July 2014. 961 reports were analysed. A summary of the key findings are outlined below:

Who Reports?

- The majority of reports submitted to NUM were from support projects (n = 710), comprising 74% of all submissions. 17% of reports came from individual sex workers (SW) themselves and a small number of reports were based on information provided by the police (6%). Although 20 reports were submitted by establishments, this comprises only 2% of all reports. A further 10 reports were submitted anonymously.
- 93% of all reports submitted were from female sex workers; 5% male sex workers; 1% transgender; and 1% unspecified.
- Over half (60%) of the reports were from street sex workers. Almost a quarter of reports were submitted by independents, with a further 7% working in brothels, saunas or parlours. Only 3% of reports were submitted by
those escorting through an agency and 6% did not specify.

### Types of Crimes

The following serious crimes are routinely monitored by NUM through the incident reports submitted to them by sex workers: rape; attempted rape; sexual assault; robbery and attempted robbery; fraud; and violence. Crimes reported as violence could also include other crime types such as rape, for example a violent rape, and robbery incidents - these would be monitored in all 3 crime types.

- The most prevalent form of serious crime experienced by reportees was violence, with a total of 419 reports. As such, 44% of all reports to NUM included some form of violence. Of the 419 reports of violence, 409 were submitted by female sex workers.
- Robbery and attempted robbery were the second most prevalent forms of serious crime, experienced by 20% of reportees.
- Although rape was less prevalent, a significant number of incidents were reported (n = 162) and thus, 17% of sex workers submitting a report to NUM had experienced this form of serious crime. Female sex workers reported 153 incidents of rape, whilst 8 male and 1 transgender sex worker also reported rape victimisation.
- Incidents of sexual assault (n = 57), attempted rape (n = 44) and fraud (n = 32) were less prevalent, with less than 6% of NUM reports including these crimes.

### Crimes by sector

- **Violence** – Of the 419 incidents of violence reported to NUM, 322 were experienced by street-based sex workers, which accounts for 77% of all violence. The second most common sector of the sex industry for experiencing this form of serious crime is the private or independent market (11%), closely followed by brothels, saunas and parlours (6%). In 14 incidents of violent crime reported to NUM the victim defined the sector in which they work as ‘escorting through an agency’, with 10 victims not wishing to specify their sex market and three defining their work as ‘other’.
• **Rape** – Of the 162 incidents of rape reported to NUM, the majority (n = 115) were experienced by street-based sex workers, accounting for 71% of all reported rape. 14% of reported rapes were experienced by private or independent sex workers, with a further 4% of cases perpetrated against those escorting through an agency. Only 3% of rapes were experienced by sex workers working from a brothel, sauna or parlour. In three cases of reported rape, the victim defined the sector in which they work as ‘other’ and in 10 cases, the reportee did not wish to specify the market in which they work.

• **Robbery and Attempted Robbery** – A similarly large proportion of all reported robbery and attempted robbery was experienced by street-based sex workers (67%), with a further 17% experienced by those operating in a private or independent capacity. In 17 cases, the victim worked in a brothel, sauna or parlour and in 8 cases the victim escorted through an agency. 6 reportees did not wish to define the sector in which they work.

**Crime and Number of Perpetrators**

• **Violence** – Of the 419 incidents of reported violence, 85% were committed by one perpetrator. A further 6% of violent incidents were perpetrated by two offenders, 5% by three offenders and 1% by four offenders. In 10 cases the number of perpetrators was unknown.

• **Rape** – Of the 162 incidents of rape reported to NUM, the vast majority (n = 145) were perpetrated by one offender. This comprises 90% of all reported rapes. 4% of rapes were perpetrated by two offenders, 3% by three offenders, 1% by four offenders and in 2% of cases the number of offenders was unknown. As such, at least 14 incidents of rape were perpetrated by more than one offender.

• **Robbery and Attempted Robbery** – Although the majority of incidents of robbery and attempted robbery were perpetrated by one offender (74%), the rate of multiple perpetration for this type of serious crime was nonetheless higher than the aforementioned crimes. Indeed, at least 22% of robberies or attempted robberies were committed by more than one perpetrator, with a further 4% of cases in which the number was unknown. More specifically, 10% of reported robbery and attempted robberies were perpetrated by two offenders, 9% by three offenders, and 3% by four offenders.

**Consent to Report to Police**

When completing the NUM report, reportees have the option to consent to
the report being shared anonymously with the police. Full consent is only selected if the victim has already reported or intends to report to the police themselves. NUM never shares full details about the victim with the police. Instead, they only facilitate direct reporting with individuals and/or organisations by acting as an intermediary.

- Rates of consent are similar across all serious crime times, with rates of anonymous consent varying between 91% (for attempted rape) and 97% (for sexual assault).
- Rates of full consent are much lower, varying between 25% (for attempted rape) and 37% (for rape).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Serious Crime by Consent Type</th>
<th>Anonymous Consent</th>
<th>Full Consent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rape</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attempted Rape</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual Assault</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robbery/Attempted...</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fraud</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Violence</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Hate Crime

- A total of 172 reports (18%) submitted to NUM included instances of reported hate crime.
- The vast majority of hate crimes reported to NUM (n = 157) were perceived to be motivated by hostility or prejudice towards sex workers, comprising 91% of all reported hate crime. Three reports were submitted to NUM in relation to homophobic hate crime, and a further three incidents were perceived to be based upon racial prejudices. Of all reported hate crime, 5% included multiple forms of hate, including prejudice on the basis of religion.
- The vast majority of hate crime, regardless of hate crime type, was reported to NUM by sex worker support projects (75%). Only 17% of hate crime was reported by individual sex workers, 6% reported by the police and 1% reported by establishments. A further 1% of hate crime reports were submitted to NUM anonymously.
- The majority of reported hate crime occurred on the street (66%). The second most common sector of the sex industry in relation to reported hate crime is the private or independent market (19%). Low rates of hate crime were reported by those escorting through an agency (4%) and those working in brothels, saunas and parlours (3%). 7% of reportees did not specify the sector in which they work.

Author’s Email: L.Connelly@leeds.ac.uk