

Manchester Prostitution Strategy 2007/08

Executive Summary

The Manchester Prostitution Forum was established in 1998 in recognition of the fact that a partnership approach was required to tackle prostitution. The Forum succeeded in bringing partners together, forging effective relationships and achieving a number of important milestones.

In 2006 the Home Office published the national Co-ordinated Prostitution Strategy. That strategy identified five objectives in tackling prostitution.

- Prevention
- Tackling demand
- Developing routes out
- Ensuring justice
- Tackling off street prostitution

These objectives form the core of the Manchester Strategy together with objectives contained in the Crime and Disorder Strategy. The Manchester Prostitution Forum benefits from a wide membership of active participants and will be key driver in delivering the strategy.

Prevention work in Manchester will be co-ordinated by a Child Sexual Exploitation Group whose membership comprises agencies with experience in child protection and enforcement. As well as ensuring schools are involved in delivering preventative messages, the group will facilitate guidance and training for partner agencies on child protection procedures. Individual support and intervention for young people will be provided where appropriate by a multi agency team of specialist professionals.

Enforcement strategies in Manchester will address the needs of local communities whilst at the same time ensuring the safety of sex workers. At the time of writing Greater Manchester Police (GMP) is in the process of formulating a force wide policy on policing prostitution. The Crime and Disorder Team will work closely with colleagues in GMP with a view to achieving synergy between this strategy and the GMP policy. A key aim will be to secure a consistent approach across the city to address the impact of prostitution on communities and to address the concerns voiced by residents.

Partners in the Prostitution Forum will take practical steps to assist individuals in exiting prostitution. A dedicated case management approach will provide multi agency support to exit prostitution on and individual case basis. A joined up approach in partnership with Health and the Drug and Alcohol Support Team (DAST) will be essential given the inter-dependent relationship between prostitution and drug use.

The work of voluntary sector agencies and the dedicated police Prostitution Officer will play a central role in encouraging sex workers to report crimes. Relationships of trust with sex workers are essential for receiving intelligence regarding crimes and perpetrators. The effectiveness of schemes already in place will be monitored and existing best practice will be extended to all parts of the city.

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Outreach agencies will work with sex workers engaged in off-street prostitution in order to promote services, ensure safety and provide a route out of prostitution. The Forum will be a channel for sharing information and intelligence regarding off street prostitution and will share protocols on how agencies should respond where incidences of trafficking are suspected or confirmed.

The Manchester Prostitution Strategy provides a basis for action around the key objectives and is linked to wider strategies on health, drugs and crime and disorder. In order to ensure there is the best possible cohesion between the strategies, it is essential that they run concurrently. The next Crime and Disorder Strategy will run from April 2008. New strategies and targets for health and drugs will also run from that date. This document is therefore an interim strategy that will be operative until March 2008. From that time, a new three-year prostitution strategy will be put in place that will be tied in to the new Crime and Disorder Strategy and the new Drugs Strategy

Strategic Objectives

The Home Office Coordinated Prostitution Strategy contains four key aims

- Challenge the view that street prostitution is inevitable and here to stay.
- Achieve an overall reduction in street prostitution.
- Improve the safety and quality of life of communities affected by street prostitution, including those directly involved in street sex markets.
- Reduce all forms of commercial sexual exploitation.

It was recommended in the national strategy that these aims should be achieved by five specific objectives that local partnerships would introduce. These were:

- **Prevention** – awareness raising, prevention and early intervention measures to stop individuals, particularly children and young people, from becoming involved in prostitution
- **Tackling demand** – responding to community concerns by deterring those who create the demand and removing the opportunity for street prostitution to take place
- **Developing routes out** – proactively engaging with those involved in prostitution to provide a range of support and advocacy services to help them leave prostitution
- **Ensuring justice** – bringing to justice those who exploit individuals through prostitution, and those who commit violent and sexual offences against those involved in prostitution (In Manchester, the Prostitution Forum's work will also seek to address offences committed by prostitutes)
- **Tackling off street prostitution** – targeting commercial sexual exploitation, in particular where victims are young or have been trafficked.

The five specific objectives in the national strategy will form the core of Manchester's Prostitution Strategy and are combined with the CDRP's core aims of:

- **Reducing crime and disorder**
- **Reducing anti social behaviour.**

This document provides the foundations for pursuing these objectives. The structures and sub-groups outlined in this document will take responsibility for actions that will make a real and sustained impact with a view to achieving the overarching objectives.

Measuring progress – Crime and Disorder performance indicators for 2007/08

The Crime and Disorder Strategy has a target to reduce overall crime by 25%.

“Overall crime” is broken down into 10 specific crime types. Of relevance to the prostitution strategy are:

- Woundings
- Common assault
- Robbery
- Theft from person

The data available to the CDRP does not lend itself to an approach whereby, for example, the total number of robberies relating to prostitution can be disaggregated. The work of agencies and the forum will therefore be to contribute to the overall crime reduction targets.

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Key performance indicators for 2007/08 – Other

Other specific targets for 2007/08 have yet to be finalised but are likely to include:

- Entering treatment for drugs/substances
- Sustained engagement with treatment
- Minimising waiting times between referral and engagement with services.
- Employment service indicators.
- the number of female sex workers are able to take their baby home with them following birth.

Prostitution in Manchester – the local picture

90% of female on-street sex workers are heavy end drug users. According to the Home Office Crime Reduction website, *“Sex markets play a significant role in the development of drugs markets (and vice versa). Where this occurs, the threats posed by drug market to public order, public health and to vulnerable individuals intensify. There are linkages between sex markets and crack markets. Crack is a drug which facilitates sex work. The significant amount of money which sex workers can earn means that they are ideal clients for crack markets.”*

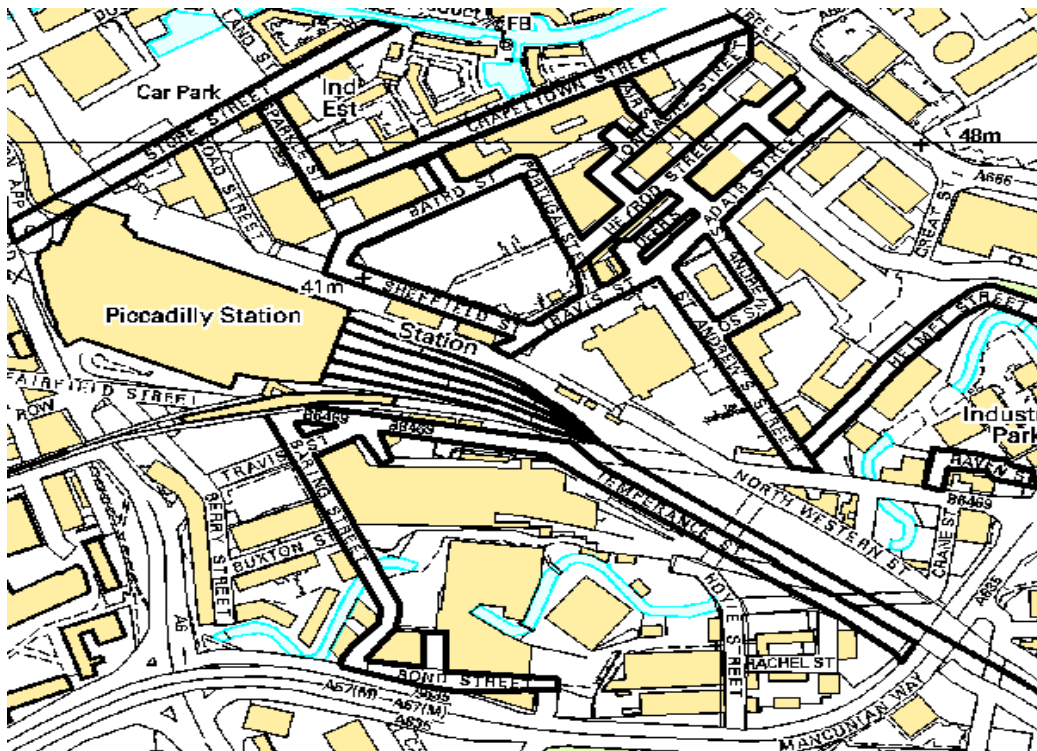
The areas where prostitution takes place therefore have to be considered in this context.

There are four main areas in Manchester where on street prostitution takes place:

- City Centre – East of Piccadilly train station
- City Centre – the gay village
- Cheetham Hill
- Whalley Range

City Centre –East of Piccadilly train station

This long established beat behind Piccadilly train station effectively operates in an area south of Store St that reaches as far down as the Mancunian Way.



The northern boundary of this beat is Store St. Sex workers do not operate along this street itself but at this location a number of outreach projects park their vans or vehicles in order to be accessible for their clients. A number of planned developments in the area in the forthcoming years are likely to impact on both prostitution and the various outreach projects in the area. For example:

- British Rail will shortly be moving into large offices in Square One (just south of Baird St).

- Development is planned in North Weston St. The old BT building is schedule to open as a 4 star hotel in September 2007

Close working between the Prostitution Forum, City Centre Management and outreach agencies will be needed to manage these developments carefully.

City Centre – Gay village

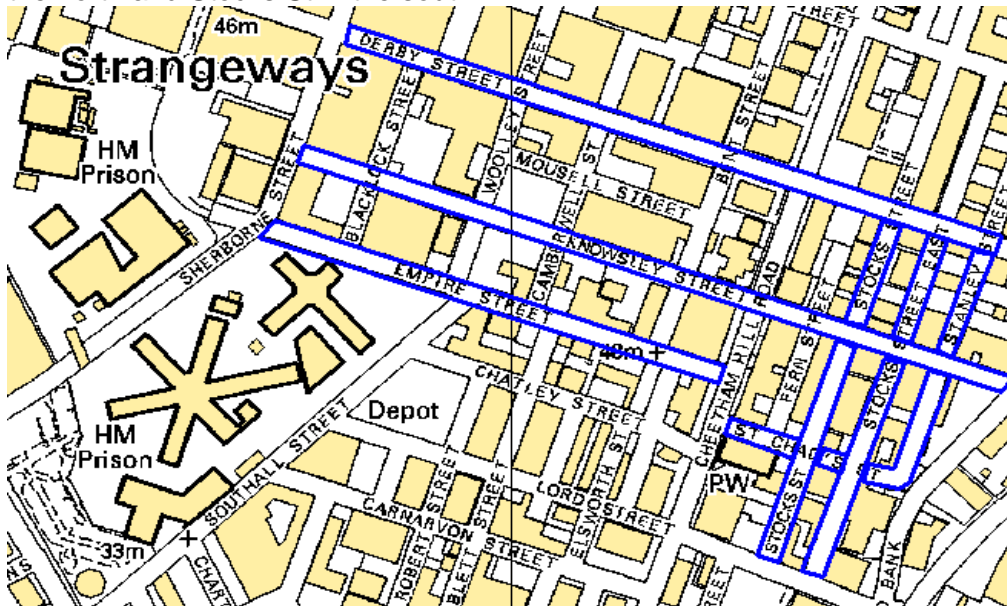
Male sex workers operate across the gay village both on the streets and in licensed premises. Concerns have been expressed by voluntary sector organisations that:

- Male sex workers are generally younger. Some will be under 18.
- Male sex workers are more likely to be stereotyped as being able to look after themselves (because they are men) when in fact they should be viewed equally as victims.
- Further work needs to be done in partnership with GMP on how best to police this beat.

This area needs to be managed holistically by all the main agencies in the same way as the Piccadilly beat.

Cheetham Hill

The beat in Cheetham Hill is located south east of Manchester Prison in an area spanning both sides of Cheetham Hill Road. The area is bordered by Derby Street in the north and Stocks St in the south.



This part of Cheetham Hill is mainly business rather than residential and the businesses and sex workers operate at different times. However, there are significant developments planned in and around the Strangeways area and so it is essential that the Regen Team for that area are included in the work of the Forum to manage this carefully.

Whalley Range – West of Alexandra Park

The beat in Whalley Range is located to the west of Alexandra Park in what is predominantly a residential area. Women working in the area use a number of streets.



Residents have raised concerns about prostitution at the Whalley Range LAP and issues are addressed locally at that Forum. The LAP is also seeking to work with the local high school to include sessions in PHSE lessons to raise awareness about grooming and awareness around prostitution issues.

Off Street Prostitution and trafficked sex workers

By virtue of its very nature, it will never be possible to obtain a full picture of the extent of off street prostitution. Most work done in this field is achieved by engagement with saunas by either the police or Manchester Action on Street Health (MASH). The main aim of the engagement by MASH is to ensure workers know how to access services. The main aim by the police is to develop relationships of trust so that workers will feel confident to report incidents. Having said that, both agencies will address whatever needs they encounter.

Developing relationships with saunas is a problematic course of action. The CDRP and its partners cannot condone saunas in any way and must not be seen to be doing so. Furthermore, there are reports of under age prostitutes working in saunas and this must be tackled using all enforcement and child protection powers. With that caveat, the type of work outlined above is essential to improve the safety of the women and to assist and to provide assistance in accessing services to exit prostitution. It also serves a vital function of building up trust and encouraging confidential intelligence that could relate to issues such as migrant or trafficked sex workers.

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Trafficked sex workers are part of a much larger picture of organised crime that is beyond the remit of the Prostitution Forum. The role of the Forum has been, and should continue to be, a channel for sharing information and intelligence gained from any sources including the type of engagement with saunas outlined above. The role of the Forum should also be to ensure that partners are aware of any protocols setting down how individuals and agencies should respond where incidences of trafficking are suspected or confirmed. Colleagues from Adult Social Care will be critical in assisting the Forum on this point. The Forum should also be to tackle under age trafficked sex workers with all possible enforcement and child protection powers.

As well as issues relating to trafficking, there are also public health issues connected to sauna based sex work that should also be within the remit and scope of the Forum. Evidence suggests that prostitutes in saunas are more likely to engage in risky behaviour (such as penetrative, un-protected sex) than on-street sex workers.

The partnership structures for addressing prostitution

The objectives in the Manchester Strategy will be met by the Manchester Prostitution Forum, its member agencies and its supporting structures. Those structures are outlined below.



The Manchester Prostitution Forum

The Forum includes all the key agencies such as the police, health service, city council and voluntary sector organisations and is chaired by the Lead Member for Women's issues.

The Forum meets every six months and its purpose is to develop and maintain effective partnership working by focussing on specific strategic issues at each meeting.

The Chairs' Group

The Chairs' Group exercises an executive function and its purpose is to

- Maintain a regular link between the four sub groups and with the Lead Member for Women's issues
- Maintain a strategic overview of the partnership work
- Ensure that the Prostitution Strategy is being taken forward and delivered.

The Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) Group

The CSE Group reports to the Safeguarding Children's Board and supports the local authority's statutory duties as regards child protection and child sexual exploitation.

In this capacity the CSE group:

- Reviews the number of live cases and the number that have led to case conferences
- Looks at policies and procedures in relation to child sexual exploitation issues
- Seeks to ensure awareness amongst agencies of child protection policies and practice.

The remit of the group also includes the preventative issues outlined in the national strategy, namely, ensuring schools are involved in delivering preventative messages that

- include input on local issues
- are available in all schools
- are available to all YP including those not in schools.

This group also ensures that the work to address prostitution meets the Every Child Matters outcomes and in particular those aimed at ensuring young people:

- stay safe
- are healthy

The Case Management Group

The purpose of the Case Management Group will be to take an operational approach to exiting prostitution. It will discuss and maintain a regular case load with a view to:

- Supporting sex workers leave prostitution by identifying services and removing barriers where they exist
- Supporting those most at risk
- Identifying where enforcement would be appropriate.
- Ensuring that responsibility for tasks is allocated to agencies and individuals

The group will have individual cases referred to it by any of the agencies. The criteria for referral are such that there will be a focus on those sex workers who have stated an intention to leave prostitution or those whose behaviour is causing a risk to him/herself or to others and that risk is significantly greater than the risk normally encountered by or posed by sex workers generally.

This group should be the link between the Forum and local area working. There should be a sharing of intelligence between the group and the relevant Local Tasking Meetings, Area Inspectors and Community Safety Co-ordinators.

Performance and Commissioning Group.

The membership of this group comprises those agencies who commission services. The group will have close links with the Case Management Group and will seek to fill gaps in service that have been identified at an operational level. This group will also monitor performance where possible.

The Strategy Sub Group

This group would effectively cover all other aspects related to prostitution not covered by the other two sub groups. The key aspects to be addressed will include:

- On street prostitution: A regular report back on each of the prostitution beats that will include monitoring complaints from residents and businesses, proposed developments in the areas and any other trends or developments. Where complaints have been received, the group will need to ensure that they are addressed either locally by the crime and disorder structures or in partnership with them.
- Off street prostitution: information and intelligence sharing
- Trafficking: information and intelligence sharing

This group will also need to maintain effective links with local CDRP structures such as LAPs and LTMs.

Local Priorities

Through the partnership structures outlined in the previous section, the partnership will address local priorities within the framework set by the national Co-ordinated Strategy on Prostitution. This section examines those local priorities under the five key national objectives, namely

- Prevention
- Tackling demand
- Developing routes out
- Ensuring justice (including offences committed by prostitutes)
- Tackling off street prostitution

Prevention

The Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) Group will lead on the prevention strand of the strategy. Key strategic aims will include:

Continuous training on child protection procedures

- There will be continuous training and support on child protection policies and procedures facilitated by the Forum. All statutory agencies and voluntary sector agencies will benefit from clear procedures on how to work with sex workers they believe to be under 18.

Oversee multi agency services to support young people who are sexually exploited.

- The newly established PROTECT Team within Children's Services is a multi agency team based at Grey Mare Lane Police Station. The team's focus is on vulnerable young people who are in controlling or abusive relationship, who are risk of grooming or who are in a sexually exploitative relationship Knowledge of this team's work and how services are accessed will be embedded across all the agencies.

Work with schools

- The national policy is clear that partnerships should ensure that schools are involved in delivering preventative messages. As discussed earlier, work is already underway to take this forward in Whalley Range. The Child Sexual Exploitation sub group will lead on this.

Address the needs of under-age male sex workers

- The needs of young male sex workers need to be addressed throughout the Forum's structures. The view of agencies working with male sex workers is that they are generally younger than female workers and there will be a greater proportion under 18. In light of that, the work of the CSE group should continue to focus on this area.

Tackling demand

Enforcement

- Enforcement strategies need to address the needs of local communities whilst at the same time ensuring the safety of sex workers. Enforcement against kerb crawlers can have health and safety issues (the "punters" need to move on quickly and the women have less time to talk and make a judgement). However, where prostitution is having an impact on the local community, the CDRP must take action.

At the time of writing, GMP is developing a new, force-wide Prostitution Strategy that will outline an approach to enforcement taking account of powers available and ACPO guidance (Association of Chief Police Officers). Manchester's Crime and Disorder Team will be working closely with GMP in the development of that policy to achieve synergy with the Manchester Strategy.

The Strategic Sub group keep a roving brief over all the beats in the city and work with local partners (specifically the Community Safety Co-ordinator and the Area Inspector) to take action as appropriate.

Respond to community complaints

- The Strategy sub group will monitor complaints from the community, ensure they are acted upon and ensure there is feedback to communities. This group will link with Local Tasking Meetings and Local Action Partnerships.
- Maintain up to date intelligence regarding on-street prostitution in Manchester
The Strategy Sub group should endeavour to map and keep up to date as regards the number of workers operating in each area.

Developing routes out

Establish a Case Management Sub Group

- In order to achieve a multi agency approach to supporting individuals to exit prostitution, a case management group will be established along the lines described in the previous section. That group and its activity will be the key focus for achieving this objective.

Support GMP in training officers who patrol prostitution beats

- Partners in the Forum will support GMP in training officers on the support and exit strategies available to sex workers wishing to exit prostitution. This will also incorporate child protection policies and procedures.

Examine criminal justice solutions such as court diversion, arrest referral or conditional cautioning

- The experience in Manchester has shown that the court diversion scheme was not effective for various reasons. In place of that kind of scheme, partners will look at the alternatives such as arrest referral or conditional cautioning and see if these types of scheme could be modified to apply effectively to sex workers.

Keep support services under review

- The sufficiency and appropriateness of services are constantly under review by agencies such as the DAST and the Midwifery Service. The dialogue with outreach services should continue so that feedback from users can inform service delivery.

Link with the Moving On Strategy

- Links will be established between the MPF and the Moving On Strategy. This latter Forum brings together the groups who undertake outreach work for people on the streets like rough sleepers. The Prostitution Forum needs to join up with all types of outreach project (eg those who run the soup kitchens) so they can be aware of the routes out type approach and can refer people in if necessary.

Ensuring justice

Continue to encourage sex workers to report incidents

- Relationships of trust with sex workers are essential for receiving intelligence regarding crimes and perpetrators. The work of voluntary agencies and the Police Prostitution Liaison Officer is central to this approach and the structures and relationships are in place for the A Division.. However, in the absence of such a Prostitution Liaison officer for the B Division, the Forum will explore what further work could be done as regards encouraging women on the Whalley Range beat to report incidents and provide intelligence.

Encourage male sex workers to report incidents

- This work should be explored by the Forum where possible and progress monitored.

Monitor and maintain an effective Dodgy Punter scheme

- A local “dodgy punter” scheme has been in place for some time in Manchester. The Forum will support GMP & MASH in ensuring that the information is distributed as widely as possible and explore whether other partners could assist. The Forum should also ensure that the Crimestoppers campaign works effectively alongside the existing scheme.

Tackling off street prostitution

Continue outreach work to saunas

- Outreach work to saunas will continue. The Forum will need to consider whether any further support can be provided to those agencies already undertaking this work in order to ensure the safety and well being of the sex workers and to encourage intelligence.

Agree protocols for sharing intelligence

- Intelligence on issues such as trafficking needs to be channelled to the correct agency (the Serious Crime Division). The Forum should agree a protocol for the rapid exchange of information and intelligence so that it provided in a timely fashion.

Partnership issues

In addition to the actions to address the government and local strategy, the Forum will maintain minimum standards to be followed across all agencies. Sex workers are amongst the most vulnerable in society and minimum standards are essential to ensure services are delivered appropriately from all sectors. To that end, policy and practice will be regularly re-visited in relation to:

- Child protection (as described earlier)
- Health and safety
- Governance and accountability (eg ensuring all our essential policies are in place and operational).

These issues will be addressed by the main Prostitution Forum meetings.

Conclusion

The Manchester Strategy provides a sound basis for tackling prostitution and its associated problems. It establishes and continues sound structures for multi agency working that will deliver real outcomes.

The Prostitution Forum has established a wide partnership that has secured effective joint working at both a strategic and operational level. This strategy builds on those partnerships and provides a clear direction for 2007/08 pending a more longer term strategy that will cover the 2008/11 period.