

MW 2004

DRAFT RESPONSE TO "PAYING THE PRICE" CONSULTATION PAPER ON PROSTITUTION

Most of the report falls outside the Campaign's remit. However, there are three areas on which we wish to express a view: 1. education, 2. advertising and 3. the internet.

1. (Consultation questions 1, 6 and 9) The Campaign suggests that prostitution should be a specific topic covered during senior school lessons, either under sex education or under personal and social development, preferably in the first or second year (ages 11-13). This would need to be done in a non-judgemental manner, especially in deprived areas, in order to avoid distressing children who have family members – mothers, sisters – involved in the trade. It would also be desirable to avoid giving prostitution the glamour of the dangerous and the forbidden. 'Don't' is not enough.

We recognise that this strategy would not reach children who were already truanting or excluded from school.

2. (Consultation question 24) At worst cards in telephone boxes are distasteful or embarrassing and they are easily removed. On the paper's own admission (7.19) the practice is confined to a very small number of cities and it is not likely to grow, simply because more and more telephone boxes are being taken out of use. The report cites no evidence that cards are posted by the pimps themselves.

The Campaign notes that the report is concerned almost entirely with on-street prostitution. We hope that this indicates an acceptance of off-street prostitution - so long as those involved are adults - and hence of other methods used to make contact between prostitute and client.

3. (Consultation questions 6 and 7) The internet in and of itself is not a threat to children and young people (2.17, 3.3 – 3.5). Great care is needed to make sure that children's welfare is not used as an excuse to censor material intended only for adults. Anecdotal evidence suggests that heavy-handed 'filters' using key words bring the attempt to prevent children accessing unsuitable material into disrepute. Some of the stories may be untrue but their existence does not suggest public confidence in the concept.

CAC believes very strongly that there is no substitute for personal supervision by parents, teachers and carers of children's internet use.