



Home Office

Sentencing and Offences Unit
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Councillor Goodman
23 Budgen Drive
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Our Ref
Your Ref
Date 18 December 2000

Dear Mr Goodman

PROSTITUTES' CARDS IN TELEPHONE BOXES

I write further to our conversation on the above subject.

Charles Clarke announced, in a written answer to a Parliamentary Question, on 12 December, details of our final proposals for a new offence.

Our discussions with local authorities, telephone operators, the police, the CPS and others have led us to revise the proposals in two main areas from those in the original consultation document to develop a more effective remedy.

The main change from the previous position is that we now favour an offence which would apply nationally. Our previous approach had favoured an adoptive offence but this was shown to be impractical. For example, it could be easily circumvented by prostitutes moving their area of advertising and could lead to enforcement difficulties.

We also now favour a more limited offence which would cover advertisements for the services of prostitutes and other sexual services in telephone boxes in public places rather than a general offence of unauthorised advertising.

We believe the offence should attract a power of arrest.

There should be a power to extend the offence, by affirmative resolution, to other structures providing shelter to the public, in case the activity is displaced to, for example, bus shelters.

As part of a co-ordinated approach, the Director-General of OFTEL is consulting with the telecommunications industry on how best to bring in effective call-barring schemes to deal with the nuisance of prostitutes' cards.

We hope that the co-ordinated action on call barring and the new criminal offence will enable us to crack down on this illegal and undesirable practise and protect local

communities from the obvious nuisance that these cards cause.

We are keen to make progress in this area and will bring forward proposals when Parliamentary time allows.

I hope that this is helpful to you.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'L Lindsay McKean', written in a cursive style.

Lindsay McKean
Policy Adviser