Explore the concept of 'belonging' within of a group of your choice. Consider what existing government initiatives support community engagement and how this affects the likelihood of their integration into community.

This assignment is about sex workers, escorts and prostitutes and how they are treated by the law, society and the community that they live in.

A sex worker, escort or prostitute is someone who provides a sexual service for money or to meet the urges of other individuals for money. It is referred to regularly as one of the oldest professions in the world. There are many reasons why individuals choose to go into this line of work. One of the main reasons that sex workers sell their bodies is to be able to afford the basics to survive on a daily basis. In the United Kingdom (UK) there are many laws and legislations that are linked to sex workers and prostitutes. Prostitution is not actually illegal in the UK, so these laws and legislations are there to protect the individuals both selling and receiving the sexual encounters. Prostitution is described perfectly by Mr Young who said

> ''Our understanding of prostitution is often coloured by simplicity and generalisation. Film and television have left many with a sanitised, even a romanticised idea of what sex actually, looks like. We tend to see prostitution as being a simple matter of unusual consent. A man who wants to have sex and a prostitute (usually a woman) who is willing to have sex with that man for a price.'' (Young 2017).

Sex workers have been around for many years, it is unclear when the first prostitute started her profession, but we do know that the first acknowledgement of protection was included in the Sexual Offences Act 1956. ''Historically, the criminal law has always been (and continues to be) overwhelmingly concerned with street-based sex work, an activity which since the late 1950s has been designated a self-evident public nuisance''. (Wolfenden, 1957). Prostitution is closely linked to other social problems and issues within communities such as drugs, alcohol, poverty and physical and mental health issues. Described perfectly by Hubbard in 1998 he said '' Nevertheless, despite criminalization, street-based sex work is a feature of many United Kingdom cities and towns, with some communities suffering ongoing noise disturbance, cars circling the area (kerb crawling), and offensive litter such as used condoms and needles''. (Hubbard, 1998). Prostitutes can be forced into that line of work for many reasons such as lack of money, if they have bad habits such as alcohol or drugs, it could be a way of making money to pay for them, human trafficking is another reason why some people are involved in this type of work. 'Research has tended to favour the study of sex trafficking over other forms of labor exploitation, despite evidence that many trafficked individuals are forced to work in a variety of industries.'' (Goždziak & Bump, 2008). If individuals are being forced

into this line of work in this way, their health problems and well-being are uncared for their employer or pimp. This is described by the international organization for migration in their handbook called ‘Caring for trafficked people’. ‘Depending on the type of work that trafficked individuals are forced to perform, they can present with health problems, such as malnutrition, dehydration, respiratory problems, high blood pressure, skin infections, accidental injuries, hypothermia, or frostbite’. (International Organization for Migration, ((2009). While human trafficking is linked closely with prostitution it may not be the only line of work that these individuals are faced to perform and act out sexual favours. ‘By associating human trafficking solely with prostitution, however, the conventions and international agreements that followed Butler’s campaigns overlooked other types of labor and sexual exploitation, such as mail-bride arrangements or domestic servitude that came with an expectation of sexual favours (Ray, ((2006). As a sex worker or prostitute you could work on your own or in a group. Sex workers who work on their own are far more at risk of being hurt, mugged, sexually assaulted, raped or even murdered for the simple reason that nobody knows where they are or who they are having sexual encounters with. So, while it is safer to work in a group or in a brothel, it is illegal, and you will not earn as much as the salary will not be as high as if you were on your own. if working for a pimp they will usually take a share of your profits to ensure your safety and supplying you with clients. Basically, working on your own is more profitable but makes you more vulnerable, not an easy choice to make.

In the UK brothels and back street massage parlours are never found in town or city centres, they are very well hidden to prevent being detected. A brothel would never get permission from their local council to be opened up in a community because of the problems and stigma that that comes with them. While being hidden away and only open during the night time this does leave the workers and users more at risk of being mugged, assaulted or worse. United Kingdom Network of Sex Work Projects (UKNSWP, 2004) ‘’contend that criminalization forces sex workers to work very late at night and to work longer hours in often dangerous locations to avoid arrest’’. This point is also picked up by T. Sagar in his ‘Tackling on-street sex work book’ where he wrote ‘Further that removing sex work from residential communities merely leads to displacement and that targeting kerb crawlers has the same negative impact due to clients seeking to avoid detection, forcing workers to adapt to changes in working conditions.’ (Sagar, 2007).

While sex work and prostitution are illegal to a certain degree there are many policies, legislations and laws out there for the protection of both the worker and the client. In Wales there are many different studies and findings to surveys and projects to help improve the provisions of the sex workers. The Welsh Government has funded many studies along with setting up projects such as Safer Wales. Safer Wales was set up over twenty years ago, it funded by Gwent Police and the Crime Commissioner to protect, support and empower individuals and groups of people who are being exploited by others or are often invisible in society. They help both women and men who suffer from domestic abuse, sexual exploitation, young vulnerable people, hate crime and ex-offenders. Another project set up in Cardiff to help Wales’ sex workers is Rise Cardiff, which is very similar to Safer Wales. They have trained people on hand twenty-four hours a day, seven days

a week to give individuals help and support. They will guide you through your situation or find you suitable accommodation if you are unsafe. The projects set up in Cardiff are very much needed as they do have a problem with the sex work profession as described by Gwent Police and the fact that they are funding these projects proves that. ‘’The number of prostitutes in Gwent is small, but the small number that operate do so mostly in the Pill area of Newport which is impacting the lives of local residents. It has been shown that such an initiative will improve the safety of street sex workers and increase their reporting of offences committed against them." (Gwent Police Spokesperson). In 2007, Amnesty International in Wales published ‘Under the Covers’. This was published to provide a picture of the trafficking problems for the sex trade in Wales. The report was produced by using information from many different resources in Wales and the UK. Interviews with senior police officers, service users and providers, media reports and court actions were all included in the findings. They published a case study that they had been very successful on called Operation Adject based on a seventeen-year-old Lithuanian girl. She was trafficked into the UK after being promised a life that she was not given, instead she was used and abused by men. While in Wales she managed to contact a home and told them of her situation. Luckily for her the home contacted the relevant police force and she was rescued by Newport Police and later went on to help SOCO and other police forces to convict four men of for many different offences. Between the four men they were convicted and ordered in total to spend a minimum of thirty-one years in prison. This case study proves that without these local projects and charities that this woman, would still being abused by her attackers and living in fear for her safety. Swansea is another place in Wales that has a problem with sex workers. The local authorities are aware of the issues they face as described by Chief Inspector White. In a statement he said

> “However, their actions are having a huge impact on the wider community, who we also have a duty to protect. Residents, business owners and visitors to Swansea have a right# to be able to go about their lives without feeling intimidated or harassed by sex workers, those controlling them or kerb-crawlers, and without witnessing the associated criminality and antisocial behaviour which so often goes hand-in-hand with sex work.’’
>
> (Chief Insp White).

South Wales Police have also issued a case study that they had solved involving a Bulgarian national. This case study is slightly different from Operation Adject as the woman was refusing to help officers with information and denied being trafficked. She was rescued from a massage parlour in Swansea, despite her lack of help, information and support, officers still managed to arrest three men. Unfortunately lack of evidence ensured the men walked away with no charges. The woman was repatriated to Bulgaria at her request. This case shows that no matter how many services, projects or charities are around to offer help and support some individuals will not reach out for the help offered but instead remain to suffer in silence. ‘’Furthermore, in criticizing the United Kingdom agenda of zero-tolerance against sex work, we are keen to

point out that the concept of "community safety" may indeed derive from a *crime reduction* agenda, but it also signifies the inclusion of local social forms of control to crime prevention and associated harms.'' (Tilley, 2005).

As well as policies and practices being in place, there is also laws in place to ensure the safety of sex workers and their clients. Laws such as The Sexual Offences Act 2003, The Policing and Crime Act 2009, The Criminal Justice and Police Act 2001, Modern Slavery Act 2015, Sexual Offences Act 2015, The Serious Crime Act 2015 and many more, were all put in place to help protect and support sex workers, their clients and the community around them. Each Act is different and covers different things like prostitution, slavery, human trafficking, sexual offences, child prostitution, human trafficking and many more.

A prostitute or sex worker face many obstacles while trying to do their job, firstly from their own problems and feelings, then from their clients and how trustworthy and nice they are and then from the community that they live in. A lot of stigma comes with being a sex worker and it is often looked down upon by other people. Even though we associate prostitutes with people who are struggling with money issues and drink or drug problems it is also known that some people do the job simply because they want to, and they enjoy it. Being a sex worker and people knowing about it leaves you in a vulnerable position of being bullied by others through name calling like slag, whore, street walker and hooker amongst many more. Communities are not very tolerating of sex workers and fear that they bring trouble to streets, estates and communities. As well as people having an issue with the sex worker themselves it can and often does get stretched to affect the rest of their families and friends. Their parents and children can also be bullied and have their names tarnished because of something that they have no control over.

To conclude this assignment, sex workers or prostitutes are often referred to as a hard to reach group, which means they are often excluded from society. This type of hard to reach group will often face risk and resilience from other people who class themselves as normal. They seek help and support from individuals just like themselves and often form little communities of their own. Sex workers are human beings too, they do the job for many different reasons some of which some people will never understand and sometimes just because they want to. The job could be very lonely and dangerous if working on your own or could be rewarding and fun if working in a group of people who you get along with and it's your decision to take part. Sex workers range from being young, to dwarfs, to disabled, to the elderly and everything in between. They can work the streets, in brothels, over the internet, phone sex or many more. There many policies and procedures around to help vulnerable people who need help and support and there are also laws in place to protect and prosecute individuals who need and deserve it. These protections are very important to have as the sex worker industry is on the rise, the more sex workers out there the more we need the support, policing and authorities for protection and control of the issues that might arise. Having said that no matter how many support groups, charities, laws, legislations and authorities are out there, prostitutes and sex workers are still being abused and manipulated into doing things they do not want to or should not have to and some individuals still suffer in silence and refuse to speak and give evidence when they are asked to. The

individuals who refuse to press charges and give evidence make it hard for the authorities to convict people and prevent them from re offending , while on the other hand it lets the criminals think they can carry on offending and that they will continue to get away with it. Finding a safe and suitable solution for sex workers and the communities to be able to work together in the future is hopeful but is a long way off.

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