

Commercial Sexual Exploitation

Oct 21 to Sept 22

DELIVERING
EQUALLY SAFE

Commercial Sexual Exploitation (CSE), as understood by the Scottish Government, is a function of gender inequality and a form of gender-based violence. The definition of violence against women and girls (VAWG) includes CSE in all of its forms, such as, prostitution, stripping and lapdancing, pornography and trafficking.

Delivering Equally Safe (DES) provides funding to three organisations for specific work focused on CSE: Women's Support Project (WSP), Sacro and Women's Rape & Sexual Abuse Centre Dundee and Angus.

Funded activity includes:

- Direct work with women affected by CSE.
- Education, awareness raising and training sessions for professionals and organisations.
- The development of key resources.
- Contribution to, and work with, the Scottish Government to improve policy responses to CSE.



Photo credit: Priscilla Du Preez on Unsplash

YEAR 1 SNAPSHOT

283

people supported by
CSE specific funded
activity

924

people attended CSE
specific awareness raising
and education sessions

7

people engaged in
CSE specific group
support work

Activity Oct 21 to Sept 22


1. Direct Work with Women in CSE

Direct work with women in CSE is delivered by two DES funded projects:

- SACRO's Another Way Project in Edinburgh and the Lothians (and occasionally Borders)
- Women's Rape and Sexual Abuse Centre Dundee and Angus' Vice Versa Project in Dundee and Angus

In the first year of funding, direct work with women in CSE included:

- One to one advice, practical and emotional support
- Counselling
- Group support work
- Drop-in sessions in the community and at other services
- Outreach work where women sell or exchange sex
- Employability support and signposting

A photograph of a woman with dark hair, wearing a striped shirt and a black backpack, looking down at her smartphone in a city street. The background is blurred, showing buildings and other people.

"I can talk now about my trauma which I couldn't do before. You've really helped me rediscover myself and I've got more confidence. I now have interests and I don't feel like I'm defined by sex work anymore. I feel like you value what I have to say and what I think."

Person supported by Sacro's Another Way

1.1 Emotional and Practical Support

In Edinburgh and the Lothians, SACRO's 'Another Way' project delivers one to one support and outreach work to women selling or exchanging sex. They have provided support to women to improve safety, health and wellbeing. Regular outreach work at places where women sell or exchange sex has allowed workers to connect with women who are new to selling sex and offer practical support, advice and care packages. They have recently developed trauma-informed regular group support which will offer professional and peer support, led by requests from the women they work with.

In Dundee and Angus, Vice Versa are funded to deliver direct crisis support and drop-in advice to those involved in CSE. One to one support includes helping women with their basic needs such as housing, health, substance use, food and clothing.

Spotlight - Sacro's Another Way

In the past year, Sacro have worked with E, a woman who had been selling sex for over 20 years. Initially E was in a highly agitated state and told workers of her struggle with finances, homelessness and drugs and that she could see no way out.

Support began as a friendly face and a hot drink. Since then E has been supported by workers to find housing, access support for health and substance use and get help with literacy.

"You were my light in a very dark place. Thank you. I couldn't have done it without you."

Another Way have built strong relationships with local inclusive sexual health services such as WISHES and TAP in Edinburgh and provide in-person advice and support at these services. This offers another avenue for women affected by CSE to access advice.

Similarly, Vice Versa offer drop in sessions in more rural areas in Angus and in communities in Dundee. Through DES funding the project employs one worker however, given the complexity and range of work required the organisation have highlighted that capacity is challenging. They recently recruited two volunteers to support their work on CSE and will continue to report on how this helps address capacity.

Direct work requires consistent joint working with other agencies. Both projects report working closely with women experiencing trafficking and sexual & physical violence to reduce risk. They regularly support women to engage with sexual health services, the DWP, the Home Office and asylum support.



Key support needs include:

- Housing
- Sexual Health
- Substance use
- Access to food & clothing
- Immigration advice

1.2 Employability

Funded direct work also involves creating opportunities for women around employability and supporting them to move on from CSE. This includes signposting to services providing free interview clothes and skills, and ongoing one to one work with women to look at their goals and improve confidence.

As part of the Encompass Network, a Scotland wide network of organisations supporting those involved in the sex industry, Sacro continue to work closely with Fedcap's Employability and CSE pilot project. They referred eight women to the pilot during the first year of DES funding. This is more than originally planned and demonstrates the demand for CSE inclusive support with employability. They supported eleven women to move on from CSE during the first year and continue to provide them with ongoing support.

1.3 Sexual Entertainment Venue Licensing

Sacro have increased support for women in response to any future changes to licensing of sexual entertainment venues in Edinburgh. In response to anxieties amongst women they continue to arrange drop in support at neutral venues. They have provided information about support available through Another Way, WISHES and the employability pilot. The WSP report an increase in requests for advice and information on SEV licensing to individuals, organisations and VAWP partnerships, both locally and nationally.

In the first year
eleven women
were supported to
move on from CSE
through DES funded
activity and support



Photo credit:
Snappy_Booth at
Nappy

2 Capacity Building

Funding has contributed to ongoing work aimed at building the capacity of all services to work with women affected by CSE. The WSP receive funding to increase understanding and coordinate work to improve responses to CSE, including management of the Encompass Network.

The WSP have developed a range of methods to improve how practitioners across sectors work with women who sell or exchange sex. These include:

- Targeted briefings, resources and self-guided training materials
- Online and in-person training and information sessions
- The launch of a bi-monthly email bulletin which provides learning on how CSE interacts with other policy areas (e.g. homelessness, mental health)
- The development of a new website – CSEAware.org



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Welcome to CSE Aware

A place for workers in Scotland to find information about the needs of women who sell or exchange sex, and resources to improve their response to them.

The WSP's bi-monthly bulletin is now sent to over 370 people. It has helped spotlight issues affecting women in CSE including housing, mental health and trauma.

Those accessing the bulletin and website are also informed of training opportunities. Some have even been inspired to use resources to run their own events locally.

"I'm so interested in CSE, mental health and stigma that I am arranging a local event/workshop for the 16 days of action in our local library where we will watch the film by WRASAC Dundee, discuss stigma and its impact on the women. I found the bulletin really helpful, and it inspired me to take this forwards, so thank you!"

Reader of Women's Support Project bulletin & attendee
at awareness raising sessions

2.1 Violence Against Women Partnerships (VAWPs)

The WSP work closely with VAWPs throughout Scotland to offer training and resources on CSE. During the first year of DES funding they engaged with a number of local VAWPs to support them to ratify a position statement on CSE for their local area.

3 Training & Awareness Raising

All three organisations have delivered training and awareness raising on CSE to professionals across a range of sectors. Organisations have seen significant demand for training and resources, in particular from statutory services and the Violence Against Women and Girls sector.

The WSP have delivered training and awareness raising events at national and local levels.

Engagement with training and awareness raising has been consistently high with sessions attracting practitioners from a range of areas including:

- Housing
- Health
- Gender based violence charities
- Social Work

WSP delivered 21 multi-agency events between Oct 21 to Sept 22, reaching almost 900 people

924 people have attended DES funded sessions on CSE

Photo Credit: Canva



Another Way and Vice Versa projects have delivered training and awareness raising sessions focused on raising awareness and understanding of CSE with local services including local authority housing, local foodbanks and with students at universities & colleges.

3.1 Targeted training sessions with Women's Aid and Rape Crisis organisations have led practitioners to reflect on the way they work with women who sell or exchange sex and improve resources and practice.



Photo Credit: Canva

“Thanks again for your input... it surely was interesting and I think it's galvanised us into being more pro-active in regards to finding ways to work with women who sell/exchange sex.”

Participant, Women's Support Project Training

4 Informing Policy

The WSP continue to gather learning from organisations supporting women affected by CSE and share this with the Scottish Government to deepen understanding and influence policy on trafficking and wider CSE. They are committed to supporting the Scottish Government as they develop a Framework for Scotland, to challenge men's demand for prostitution and support those with experience of prostitution. They continue to support CSE policy work nationally through linking with Scottish Government working groups, cross-party groups, COSLA and the Improvement Service.

Work from all three organisations clearly highlights the intersection of CSE with other policy areas, namely homelessness, justice, health and employment, and there is a commitment to work in partnership to support developments of new approaches to CSE across all areas.

5 Ongoing Work & Learning

DES funded organisations continue to deliver CSE specific activity and will next report on their progress in April 2023.

In their most recent Progress Reporting organisations delivering CSE specific work highlighted that services and organisations across the sector have noted an increase in women's vulnerabilities to becoming involved in or returning to CSE due to the increase in cost of living and economic/ energy crisis.

For any questions or further information on Delivering Equally Safe funded work focused on CSE please contact the Delivering Equally Safe Team at Inspiring Scotland on DESEnquiries@inspiringscotland.org.uk

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