



Northern Ireland  
Assembly

Committee for Justice

# OFFICIAL REPORT (Hansard)

Human Trafficking and Exploitation (Further  
Provisions and Support for Victims) Bill:  
Dr Graham Ellison and Dr Susann Huschke,  
Queen's University Belfast

30 January 2014

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**Members present for all or part of the proceedings:**

Mr Paul Givan (Chairperson)  
Mr Raymond McCartney (Deputy Chairperson)  
Mr Sydney Anderson  
Mr Tom Elliott  
Mr William Humphrey  
Mr Alban Maginness  
Mr Patsy McGlone  
Mr Jim Wells

**Witnesses:**

Dr Graham Ellison                      Queen's University Belfast  
Dr Susann Huschke                      Queen's University Belfast

**The Chairperson:** I formally welcome to the meeting Dr Graham Ellison, who is a postgraduate research coordinator, and Dr Susann Huschke, who is a visiting fellow from Queen's University in Belfast. As before, this meeting will be recorded by Hansard and will be published in due course. I hand over to you to make some opening statements. Members will then have some questions.

**Dr Graham Ellison (Queen's University Belfast):** Thank you, Chair. I hope that everyone can hear me. I have a very soft voice, so I will try to shout. First, I thank the Committee for allowing my colleague and I to provide oral evidence. I am very mindful of the difficult task that the Committee is undertaking, and I am also mindful that, at times, individual members may feel bamboozled by claims and counterclaims that are made by all parties to these debates. I am also conscious that members of this Committee have asked very pertinent and relevant questions on some of these issues, and I hope that what I and my colleague say will assist the Committee in its deliberations.

Before I begin, I commend Lord Morrow for bringing the issue of human trafficking into the public spotlight. Indeed, there are many aspects of his proposed Bill that I am in agreement with. Nevertheless, I also feel that, based on my current research, there are a number of issues in the Bill that have been oversimplified and which need further scrutiny and consideration. Some of these concerns have already been raised by the PSNI, the Public Prosecution Service and others, so I will confine the bulk of my remarks to clause 6.

I will give a bit of background to the Committee about where I am coming from and why I am here. Currently, I am the lead researcher on a project funded by the British Academy and the Leverhulme Trust. This investigates the regulation of prostitution or sex work in four EU cities that have very, very different legal and regulatory frameworks in place. My co-researcher is based in the United States

and the project consultant is based in Sweden. The cities in the study include Berlin, Prague, Manchester and Belfast. One of the aims of the study — but not the only aim — is to assess the regulation of prostitution in the light of the so-called Swedish system. You will notice that I do not use the word "model", and I will explain that later.

In each city, we have adopted a similar methodology. We have investigated many aspects of prostitution, including on-street and off-street. We have looked at lap-dancing clubs, brothels, bars and massage parlours. We have spoken to police and politicians in each city as well as local government officials, health and outreach workers, business owners, sex-worker activists and anti-trafficking organisations, as well as a small sample of sex workers — again, including those who work on street and those who work off street. We have also spoken to representatives of the new trade union for sex workers established in Germany, called Sexwork Deutschland. This group campaigns for better working conditions for those involved in the industry. We have also, and I suppose, unusually, examined the male sex work sector in each city, where males provide sexual services to other men and to women. In this respect, I am somewhat curious as to why abolitionist groups depict prostitution as violence against women, given the prevalence of male sex work in each city.

Here are some of the issues arising from the research. The first general point that I would like to make is that it is impossible, in my view, to generalise about prostitution or sex work between jurisdictions or, indeed, very often, within the same jurisdiction. This can be seen even on a city-by-city basis within the United Kingdom, where differences are in evidence. This suggests to me that we need a local policy framework, and I emphasise the word "local". I am deeply sceptical about importing a particular model or system from Scandinavia to Northern Ireland, which, to my mind, has very different circumstances and characteristics. I will return to that point shortly.

Few organisations, and the minority of those to which we spoke in connection with the study, viewed prostitution and trafficking to be the same issue. Indeed, one of the most prominent anti-trafficking organisations in Europe acknowledged that, although trafficking for sexual exploitation was an issue, not everyone selling commercial sex was trafficked into the sector. I am not going to discuss trafficking at length; my colleague will say a few more words about that. Suffice to say that trafficking is best seen on a continuum, ranging from the violently coercive, at one extreme, to those situations where individuals are complicit in their own trafficking, at the other.

The explanatory and financial memorandum to Lord Morrow's Bill states that one of the objectives is "tackling the demand for trafficking", but the focus of the Bill is specifically on trafficking for sexual exploitation, through clause 6. However, as the Joseph Rowntree Foundation has documented, trafficking exists across a range of sectors in Northern Ireland, including seasonal agriculture and fishing. Indeed, I go further and suggest that, if the Bill really wanted to put a dent in trafficking, it should call for the enforcement of the minimum wage in the sectors I have just mentioned. A recent Home Office research report at the end of last year noted that sexual exploitation accounted for around a third of victims identified by the UK Human Trafficking Centre, with the remaining 70% concerning various forms of labour exploitation in a range of sectors.

Prostitution involves the selling of commercial sex, obviously. However, if doing this project has taught me one thing, it is that it is impossible to generalise about any aspect of commercial sexual activity. Huge differences are apparent between the on-street and the off-street sectors, and we have extremes from the high-end escort sector to the street worker with drug-dependency issues and other social problems. For that latter group, selling sex is a symptom, not a cause, of other problems in their lives. However, a larger cohort, somewhere in the middle, are those men and women who see commercial sex as the best way of earning money or providing for their families in the circumstances. Some enjoy what they do; some do not, but do it anyway. Here, selling sex is often transient and opportunistic. However, we should be clear that the experiences of these groups are all different and impossible to generalise from one sector to the other. Unfortunately, many abolitionist groups and organisations do generalise. They generalise in two ways. First, a small number of women — no men, as far as I am aware — have written books that often graphically illustrate their very negative experiences as sex workers. Those narrative accounts are valid and important and are perhaps reflective of a reality as the person saw it. I have no wish to undermine anything that is said or written, but — this is an important "but" — those accounts represent one opinion. Is there any sense in which that opinion should be viewed or valued more enthusiastically than that of someone who has a different view? Dr Brooke Magnanti wrote positively about her experiences as a sex worker in her blog 'Belle de Jour: Diary of a London Call Girl'. However, her account is not privileged in the abolitionist discourse. Is her view somehow less valid? How are we to mediate between the competing versions of experience?

Secondly, abolitionists generalise in other ways, too. They generalise from the very narrow street-based sector to the entire arena of commercial sex. However, in practice, the street-based sector is relatively small, representing only 10% to 15% of the total sex worker population. What has happened is that the experiences of that relatively small cohort are being extrapolated to sex workers writ large. However, that is where the problem lies. Abolitionist groups often cherry-pick and distort studies in ways that the authors did not intend.

One common claim, for example, is that prostituted women — their term — die younger. However, when you look at some of the cited studies, you find that they are epidemiological studies of street-based sex workers with heroin addictions and other problems. Of course intravenously injecting drugs is incredibly risky, and of course people with such addictions are more likely to die at an earlier age. However, it makes no sense to generalise from that sector to independent escorts who do not experience any of those problems. Indeed, even prominent abolitionists such as Melissa Farley grudgingly admit that the indoor sector is safer and poses fewer problems than its on-street counterpart.

Other claims that I dispute surround around the age of entry into prostitution. For the record, the median age for the group of Irish-based off-street workers that I studied was 26. Therefore, what clause 6 in the Bill effectively does is homogenise a range of experiences about sex worker prostitution that is simply too divergent to introduce blanket legislation for.

Thirdly, the Swedish or Nordic system has been wheeled out and held up as a panacea against trafficking, and its proponents have made many grand claims. I can perhaps hear some Committee members groan when I mention Sweden. However, Sweden deserves a mention if only because of the undue attention that it has received in these debates. I am sceptical of many of the claims made in support of the Swedish system.

We need to be clear that the Swedish system was never — I emphasise "never" — designed to tackle human trafficking. Rather, it was driven by a number of prominent Swedish feminist activists at a particular point in Swedish history as a way of enhancing female equality in opposition to what they saw as patriarchy. Indeed, some of the proponents of the Swedish system take the debate to a level that I am sure some Committee members may not wish to go. I am happy to elaborate on that later if you wish, but I will not say anything about it at the minute.

A lot has been said about Sweden, much of which is based on conflicting research or comes from official Swedish sources that have a particular interest in promoting the system. In a sense, the Swedish debate is something of a red herring. Northern Ireland is not Sweden and is, in fact, nothing like it. Even if we were to take the Swedish system at face value, it is still difficult to find conclusive evidence that prostitution has declined in Sweden. Indeed, a Swedish report from 2012 suggests that trafficking into the country continues to be a problem. I have spoken to representatives of online escort agencies who tell me that Sweden and Norway are fast-expanding and lucrative markets for their industry.

Similarly, a recent article on the Swedish system noted that, in 2009, the Swedish Government reported 90 massage parlours offering sexual services in Stockholm. By 2012, that had risen to 250 in the city and 450 throughout the country. Even the street-based scene, which has admittedly declined in Sweden because of the Internet, as it has done everywhere else, is blossoming again, mainly filled by economic migrants. However, those women, who have few rights and no resident status, are often pushed into the underground sex economy and are far more likely to be exploited and abused.

I believe that the premise of the Nordic model, with its term "asymmetric criminalisation", where you criminalise the client not the seller, does not work in practice. In my view, it is impossible to criminalise only one actor in an exchange relationship. Researchers such as Dr Jay Levy have conducted detailed empirical studies in Sweden and found that, rather than get rid of prostitution, all that the legislation has done is push it to out-of-the-way locations where the risks to sex workers are more severe. He notes that a raft of legislation, from antisocial/nuisance orders to deportation under the Aliens Act (2005:716), is used against economic migrants who sell sex. Furthermore, enforcement of the law in Sweden has been patchy, as can be seen both in policing and in conviction rates in the courts. A study by Professor Don Kulick noted that, for evidential reasons, the majority of charges are dropped. Even if cases go to trial, the majority end up being dismissed. Professor Kulick suggests that the legislation has had such an impact on police resources in Sweden that, in the majority of cases, it is simply not worth the police's time to pursue the activity. Likewise, I am tempted to wonder whether, in Northern Ireland, with the huge challenges that face the PSNI from dissident republican activity, contested marches and flag protests, that is the best use of the policing budget.

I am mindful of suggesting to a group of politicians that something is "politically courageous", to borrow the doublespeak of Sir Humphrey Appleby of 'Yes Minister'. Yet, in a sense, some aspects of the Bill are untested, and we simply do not know what the downstream consequences might be. I say that because one of my main research areas relates to what is called policy transfer: the effects of transferring policies from one jurisdiction to another, particularly between those with very different characteristics. Through my research, I am aware that, owing to differences in political cultures, diverse histories and local circumstances, very few policies are ever successfully translated. Indeed, most policies get lost in translation and have unanticipated or negative outcomes. It is the downstream consequences of clause 6 in particular that I respectfully ask Committee members to think long and hard about.

What might, for example, be the consequences of driving prostitution further underground — even more underground than it may be at present — away from those areas where the police know that it is occurring? Might some sex workers feel that they need to appoint middle men to manage and set up bookings with their clients? Might that, in turn, create an opportunity for organised criminals and, indeed, paramilitary organisations to muscle in on the sector? What would be the political fallout, for example, if it transpired that a police officer had been lured to his or her death investigating an anonymous tip-off about prostitution in some derelict industrial park in the city? I sincerely hope that that never happens. If it does, the political consequences will be severe.

It is one thing talking about importing a model; it is quite a different thing and, in my view, much more important to think about what the downstream consequences of doing so might be. What Northern Ireland needs is a local solution to a locally identified problem. I suggest that that could be achieved through existing legislative provision and better links and cooperation between the statutory authorities. In fact, some of what is currently practised in Manchester, England, might be a good starting point. A police officer told me when I was there that there can be no best practice ever when dealing with commercial sex, but that, in his view, there was certainly better practice.

I am coming to the end of my little speech. Fourthly, I suggest in my written evidence that, for Northern Ireland, clause 6 is the equivalent of taking a sledgehammer to crack a nut. As far as I can tell, demand for paid sex is relatively low and, based on Ruhama's figures, certainly no worse than in Sweden. There has been only one prevalent study of men who purchase sex in Northern Ireland. From the sample of 540 men, just under 9% admitted to purchasing sex on at least one occasion. However, two thirds of the group said that the encounter occurred outside Northern Ireland while they were on holiday and under the influence of alcohol. Similarly, I do not believe that there is a particularly large or visible commercial sexual services sector in the jurisdiction, nor do I believe the cited figures for the money allegedly spent on it. I have read newspaper reports that there may be thousands, if not tens of thousands, of people involved in selling sex in Northern Ireland and that the industry is worth around £30 million a year. I have even seen a figure of £50 million a year quoted. Given that Northern Ireland is in the economic doldrums, where are all of these men getting the money?

Comparatively, the social problems surrounding prostitution in the larger cities here are not as prevalent as elsewhere: for example, in London, Glasgow, Birmingham, Manchester or even Dublin. There are few public complaints and none since 2003. There have been only two prosecutions for trafficking for sexual exploitation, although I am really dubious about one of them. The street sector in Belfast in particular is minuscule and located in a mainly non-residential area. The pragmatist in me would suggest that we do not rock the boat. The situation as it stands can be managed by interagency cooperation to help those individuals who want help to exit. The PSNI have enough resources and legal powers to deal with coerced prostitution, and if the victim elements of this Bill are passed, then that is a benefit, too.

Finally, I want to emphasise to the Committee that there is no way prostitution will be abolished or curbed. To believe or to suggest otherwise flies in the face of all the evidence. With or without this Bill, the selling of sex will exist and will continue to exist. Every attempt at abolishing or legislating against prostitution has failed throughout history, and I could make the same points about the illegal drugs trade.

To conclude, for those Committee members who may be morally opposed to prostitution, there is, in fact, a way out. As politicians, you need to weight up the consequences of a piece of legislation and whether it may cause more harm than the activities such legislation is designed to prevent. In this sense, you can be opposed to prostitution but believe that a harm reduction approach based on regulation and interagency cooperation is the least worst option in the circumstances. That is all I wish to say, and I would like to thank the Committee for its patience.

**The Chairperson:** Thank you.

**Dr Susann Huschke (Queen's University Belfast):** I am also thankful for the opportunity to talk to you today. I welcome the debate that this Bill has inspired, but I would like to present some of my concerns, particularly about clause 6. I will not talk for more than 10 minutes, so please try to bear with me.

I am a visiting fellow at Queen's University Belfast. I am trained as an anthropologist. My PhD research focused on illegal migration and health in Germany. At the moment, I am conducting a study on sex work in Northern Ireland that focuses particularly on the subjective experiences of people selling sex, for example, regarding emotional well-being, stigma and personal safety. For this study, I have so far interviewed a small number of sex workers as well as service providers and other experts in this field. I also just recently conducted an online survey that targeted people selling sex in Northern Ireland, other parts of the UK and the Republic of Ireland. That survey was just completed within the last few weeks, so that is why it is not in the written evidence that I sent to the Committee. My research project is ongoing, and the points that I wish to make today are based on preliminary results.

I would like to stress here that one of the baseline assumptions of my research is that the perspectives of sex workers are a valid source of evidence on these issues. I do not agree with approaches that, for example, argue that women, men and transgender persons selling sexual services simply do not realise that they are being abused and exploited, that their own assessment of their situation is based on false consciousness and that they need researchers, service providers or politicians to tell them what they really feel and experience.

I appreciate the difficult task that lies before the Committee members to get a comprehensive overview of the research evidence that exists on prostitution and trafficking, and to compare and critically reflect on the possible policy solutions. However, I am concerned about the ways in which evidence has been used in this debate. Dr Ellison has already presented examples for the abuse and misrepresentation of evidence. I would like to add another example to make this point more explicit.

One of the main arguments of those in favour of this Bill and the criminalisation of clients is that sex work, from their point of view, always constitutes violence and abuse. They support this claim, for example, by arguing that the majority of sex workers started selling sex when they were underage. This argument is explicitly presented, for example, on the website of the Turn Off the Red Light campaign, which also presented evidence here in one of its 10 facts about prostitution. It states that prostitution is not an issue of choice because 75% of women in prostitution became involved when they were children, so, under 18. The website cites as a source a conference paper by Professor Margaret Melrose from 2002. I read the original paper and learned that Professor Melrose's research specifically investigated child prostitution in Britain, therefore, she recruited participants who had started selling sex before the age of 18, that is, who had experienced child sexual exploitation. So, the 75% is not based on a representative study of the entire industry. I also emailed Professor Melrose to ask her about this rather distorted use of her study, and she replied to me saying:

*"The findings were never intended to suggest that 75% of all women involved in sex work become or became involved before they were 18, only those included in the study, and as we were looking at adult women who had become involved before they were 18, this is hardly surprising. I am aware that the work has been used by those who argue that all sex work is violence against women. It is not a position I adhere to myself."*

Let me be very clear. I am not saying that there are no young people in the sex industry who are being exploited and abused; all that I am saying is that I would like to see more of a critical engagement with the sources and evidence employed in the debate.

At the beginning I said that one of the assumptions that guides my research is that sex workers themselves need to be heard in the debate, so I would now like to present some more of the results of my research. The online survey was distributed via various websites that people use to advertise sexual services in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland, as well as in the rest of the UK. I received 104 replies, although not all the respondents answered all the questions. As Dr Ellison pointed out, whether someone works on the street, in an apartment or in a hotel can make a huge difference. Most studies cited in the debate focus on street-based sex work. At the same time, we know that the Internet now plays a major role in the sex industry, so an online survey has the

advantage of targeting a sector of the sex industry that is often excluded from studies, that is, Internet-based sex work.

To provide a counterexample for the flawed statistic cited above, in the responses to the survey, only one of 80 people who answered the question said that they started selling sex before the age of 18. The majority of them started between 18 and 35, and some even started doing sex work at the age of 40 or 50. My study, like many others before it, shows that there are many different reasons why people start selling sex. The main question that many in the room may have in mind is whether those people were at any stage forced, tricked or coerced into selling sex against their will; that is, were they trafficked? Two of the respondents to the survey said that, yes, they were forced against their will at some stage during their time as a sex worker. That is two people too many, but it is not the majority of sex workers.

So, what is it that leads people to start selling sex if they are not forced to do so? Many respondents to the survey said that they liked the flexibility and being self-employed. For example, one respondent wrote:

*"It's supremely flexible. No other job could allow me to care for my mother, who has Alzheimer's, and provide a comfortable home for my family within the few hours I have available to work."*

The most common reply, however, was that it allows people to be financially independent. I asked people to estimate how much they earn in a week from sex work. The replies show that the income range is rather wide in the sex industry. It ranged from about £100 a week to more than £1,000 a week. I also asked people how much that is compared with what they earned in other jobs before, because that is a relevant thing to think about. Some 90% said that it was more than they earned in whatever kind of work they were doing before sex work. So, it allows people to pay their bills, but, on top of that, the money is used to save up, pay off debts, pay for education and, most commonly, to provide financially for family members. As one Hungarian respondent put it:

*"It allows me to provide a future for my children".*

That also relates to my previous research on undocumented or illegal migration. It is important to keep in mind that the vast majority of economic migrants, including mobile sex workers, move to another country to earn money not just for themselves but for their partners, children, parents and siblings.

What are the consequences for sex workers of criminalising clients? I am now going to read you several replies from sex workers, as that is really the core of the debate. They are the ones who deal with those clients on a regular basis. These are all individual quotes from the survey:

*"It won't change. You'd just drive it underground where it would be more dangerous".*

*"It won't make much of difference really because so many people haven't a clue about the law as it stands."*

*"It would mean that good, responsible, polite clients would be less likely to book me."*

*"I don't think the unpleasant ones would care, and the robbers and rapists are already criminals anyway".*

*"Clients would become more nervous, more willing to deal with a third party."*

The third party mentioned in the final quote would be, for example, a pimp.

I also asked how the law would change the situation for those who sell sex, and some of the responses were as follows:

*"The safety of escorts would be affected, as they would feel the need to reduce their rates in order to get business."*

*"Sex workers would be pressurised to accept more difficult and dangerous clients in order to earn similar money."*

*"We would have to go underground as we would try and protect our clients so they do not get arrested."*

*"It would make things much worse than they are already. It would create more crime and crime-run sex rings, and drive it further underground."*

*"It would increase stigma."*

Only one out of 60 replies stated that this legislation would make things safer for sex workers. None of the people who replied to the survey was in support of the Bill. All the other respondents felt that it would not change anything or, if it did, it would be for the worse.

Let us assume for a moment that the criminalisation of clients would drive away the good clients and leave the bad. Even if that were the case, fewer clients would not actually mean less sex work, let alone less trafficking. The opposite is true. As I said earlier, sex work generates income that sex workers, particularly migrant sex workers, rely on. They cannot simply stop selling sex and return to a great well-paid job in their home country. That is not the reality of labour migration, and many of the British and Irish sex workers probably also do not have a lucrative job outside the sex industry waiting for them, as a comparison between their current income and income earned before sex work shows. Sex workers may have to reduce their rates and, therefore, would have to work more to earn the same: that is, take on more clients. They would start working in more dangerous settings, such as on the street, to make a living; engage in unsafe practices, such as not using condoms, because that often pays better; or they would have to collaborate with third parties, who would help them to find clients rather than work independently. That opens the door to exploitation, and indeed, organised crime and trafficking. Again, that relates to what we know about undocumented migration. People who can move from one country to another legally, like me for example, do not need the services of traffickers and are less vulnerable to exploitation. However, those who are excluded from legal labour migration, yet desperate enough to get out of their home country because of economic hardships, are the ones who end up relying on organised crime to facilitate their migration project. Similarly, the fewer options that sex workers have, the more marginalised and stigmatised they become, the less power they have to determine the circumstances in which they work, and the more likely they are to be exploited and abused.

One last point that I would like to make is that the responses also addressed the issue of stigma, something that I have already highlighted in my written submission. When the respondents were asked about the negative aspects of their job — "What do you not like about doing sex work?" — the main replies were: "the stigma"; and "having to hide what you do and be worried about being exposed", especially for British and Irish local sex workers. It was not the sex itself, the emotional damage or feeling abused — although some people did state that too. The view that criminalisation of the clients would harm sex workers is even shared by people whose experience of sex work was not all sunshine and roses. One of the people whom I interviewed in person was a woman who had sold sex in Belfast city centre for seven years. She looked back on her experience with mixed feelings and recognised that it was harmful to her emotional well-being in some ways. However, she also said that she did not approve of clause 6. She said:

*"All that it would do is push it underground, make it a deeper darker secret, add to the stigma, add to the taboo, make it more seedy than it already is. If they wanted to truly stop prostitution, especially streetwalking, they need to decriminalise it and they need to be more helpful and more attentive to the needs of the people who actually do it."*

Thank you very much for your attention.

**The Chairperson:** Thank you for your statements.

**Mr Wells:** Dr Ellison, do you remember writing an e-mail to an academic on 13 September 2013?

**Dr Ellison:** No.

**Mr Wells:** I will remind you of what you said in that e-mail. This is in reference to clause 6.

*"Why have you hooked yourself up to that lot in the DUP? Have you any idea where they stand for in terms of social issues around women's rights generally, women's reproductive rights, gay and*

*lesbian issues, and so forth? In terms of gay and lesbian politics that I have an interest in, they are one of the most repressive and socially backward parties you can imagine."*

The next word I will not use because it is deeply offensive and it is a swear word.

*"Who knows how many gays and lesbian young people in Northern Ireland have committed suicide because of this bloody party? I can also remember not long ago, five or six years, that the party, i.e., the DUP, was claiming that rape within marriage was impossible. They are simply latching onto this idea about sex, that it is grounded in biblical teaching and not in feminist theory."*

Dr Ellison, I put it to you that your opposition to this clause in this Bill is more because of your prejudice against the DUP than —

**Dr Ellison:** Actually, it is nothing of the sort.

**Mr Wells:** Did you say that?

**Dr Ellison:** Yes, and the person you are talking about is Ms Gunilla Ekberg, presumably.

**Mr Wells:** That is your phrase, not mine.

**Dr Ellison:** It can go on the record that that is the person I wrote to because I felt that I wanted to clarify a number of the issues that she and I were in sympathy with.

**Mr Wells:** So, you have no objection to the entire email being published. There is more to come.

**Dr Ellison:** You have obviously got your hands on it —

**Mr Wells:** It has been referred to Queen's University in a formal complaint against you. That is where it is.

**Dr Ellison:** That is fine.

**Mr Wells:** So, that is your view on the DUP. Give me examples of —

**The Chairperson:** Mr Wells, before you go on, do you think it is normal, Dr Ellison, to contact witnesses once they have given evidence and give them that level of abuse?

**Dr Ellison:** I would not say that it was abuse. I was trying to reason with her.

**The Chairperson:** You do not regard the content of that email as abusive.

**Dr Ellison:** Not particularly, no.

**The Chairperson:** OK.

**Dr Ellison:** Excuse me, Mr Givan. What do you mean, given evidence? She had, in fact, given evidence, so I am not sure what —

**The Chairperson:** My point, and I put it to you again, is whether you think it is acceptable to contact witnesses once they have given evidence and give them the type of abuse that is contained in that email.

**Dr Ellison:** As I said, I thought that I was trying to reason with her. There are a number of issues that I feel strongly about. I thought that I could maybe, if you like, talk her round. There are a number of fundamental issues on which she and the DUP do not agree. You may agree on the criminalisation of the payment for sex, but there are other issues on which you do not agree.

**The Chairperson:** But it is your view that the DUP is a party that claims rape within marriage is —

**Dr Ellison:** That point was made about six years ago. It is written down somewhere.

**The Chairperson:** So, that is a view you hold: that the DUP —

**Dr Ellison:** Someone in the DUP said that rape within marriage was not possible.

**The Chairperson:** How many people am I responsible for killing?

**Dr Ellison:** What do you mean?

**The Chairperson:** Your email stated:

*"Who knows how many gay and lesbian young people in Northern Ireland have committed suicide because of this bloody party."*

**Dr Ellison:** A lot of gay and lesbian young people in Northern Ireland have committed suicide because of issues around their sexuality, and your party is firmly opposed to those.

**The Chairperson:** No, that is not what you said. You said:

*"because of this bloody party".*

**Dr Ellison:** Yes, because of the stance that your party takes on the issues.

**The Chairperson:** How many people am I responsible for killing?

**Dr Ellison:** Excuse me, Chair. If we are bringing Ms Ekberg into this, why not spill the whole story?

**Mr Wells:** We will. We will publish the whole story.

**Dr Ellison:** All of it?

**Mr Wells:** We will. We have it here. You will not be very pleased.

**Dr Ellison:** Sorry, I do not know what you are talking about.

**Mr Wells:** There is more in the email, and it is all derogatory against the DUP.

**Dr Huschke:** Can I say something? I am not from here, and obviously I am not involved in the local politics. What I find interesting in the debate is that I just presented evidence from 100 sex workers, some of whom work in Northern Ireland, on what they feel the Bill would do, but here we are talking about —

**The Chairperson:** Dr Huschke, please be reassured that I will come to you shortly.

**Dr Huschke:** I just want to say that —

**The Chairperson:** What is important is that we establish the integrity of the individuals in front of us and the motivation behind what is being said. Mr Wells has brought to the attention of the Committee and the public something that I believe is material to people's consideration of what Dr Ellison has submitted to the Committee. We will certainly come to your evidence later in the —

**Dr Huschke:** Or also Dr Ellison's. We both have research.

**Mr Wells:** We will come to your survey later on with further information. Of that, I can assure you.

**Dr Huschke:** I look forward to that.

**Mr Wells:** Dr Ellison, I think that totally undermines the validity of your position.

**Dr Ellison:** I do not, Mr Wells. My view may not be shared by you or some other members on the Committee, but I think that there is an element of a moral crusade behind the Bill. I come from a tradition of Presbyterianism and would like to see a separation of church and state and to maintain that. I suppose my point is that there is an organisation driving the Bill — I am not necessarily sure how much of it is to do with Lord Morrow — and that really has not been discussed, in my view.

**Mr Wells:** It is Lord Morrow, who is a member of the DUP. It is also Women's Aid, the Irish Congress of Trade Unions and the Human Rights Commission. Are they all on a moral crusade, Mr Ellison?

**Dr Ellison:** Excuse me, Mr Wells. The Bill has been driven by a particular organisation that sat alongside Lord Morrow when he gave evidence.

I would like to go back to Ms Ekberg, because you have repeated only part of her position. Are you aware of what her other position is?

**Mr Wells:** We had her here giving evidence.

**Dr Ellison:** Yes, but you have not asked her what the rest of her position is.

**Mr Wells:** Tell us.

**Dr Ellison:** Two things. Ms Ekberg was co-executive director of the coalition against trafficking in women along with Professor Sheila Jeffreys. Are you aware of that?

**Mr Wells:** Yes.

**Dr Ellison:** Professor Jeffreys has a particular stance on prostitution that I do not think would be shared by very many members of this Committee. It is basically that all heterosexual sex between husband and wife is a form of prostitution and that the biggest site of prostitution is in the family. Professor Jeffreys and Ms Ekberg sat at this Committee. In the introduction to Professor Jeffreys's book, 'The Industrial Vagina', she makes a glowing acknowledgement of Ms Ekberg's contribution to her thought and whatever. So, let us put all that in the public domain as well. Is that something that your party supports: undermining the family and undermining relationships between husband and wife?

**Mr Wells:** We have questioned Ms Ekberg and are very clear on her position. The position of someone —

**Dr Ellison:** But, to my knowledge, she has never discussed that in public. Have you also discussed with her the issue of ROKS in Sweden in 2005?

**Mr Wells:** What is ROKS?

**Dr Ellison:** It is the largest rescue organisation in Sweden that deals with female victims of prostitution or whatever.

**Mr Wells:** You still have not answered this question: how many people is the DUP responsible for the death of, because of our stance on family values?

**Dr Ellison:** Obviously I cannot answer that, Mr Wells. I believe firmly that your stance on gay and lesbian issues —

**Mr Wells:** Has led to the deaths of gays and lesbians. The DUP has murdered gays and lesbians.

**Dr Ellison:** It certainly has not contributed to young gay and lesbian people having a very easy lifestyle.

**Mr Wells:** If that is your sincerely held view, and the proposer of the Bill is a very prominent member, indeed the chairman, of the DUP, then that taints your view. As I said, we will let the public make up their mind on that.

I want to talk about the survey. I have seen the survey. I have seen a leading pimp encourage his workers to complete the survey; I have seen the Internet trail on Twitter. How do you know that this survey of 100 sex workers, which is a very small proportion of the total number of sex workers, was genuinely filled in by sex workers and not by their pimps or owners, or in the presence of their owners? How representative is it of the genuine —

**Dr Huschke:** Who is this pimp?

**Mr Wells:** I am not going to name the pimp, I can assure you. However, I followed the trail on Twitter and saw a leading activist, who promotes prostitution and gets substantial income from it, encourage his prostitutes to fill in that form. How representative is it of genuine prostitution? Is it simply the pimps, once again, using the prostitutes as mouthpieces?

**Mr McCartney:** How do we know that? How can we validate that?

**Mr Wells:** You can follow it on Twitter.

**Dr Huschke:** The way that online surveys work is that you create an online survey and then you contact people who can forward it to other people.

**Mr Wells:** Which they did.

**Dr Huschke:** Yes. So, you do not have control over who forwards it to whom; I agree with that. If it was the case that whoever you are talking about pushed it as a survey for his or her employees, or the persons that they abused or whatever, to fill out, that was obviously not my intent. It was spread to several different websites and through different approaches. This is not the only way that it was spread around.

**Mr Wells:** All I have seen is a prominent pimp urging his prostitutes to complete your form.

**Dr Huschke:** Yes, and the reason that that is all that you have seen is that that is public and on Twitter. The other way to post an online survey is to go through the websites where people advertise for sex work. It will then be posted on the internal forums that cannot be accessed — neither by me nor by you, I suppose — unless you are a registered member of that community. So, you cannot access those ways of spreading the survey. You can access only Twitter.

OK; let us get back to your question. How do I know that not all the 104 replies were actually from sex workers whose pimps were sitting behind them and forcing them to click this? Is that your question; yes?

**Mr Wells:** Yes.

**Dr Huschke:** I do not know that.

**Mr Wells:** Equally, if you were a sex worker who got an email from your pimp saying, "Whatever you do, fill it in and send it back to the good doctor at Queen's", how do you think that that would be representative of sex workers generally? When the pimp knows that they are filling it in, how is that representative?

**Dr Huschke:** I find these speculations about how people filled out the survey very much not supported by evidence and by how research works. Let me just say one thing: one way of making sure that the survey is not filled out by the same person is to look at the IP addresses. All the IP addresses were different. They were also usually British and Irish IP addresses, not proxy service from other countries. That is one way of making sure that it was not all filled out by the one person. In this case, 104 different computers with different IP addresses were used.

**Mr Wells:** I got access to that survey. I could have filled it in.

**Dr Huschke:** You could have, yes.

**Mr Wells:** For obvious reasons, because of my position, I did not. However, I could have filled it in. I could have put in a glowing reference for the prostitution industry in Northern Ireland.

**Dr Huschke:** But so could anyone who is in favour of the Bill or thinks that sex work is exploitation and abuse. All those people could have filled it out too. I would actually invite any sex worker who supports the Bill and supports criminalisation to fill out the survey, because I would like to hear those opinions too. However, there was none of that in the survey.

**Mr Wells:** Surely, in academia, what you should have done is approach a random sample of, say, 300 sex workers and interview them personally.

**Dr Huschke:** And how would you do that? It is impossible.

**Mr Wells:** Because their pimps would intervene; that is why you cannot do it.

**Dr Huschke:** No, it is impossible, first, because there is no representative sample in sex work because we do not know the number of people in the sex industry. Nobody knows the exact number. Something can be representative of something only if you know what it is representative of. There are no representative studies. It is impossible, because at least part of the sex industry is underground and cannot be known; that is number one.

Number two is, yes, I do think that research is very difficult in this setting. It is very important to use different methods and go in different ways to make sure that you are not getting just one side of the story. I absolutely agree with that, and I did that. A survey is not the only thing that I did, and also I have also not finished my study, which is why I have not published anything on it yet. Those are two things.

The other thing that I would like to say in this regard is that I really appreciate how critical you are of my study.

**Mr Wells:** Very critical.

**Dr Huschke:** It is really important to be critical of all the evidence presented. However, I find it curious that, when other studies and evidence is presented, a lot of the time we do not ask who are the people who took part in the study — for example, all the studies that come from service providers and NGOs that interview their clients. Let us say that it is an organisation that provides services to women who have experienced exploitation, physical abuse or trafficking. Logically, all the people who reply to that question, survey or whatever will be people with that experience. If you take as a sample people who go to Alcoholics Anonymous and realise that 100% of those people are alcoholics, it would not make sense to then say that all the men in this country are alcoholics. You have to look at who is included in the survey. That goes for my research and for every other kind of study.

**Mr Wells:** Where your research falls down flat on its face is that you did not interview any women, like Rachel Moran, who had come out of the sex industry and have a very different tale —

**Dr Huschke:** That is not true.

**Mr Wells:** She told us that none of the academics have approached her.

**Dr Huschke:** I did not interview her.

**Dr Ellison:** Mr Wells, I am two thirds of the way through my study. I have interviewed women and, indeed, men who did not necessarily like doing what they did.

**Mr Wells:** And you found only one women who felt that she had been coerced into —

**Dr Ellison:** No; that came from Dr Huschke.

**Dr Huschke:** Obviously you were already so distressed earlier that you were not listening to the last example in my presentation.

**Mr Wells:** I was not distressed at all. There is more to come.

**Dr Huschke:** That example is of a woman who worked in Belfast city centre — so, street-based sex work — for seven years and did not like her experience. She said that it was not the best time of her life and that she would not want to do it again. However, she also said that criminalisation would not help them, and she is opposed to it. So, it is not true that I have not talked to anyone who — I have also talked to three organisations that work with victims of human trafficking. So, it is not a blind spot.

**Dr Ellison:** I think that the landscape of sexual commerce, not just in Northern Ireland but in general, is much more complex than you are implying. I also take exception to your use of the word "pimp". I am not sure that it is terribly helpful. I think that it is a bit sensationalist. I have spoken to people in various other jurisdictions — I am not sure why you are smiling, because I do think —

**Mr Wells:** It is because I have never found anyone prepared to argue that there is no such thing as a pimp.

**Dr Ellison:** I did not say that. I said that I think your use of the term oversimplifies a very complex range of issues. Sisters, brothers, mothers, uncles, or whatever are —

**Mr Wells:** Both of you rubbished —

**Dr Ellison:** Mr Wells, do you answer your own phone? If I were to call you on my mobile phone at your office, would you answer your own phone?

**Mr Wells:** I frequently do; yes.

**Dr Ellison:** OK, so I would get straight through to your office. Do you keep your own diary or calendar?

**Mr Wells:** No.

**Dr Ellison:** So, you have a PA to do that.

**Mr Wells:** Yes.

**Dr Ellison:** Many sex workers keep a PA. Whether you say that that is a pimp, a manager, or whatever, that is what they do. Other sex workers keep a manager basically to protect them against violence. I spoke to someone in Washington last week who employs someone. She pays someone \$800 a month, I think it was, to screen her calls, field her calls, do credit checks on clients or whatever simply because she does not want to turn up at a hotel and get attacked.

Whether you say that the person is a pimp, a manager, or whatever, I think that you are talking about very different activities. I agree that in some circumstances women and men are violently coerced into this horrible activity. At the other end of the scale, and for a large chunk of people in the middle, that does not necessarily happen.

**Mr Wells:** You rubbished the claim that sex workers live, on average, considerably shorter lives.

**Dr Ellison:** You are generalising from a street-based sample to —

**Mr Wells:** OK, but they do, because in Holland, the Dutch model, which you favour —

**Dr Ellison:** I have been searching —

**Mr Wells:** One hundred and twenty-seven women — prostitutes — have been murdered.

**Dr Ellison:** Mr Wells, I have been searching. I was here at the last hearing.

**Mr Wells:** Would you accept that figure?

**Dr Ellison:** No; I do not. I have searched high and low. I have emailed the Dutch authorities, and I have emailed the Swedish authorities, and they can give me no indication of where that figure came from. If you want to provide me with the source.

**Mr Wells:** I can send you the front page of the Dutch newspaper that quotes that 127 women have been murdered.

**Dr Ellison:** OK. I have seen that, but those figures date from 30 years ago —

**Mr Wells:** Over 30 years; that is right.

**Dr Ellison:** That is 20 years before the 2000 Act.

**Mr Wells:** Yes, and there have been 85 since that. If this is the model that —

**Dr Ellison:** There is no official government report that I can find that acknowledges those figures. So, if you send me the link — . OK, we can agree to disagree on that.

**Mr Wells:** You are saying that this model protects openness and legalisation, making it entirely —

**Dr Ellison:** What model?

**Mr Wells:** The Dutch model.

**Dr Ellison:** I was not talking about the Dutch model.

**Mr Wells:** You discussed the Swedish, the Norwegian and the Icelandic model

**Dr Ellison:** They are different models. It is a completely different system.

**The Chairperson:** If we could get to questions and answers without cutting across each other.

**Dr Ellison:** I am sorry, Mr Givan.

**Mr McGlone:** Good idea, Chair.

**Mr Wells:** You say that you are in favour of legalisation —

**Dr Ellison:** No, I did not say that.

**Mr Wells:** Have you been advising Amnesty International on this issue?

**Dr Ellison:** No.

**Mr Wells:** You said in an article in the 'News Letter' that human trafficking was really a myth. That interview was recorded, of course, and we can have access to that. This is in spite of the fact that the police, who are no great supporters of this Bill, would not suggest for one moment that trafficking in Northern Ireland in sexual services is a myth.

**Dr Ellison:** I think that I was referring to a study based in England called Operation Pentameter 2. It was the largest police operation in UK history. It cost £55 million and involved all police forces in the United Kingdom. They did not find any victims of human trafficking for sexual exploitation. So, in the context of that, you might say that human trafficking is a myth.

Of course, people are trafficked. I argue strongly, as I said in my opening remarks, Mr Wells, that I think that human trafficking for labour exploitation is more prevalent than for sexual exploitation. I

think that the reason why we might have more of the latter in Northern Ireland is because people like you have focused more on sexual exploitation. That has driven the police to focus more on that. Therefore, when they are looking for something, they are actually finding it. I am not in favour of legalisation; I am in favour of a regulated model.

Mr Wells, I am not sure who has been doing all this research for you. It is brilliant. I wish I could employ someone like that.

**The Chairperson:** Keep those remarks, and just respond to the questions.

**Mr Wells:** I do not employ anybody. People spontaneously give me the facts.

You do not seem to like the word "pimp".

**Dr Ellison:** I think that it is sensationalist. I do not think that it reflects the reality of people's relationships.

**Mr Wells:** Can we use the phrase, "those who control women providing sexual services"? The guards in the Irish Republic —

**Dr Ellison:** Some women are controlling women.

**Mr Wells:** The guards in the Irish Republic say that 400 are moved every week from house to house in the Irish Republic in order to provide men with a new sexual service.

**Dr Ellison:** That is very odd, because when I phoned the guards in relation to a recent piece of research about sex work, they could give me no idea about any figures.

**Mr Wells:** So you did not see the 'Prime Time' programme on RTÉ —

**Dr Ellison:** I did; I saw it the other night, yes.

**Mr Wells:** The 'Prime Time' programme revealed a whole cadre of women being moved weekly because men were demanding fresh partners. Therefore, a woman could be moved from Athlone to Dublin to Dundalk to Wexford every week to provide men with new experiences. Is that going on?

**Dr Ellison:** Yes, people can be moved; people can be driven. I am also aware of people driving themselves or taking the train to come to Belfast and go back to Dublin or whatever. In fact, I spoke to a Romanian sex worker last night simply to find out the dynamics of the Romanian trade, if you like.

**Mr Wells:** And those women are in total control of their lives; they are making a lifestyle choice; they are being moved forcibly week after week —

**Dr Ellison:** Yes, Mr Wells. To be fair to you, you have raised a very good point several times about moving from a bad place to a worse place, if you remember that quote.

**Mr Wells:** I thought that question, which was devil's advocate, was very well dealt with by those —

**Dr Ellison:** Obviously, it was a devil's advocate question, but I thought that it was a good question. If you are living in Timisoara or a small village somewhere, earning €2 a day or whatever, there is a certain seduction or attraction about moving to another place if you could earn much more money to pay for your kid to go through school, to pay for your elderly parents or whatever. It is the dynamics of poverty and immigration. That is where this thing is really sitting.

**Mr Wells:** In an article in the newspaper, the police quoted this dreadful case of the woman locked in a room, not knowing where she was and having to service 20 clients a day. Her fingernails were found on the wall as she desperately tried to claw her way out. That woman has disappeared. You compared those to the marks made by your cat.

**Dr Ellison:** Mr Wells, I am glad that you have brought me up here from Queens to talk about my cat —

**Mr Wells:** Do you think —

**Dr Ellison:** — I really, really am, and I hope that the taxpayers listening to this are wondering whether they are getting value for money or whatever. Can I explain the context of that?

**Mr Wells:** Yes, certainly.

**Dr Ellison:** It was during an interview, and the interviewer — the journalist — did not give any background as to what was happening and produced a photocopied piece of paper. He showed me a photocopy of a photocopy in greyscale, not even colour, and said, "What do you think of this? This is evidence of human trafficking." I said, "It looks like a door", and that is what the photograph was; it was of a door with a couple of scratch marks on it. So, I said to the journalist, "I am not really sure what to make of this; I cannot say this is definitive evidence of human trafficking. You could come to my house and my cat Felix, the bigger of the two, will jump up the door and scratch it, so there are scratch marks on the door.". Of course I was not trying to belittle what had happened. I did not know, in fact, what had happened.

**Mr Wells:** The PSNI told 'Spotlight' in 2012 that there were 170 sex workers in Northern Ireland and 50 or 60 of them were victims of trafficking. Are those statistics correct?

**Dr Ellison:** Sorry; could you say that again?

**Mr Wells:** That there are 170 sex workers in Northern Ireland and between 50 and 60 of them are victims of trafficking. Do you believe those stats are credible?

**Dr Ellison:** Sorry, I have my own figures here. Why, for example, do you not ask me how many sex workers I think there are in Belfast, instead of —

**Mr Wells:** Do you accept that there could be —

**Dr Ellison:** I accept the PSNI's statistics for the numbers of sex workers, and they have told me that it is between 40 and 100.

**Mr Wells:** Do you accept their figures for those who are trafficked?

**Dr Ellison:** I accept the figures from the National Referral Mechanism (NRM).

**Mr Wells:** But if there are 50 to 60 women, and they mainly all are women, locked in various flats and basements throughout Northern Ireland servicing large numbers of men —

**Dr Ellison:** We do not know that they are locked in various flats and basements. Where is that coming from?

**Mr Wells:** Those who have been rescued certainly have that story. So you are saying that this is a myth, that this is not going on?

**Dr Ellison:** No, I am not saying that it is a myth. I am saying that I believe the National Referral Mechanism statistics, which is all you, Mr Wells, or, indeed, I have to work from.

**Mr Wells:** I think that the police should be fairly good —

**Dr Ellison:** I am afraid that the police are the people who feed into the NRM, so if they are NRM statistics, then fine.

**Mr Wells:** Do you not think that it is worth introducing legislation to protect those 50 or 60 women?

**Dr Ellison:** No. My point is this: what are the consequences for the majority of people who are not trafficked? Indeed, as I said, the PSNI does not want this law. It has said so publicly, and you and your party have gone on record to criticise the police for the stance that they have taken. They are the

people who deal with the issue every day, so, as far as I am concerned, they should be left to get on with their job. I am not at all convinced that we need this. As I have said, the consequences of the Act, in my opinion, could be far worse than what it is designed to prevent in the first place.

**Mr Wells:** As part of your research, have you had any contact with the International Union of Sex Workers or Escort Ireland?

**Dr Ellison:** No.

**Mr Wells:** So you do not know Ms Lee?

**Dr Ellison:** Ms?

**Mr Wells:** Ms Laura Lee.

**Dr Ellison:** I saw her here at the Committee hearing.

**Mr Wells:** And you have had no contact at all with Peter McCormick, or his son, from Escort Ireland?

**Dr Ellison:** I have no idea who that is; I am sorry.

**Mr Wells:** Right. Have I a right to buy the sexual services of any woman I choose?

**Dr Ellison:** I am not saying that you have a right to buy. I think that a person has a right to sell, or to do with their body what they want, by and large.

**Mr Wells:** It does not matter how vulnerable that woman is, or whether she is a drug addict?

**Dr Ellison:** Of course, and there is legislation in place to protect them. No one saying that this is going to be like a free-for-all. There is legislation in place to prevent the very activity that you are talking about. There is legislation in place to prevent children from buying cigarettes, taking drugs and alcohol or whatever. There is legislation in place, Mr Wells, to prevent people from paying for sex from vulnerable women and men. I am not sure what clause 6 does, over and above that.

**Mr Wells:** Do you concede that I have a right — I hope that I would never be involved in anything like that — to buy sexual services and to use that woman in whatever way I want, provided that she is willing to do it?

**Dr Ellison:** If the person, male or female, wants to enter into a private consensual arrangement. I have no interest at all, Mr Wells, in what you do in your bedroom. If you wanted to enter into that arrangement, fine.

**Mr Wells:** Have I a right to buy her kidney if she consents?

**Dr Ellison:** No.

**Mr Wells:** Why?

**Dr Ellison:** Because that will probably cause — There is legislation against that.

**Mr Wells:** But in India I could —

**Dr Ellison:** Mr Wells, this is —

**Mr Wells:** In other words, is a woman of so little value that I have a right to purchase sexual services from her and a right to enforce my desires on her in return for payment?

**Dr Ellison:** I said "consensual", Mr Wells. It is a negotiated arrangement between two grown-up people who can decide what they want to do in the privacy of their bedroom.

**Mr Wells:** If that woman is in a brothel and controlled by powerful men, it is still all right for me —

**Dr Ellison:** No, of course not. As I said, there is legislation in place currently to prevent that type of control.

**Mr Wells:** And if that woman has been carted around Ireland and is staying in a different flat every week in order to provide sexual services —

**Dr Ellison:** I say exactly the same thing, again: there is legislation in place to prevent the activity that you are talking about. If you go to Germany or wherever, Mr Wells, there are brothels — *laufhäuser* — where people sell sex. That is their job. You might not like it; I may not be that happy with it either, but that is the way it is.

**Mr Wells:** If you had a daughter or a sister or a wife —

**Dr Ellison:** This is —

**Mr Wells:** — would you encourage them to be involved in the sex trade?

**Dr Ellison:** I certainly would not encourage them to be in the sex trade. If they decided at some point in their life that that was something that they wanted to do, I guess I would have to live with it. I do not think that I would like it very much.

**Mr Wells:** But if sexual services are viewed in the same way as being a cleaner or a cook or whatever, why not have it on the curriculum?

**Dr Ellison:** Mr Wells, you have to understand that people sell sex for a thousand different reasons. There is no one reason. Some vulnerable women, who have no access to permanent jobs because they have kids to bring up or whatever, choose to do it because it is the best thing in the circumstances. They may not like it; they may like it, or whatever. I think that clause 6, in particular, will hit those women hardest.

Mr Wells, if I could change the world, I would. I genuinely do — "agree" is maybe not the right word — think that you think you can, or something. If I thought that you were going to be successful in that, I would probably be sitting over there with you. This is such a mucky and messy business. People have tried to do this for centuries, and no one has ever managed it. You are not going to get rid of this. I think the best that you, as legislators, can do is manage it. That is the least worst option in the circumstances.

**Mr McCartney:** Thank you very much. You might know what the Spanish Inquisition was like by the time you leave here today.

**Mr McGlone:** Nothing like this.

**Mr McCartney:** That is another day's work. I have said a couple of times that this is an issue that divides people. You have put together a very cogent argument, and I thank you for that. You have contributed, as have you, Susann, to this. What compelled you to do the research?

**Dr Ellison:** It was about seven years ago when I was doing some work with the Czech police in Prague. They were looking at introducing a [*Inaudible.*] model. I was talking to an officer, and he said that they were having huge problems in the train station with pickpocketing and violence; basically, male sex sellers were coming in from outlying areas and were vandalising, stealing and robbing. He said, "If we can get them away from here and into there", and he pointed to a bar. That was my first foray into the regulation of sex work. The Czech police view was that the indoor sector is much safer and that it involves much fewer police resources and less time than the on-street sector. I have heard the same in Manchester.

Some of you might think that Belfast is the biggest sex capital ever outside Bangkok or somewhere. It is not. Go to Manchester. There is an absolutely huge street scene. There are lots of women, mainly, and men with dependency issues. The police tell me, "What can we, as police, realistically

do? We can arrest these women, arrest them, arrest them, arrest them. They go back on the street, so what we have is a harm-reduction approach. We have moved them to four or five streets in a non-residential area. We patrol the area regularly. We keep an eye out. We have a harm-reduction approach". There is a huge indoor sector in Manchester as well, but what the police officer was saying was that the last thing the Greater Manchester Police would want would be a clause 6. He said that that would displace all the on-street work to all the derelict industrial parks all over Manchester. He said, "We don't have the staffing, the manpower or the resources to police this. If we can contain it within three streets, we know where it's happening and we can keep an eye on it."

**Mr McCartney:** If you read a piece of research when you are trying to promote an argument, it is easy to delete the part that does not suit. There have been a couple of examples of that. How can people satisfy themselves that, when they read the research that you have done, it is authentic?

**Dr Huschke:** As I said earlier, that question needs to be asked about any sort of research. I welcome that question. I can speak for only my research. It is still ongoing. I am not done. I hope to do more interviews and talk to more people.

There was criticism earlier that we have not talked to the other side or people who might not have the same view as the people who replied to the survey. As I said, that is not true. I have interviewed people who have different experiences and I have talked to organisations that have different approaches. It is not always that easy, especially when you work on something such as sex work. I have tried to interview Lord Morrow and CARE. I am interested in where it is coming from, what the perspective is, what is behind the Bill and what is the reasoning for people. I would really like to know that. I would love to talk to Rachel, if she wants to take part in the study, and anyone else. In this case, some of the people I would have liked to interview to get a more balanced view simply have no interest in taking part in research. That is one thing.

If you read research and you are wondering whether it makes sense and whether it is believable, the first thing I would always recommend is to look at who is doing the research. There is a difference between somebody who is trained to do research and somebody who is not trained to or is, indeed, not actually doing research, which is the case for the very important personal experiences that have fed into this debate. I think that they are important. You have to look at it from the perspective of people who were involved in the sex industry, but that is not research; it is one person's subjective experience. If that were a research project, you would listen to that person but then also listen to 10 other people or 20 or whatever, depending on what it is that you are trying to do. So, that is one thing. I hope that, maybe in a year's time, I will be able to feel so satisfied about my research that I can publish it. It is just all ongoing.

**Dr Ellison:** From my point of view, Mr McCartney, most of the project is not finished but most of the respondents have given permission to use their names and addresses, so anyone in doubt could cross-check that they had been interviewed or whatever. As Dr Huschke said, of all the main political parties here, I have only ever been unable to get one to speak to me.

**Mr McCartney:** I do not want to put you in the position of being the defender or the promoter of something. However, it strikes me that people in organisations such as Turn off the Red Light and those in the trade union movement who gave our previous presentation are well-intentioned. They want to see human exploitation end and see clause 6 as a way of doing that. It is not your job to convince them, but what are they missing in supporting that clause?

**Dr Huschke:** As I said at the beginning of my presentation, when I do interviews and research, I take seriously the person who has had the experience. If that is their experience, it is their experience. I am not going to come and say, "No, that wasn't your experience". I have asked people during interviews, "Why do you think this is a good idea? Have you ever encountered a sex worker who actually said, 'No, I want to do this job because I am earning money at it?' Or, 'It may not be the best job I ever had, but I am earning money with it.'" And I have had people reply to me, "Well, that's what they might feel now, but later on they will realise they were wrong and they will regret it and feel horrible about it". I think that it is paternalistic to say that a person does not know what they are feeling or thinking and they are wrong and later on will have my opinion. So, that, I think, is something that is missing from, for example, the Turn off the Red Light campaign.

**Dr Ellison:** I think, Mr McCartney, that some organisations in Turn off the Red Light engage with women and men — although not that many men; mainly women — who have serious problems. Their client base, if you like, is derived from people with drugs dependency issues — heroin, for example, in

Dublin. So, in effect, what they know about prostitution is derived from a very small, selected sample, whereas the reality is that that is a snapshot of a particular group at a particular time, when the bigger picture is, in fact, that we do not know that much about it.

That is why, in this study here, we purposely looked at indoor and outdoor, because we know virtually nothing about the indoor sex work sector. All the research has been done on a very small, street-based sector and extrapolated across. We know nothing, for example, about how online escort websites work. We know nothing about what drives them, how they recruit customers, how transactions are conducted and how safety is guaranteed. So, for example, what Women's Aid says is perfectly valid for the people that it deals with, because it comes into contact with marginalised women, mainly, with serious problems. However, you cannot generalise from that to everyone else, and that is why I keep repeating: what are the consequences of clause 6, in particular, for everyone else? We simply do not know. That is why I ask whether the consequences are worse than the initial problem. I think that in Northern Ireland — we should keep this local — we have a perfectly good infrastructure in place to deal with this via an interagency and statutory basis, as Manchester does. There is a model in Manchester that I would like to see implemented here.

**Mr McCartney:** Others have referred to that in other meetings, but maybe not in front of the Committee. The argument is made that you should tackle the demand. There has to be an acceptance that there are women who are exploited.

**Dr Ellison:** I do not think anyone is denying that, Mr McCartney.

**Mr McCartney:** The argument is that, sometimes, laws by themselves can change people's behaviour and values.

**Dr Ellison:** I think there is a normative element, and that was alluded to in one of the earlier presentations. However, we were talking about Sweden. I looked this up the other night: debates on gender inequality and so on have been going on in Sweden for nearly 50 years. In many respects, we still have not had that debate here. In Sweden, there may be more of a normative reluctance to buy sex, but my argument is that, for lots of different reasons, Sweden has seen very high levels of inward migration, particularly over the past 10 years. I think that there is demand for sex in Sweden, but my broader point is that I am just not convinced that this is in the best interests of the country. We are taking a model from a very different political, cultural and social climate — the Nordic region — and superimposing it on an area that, as you are all aware, has witnessed a very intense and violent political conflict for the past 35 years or so.

**Dr Huschke:** I would like to add something about the issue of demand. The entire debate and the Bill itself is focused on demand. Yes, demand is part of the whole issue. Obviously, if there were no demand, there would be no sex work or trafficking. However, that is just one part of it. In my presentation, I tried to show why people are selling sexual services and, for migrant sex workers at least, the main reason is economic; they need the money. That is related to migration. Why do people migrate in the first place? It is because the situation wherever they come from is not providing what they need in their lives. If the Bill really did reduce the number of clients, it would still not solve the problem of the people who are selling sex because they need money but who do not have, in a lot of cases, the option to earn the same amount of money in their home country in another type of job. We should really be talking about migration, global inequality and the reasons why people migrate in the first place to places like the UK, which is rich in comparison with lots of other places.

**Dr Ellison:** Do not forget as well that Sweden has a hugely expensive welfare system. I have Swedish friends who pay, I think, 65% of their income in tax to fund that system. So, theoretically, people who want to exit prostitution in Sweden have that safety net to fall into. We simply do not have that here; it just does not exist.

**Mr McCartney:** That gives the impression that, simply because you do not have a safety net, you do not do what you think is the right thing. Part of it may simply be down to migration but, as you said, we cannot tackle migration and let some other harmful practice continue. I do not think that is a compelling reason either.

**Dr Ellison:** Yes, but, as I said, the legislative provision at the moment in the 2009 Act, under which it is already illegal to pay someone for non-consensual sex, is solid. That could be developed further,

not necessarily in legislative terms, but there is a good argument for joining that to a more multi-agency approach, maybe even at Assembly level, for example.

**Mr McCartney:** In any of your research, have you ever examined why the 2009 Act is not perhaps pursued as much as it could be?

**Dr Ellison:** There are two reasons, Mr McCartney. The first is that it may be very difficult for the police to prosecute as it is difficult for them to obtain evidence. Mr Wells raised the issue of the photograph with me, and, as I said, it was not explained to me what that was at the time. If that is all the evidence there is and no victim is uncovered — the victim apparently went to live in England and did not want to pursue an investigation — that simply would not stand up in a court case. You need much more evidence than that to indicate trafficking. So there is a difficulty providing evidence.

There is also a difficulty in getting witnesses to come forward. Some who come forward will be deported, particularly if they are migrants, so they go to ground. There is a complex issue around migration, residents' permits and evidence gathering.

I think that the 2009 Act is solid. I would not argue that it needs to be changed.

**Mr Elliott:** Thanks for your presentation. I want to ask you about a couple of areas and follow on from Mr McCartney's points. You said that you would like to see the Manchester model implemented. Will you give the Committee a wee bit of an explanation about that? I note that, in your written submission, you indicated:

*"The Justice Committee could perhaps consider alternative regulatory approaches - as practiced in other UK cities".*

I assume that that is broadly what you are talking about. I suppose that the Justice Committee could follow up with a regulatory process, but that is normally done by the Department or through a private Member's Bill. However, irrespective of who does that, I understand your ideal. Will you explain the process that you are thinking about?

**Dr Ellison:** I think that it was around 1997, Mr Elliott, that Manchester City Council recognised that it was having a problem, mainly with on-street prostitution. It developed what it called a prostitution strategy. Basically, what that means is that the city council dovetails with, I think, its environmental health department and its community safety unit, and it involves the local health trusts, sexual health outreach workers, representatives of sex workers organisations and the Greater Manchester Police. The council set up the Manchester Prostitution Forum, which meets periodically, perhaps every two months. The forum brings all the issues to the table and discusses, for example, whether underage sex workers have been discovered in a bar, a massage parlour or whatever. Basically, various groups tell each other what they see around the selling of sex. That morphed into a prostitution strategy, which, again, is an interagency approach across a number of departments, and it favours a harm reduction approach rather than one of enforcement.

**Mr Elliott:** How positive have the results been? Is there any real evidence that it has been successful?

**Dr Ellison:** A police officer once said to me that there are better practices in this area but no best practices. They were probably aiming for a moderate improvement. They have managed to get the street sector contained in a non-residential area and identified very vulnerable children who were taken out and put into residential care or whatever. However, the officers whom I spoke to did not give me any indication that they saw trafficking for sexual exploitation as a problem in the city. They said that they had other problems but that that was not one of them. Some of the biggest problems they had were the illegal drugs market and the on-street sex sector, which I do not think, to be honest, that we have in Belfast.

**Mr Elliott:** All that I am trying to say is that it has had limited positive results rather than it being a huge — *[Inaudible.]*

**Dr Ellison:** You are never going to get hugely positive results. You are not going to abolish human trafficking as long as people can get on planes and boats.

**Dr Huschke:** Or as long as they have no options to migrate legally. As a German national, I do not need traffickers to get to Northern Ireland. I can migrate legally.

**Dr Ellison:** In spite of the rhetoric around trafficking for sexual exploitation, I think that we are starting at a very low point. We are not Prague, we are not Berlin, we are not Bangkok or whatever.

**Mr Elliott:** We do not want to be there either.

**Dr Ellison:** Exactly, of course. What could be done can be done within existing legislative provision.

**Mr Elliott:** That brings me on to the other point. You said that the PSNI already has strong powers, and I assume that those are under the 2009 Act. How would you improve that, because, as we have heard from other presenters, there is not a huge amount of activity from that Act, and there is not a huge amount of people who are being convicted?

**Dr Ellison:** Susan can come in here as well. Partly, Mr Elliott, it is to do with stigma in one area. Some sex workers who may feel exploited do not want to come forward because they think, "What is going to happen to me if I do?" Therefore, they will not give evidence in criminal trials and so on. So, it is about finding maybe a way of reducing that stigma to allow them to come forward, maybe by doing what the Italians do, which is to give people residence permits. That, again, creates its own political difficulties around immigration, and that is certainly something that is very topical at the moment.

**Dr Huschke:** It is not just the sex workers — they are not sex workers but people who are victims of human trafficking — who are not daring to come forward. It is also about other people in the industry, especially other sex workers who might notice something. Something that came out of my research and which is talked about in Rachel Moran's book is the stigmatisation and mistreatment that sex workers fear that they will get when they go to the police. Or, in the case of Northern Ireland, local sex workers may worry that, if they go to the police, it will come out that they are a sex worker and that that will have negative consequences to them. So, there is a lot to be done on reducing the stigma and to provide some sort of safe space in the PSNI where people could come forward and either talk about cases that they have seen or bring up their own case. If they are migrant sex workers and are here without legal status, obviously, if all this will do will be to have them deported to their country of origin, that is not an encouragement for people to come forward.

**Dr Ellison:** I am certainly aware that a number of investigations and one of the prosecutions depended on the police having access to industry information. It was the information that they got from the sector that allowed that prosecution to go forward. Mr Wells was talking about Escort Ireland or whatever. I think that there is a huge risk in alienating that sector. It is not just me who has said that. Microsoft has a huge research centre now for trafficking and technology, and it will say that, because you are never going to abolish it or get rid of it or whatever, you need the sector on board to provide you with that information. I do not think that we need clause 6 on top of the 2009 Act. That is my position.

**Mr McGlone:** I welcome a bit of calm discussion around this. It is always very useful. Two issues arose during the previous dialogue with you. One is that, Dr Ellison, you mentioned that there is organisation motivating this. Can we put that clearly on the record?

**Dr Ellison:** It is Christian Action Research and Education (CARE).

**Mr McGlone:** Thank you for that. Secondly, Mr Wells referred to a Twitter trail. Clearly, he threw that out there and expanded on it in some considerable detail without actually getting to the nub of it. For the rest of us who may wish to expand on our deliberations, it would be helpful, Chair, if we were to have that detail shared with us. It became, in his mind anyway, a good part of the discourse with yourself. It is important that that be shared with us.

I will get on to the substance. These are issues that came up, not in any order of importance, during discussion of some of the more moderated comments. You raised an important issue. We heard earlier the experience of a girl who, through force of unfortunate circumstances, wound up in prostitution. You commented on how you mediate between experiences. I would reflect on that, if I were in your position. If a bad experience is one where a person has suffered abuse, violence or whatever, it is for us to incorporate that into law where we can and make sure that the law is enforced. Where someone claims that they have had a good experience with no abuse, that aspect of the law

cannot be taken against them. So, it is not a case of mediating. It is a case of discerning that, where someone has been abused, the appropriate measures are taken to make sure that that abuse is stopped and the perpetrator brought before the courts and held to account. You may wish to reflect on that.

**Dr Ellison:** Is that a question?

**Mr McGlone:** No. You can comment on it if you want to expand on where you were coming from.

**Dr Ellison:** All I was trying to say, Mr McGlone, is that there is a huge range of experiences in the selling of sex, as there is in politics or academia or whatever. I am just concerned that, traditionally, the people with bad experiences have been maybe best able to articulate their views; they write books and whatever. However, there is a silent majority who, I would almost say, nothing has happened to, but they do not feel that they can comment because of issues around stigma. I do not want to get into a dog wagging the tail thing —

**Mr McGlone:** To emphasise the point, in case you did not pick it up well enough, if a person has had bad experiences resulting from illegal behaviour, that is why we are here. If people have been tortured and abused and so on, we are here to make sure that —

**Dr Ellison:** But there is legislation in place, Mr McGlone, to deal with that.

**Mr McGlone:** The phrase you used was "mediating between experiences". I do not think it is a case of mediation. It is a case of making sure that the appropriate law is brought about and that those responsible for criminal activity appear before the courts.

**Dr Ellison:** I see where you are coming from, Mr McGlone, but I simply do not think it is as simple as bad and good. There is a huge chunk of experience in the middle that may not necessarily be one or the other or may shift between the two. I am just very conscious of having laws based on a small number of people's bad experiences.

**Mr McGlone:** All I was doing was giving you an opportunity to give your opinion.

**Dr Ellison:** Sorry.

**Mr McGlone:** I am not trying to put you in a box or anything.

To extend it further, as it stands at the moment, the act of prostitution is the criminal act.

**Dr Ellison:** Soliciting is.

**Mr McGlone:** Yes. We have heard evidence previously that, if you took the foot off the pedal for prostitutes, the police may find it easier to gain evidence from those prostitutes, which would make prosecutions easier. Have you an opinion on whether one aspect of the law should be eased to obtain convictions of those who are buying the sex?

**Dr Ellison:** The first issue is that selling sex is currently legal. So, unless Parliament passes a law to make that bit illegal —

**Mr McGlone:** OK.

**Dr Ellison:** That is one issue. Your second point relates to clause 6, the ending of —

**Mr McGlone:** The criminal act of a person who actually acquires sex via a prostitute.

**Dr Ellison:** I do not think that it has worked in Sweden to the extent that it has been alleged to have. It certainly has not worked in South Korea, the other jurisdiction where it has been applied. It is a bit of a mess there.

**Mr McGlone:** That brings me to the next bit, and we have heard evidence. Some members went to Sweden and spoke to the police and authorities there, and they will have formed their own conclusions from that. I have spoken to some of the members who went to Sweden. Apparently some of the evidence gathered in Sweden has been as a consequence of phone-tapping. That takes us into a different field altogether, with human rights abuses and the sensitivities here in Northern Ireland, because there has been phone-tapping in the past in Northern Ireland, some legal and some quite illegal. Have you any views, evidence or research that shows whether any convictions were as a result of phone-tapping?

**Dr Ellison:** I have read that the Swedish police say that the law was effective against trafficking because they heard two anonymous people having a phone conversation.

**Mr McGlone:** Right.

**Dr Ellison:** Realistically there is no way that that would stand up in any kind of court, and I would be looking for far stronger evidence than that. I think that the issue was raised before anyway. There have been so few prosecutions under the Act, comparatively speaking, for lots of evidential reasons: if the buyer says, "I did not buy", and the seller says, "I was not selling", that pushes the police into a whole evidence-gathering thing, and, as I say, most cases collapse.

The idea that prostitution is gone in Sweden is just ridiculous. I have spoken to an online provider who could not be happier at the moment. They are raking it in. They said that the worst thing that the Swedes could do would be to decriminalise; it would put them out of business in the morning. So the more the Swedes tighten the laws, the more these companies are rolling in the dollars, pounds, krona or whatever.

**Mr McGlone:** You touched on the policing resource, which is a big issue.

**Dr Ellison:** Absolutely.

**Mr McGlone:** Here in the North, we have our own not entirely unique problems. Some people insist on blocking streets, we have had flag protests, and we have had other lunatics trying to explode bombs on the streets. That is a resource issue. You mentioned dissident activities, and probably other activities. Has any evidence been sourced of paramilitary involvement of any hue with the sex trade?

**Dr Ellison:** No. I think that, historically, going back maybe 30 years, there was some evidence that some loyalist paramilitary organisations were involved. I have asked the PSNI repeatedly about this, and they tell me that there is no evidence.

**Mr McGlone:** OK.

**Dr Ellison:** I do not know whether that was the answer that you were expecting, but that was what they told me.

**Mr McGlone:** I just did not know. I wanted to ask you because you drew me in that direction earlier when you referred to the resource implications.

**Dr Ellison:** They said that there might be other groups, maybe one or two Chinese Triad gangs, that might be involved. The PSNI has no evidence of paramilitary involvement at the moment, which is not to say that there will not be, but there is none currently.

**Mr McGlone:** OK. Thanks very much.

**The Chairperson:** Dr Ellison, you said at the tail end that the more the laws are toughened in Sweden, the more money is made. Based on what evidence?

**Dr Ellison:** Based on what companies told me about their business activities.

**The Chairperson:** What companies?

**Dr Ellison:** I am not telling you. I cannot say.

**The Chairperson:** You cannot say.

**Dr Ellison:** I cannot say. I would love to be able to say, Mr Givan, but I cannot say right now.

**The Chairperson:** What is restricting you from saying it? Remember, you have privilege: you can say what you like in this Committee.

**Mr McGlone:** Within reason.

**Dr Ellison:** Yes, but research ethics apply. I can read the bit out to you if you like.

**The Chairperson:** Yes, that would be great.

**Dr Ellison:** Bear in mind that I am two thirds through the project. When I do the report, I will probably be in a position to say, but I cannot say at this time. I can read you the relevant bit.

**The Chairperson:** Yes, that would be good.

**Dr Ellison:** I am not sure whether the Committee understands how you do economic research, but you have to get ethics permission from your institution to do it. It is a very complex and convoluted process, and the UK Government set out requirements for what you are allowed to do. I had applied to the university ethics board, which states that:

*"All specific identifying information (individuals, venues) that the research team uncovers in the course of the project will be treated as strictly confidential and will be securely stowed in a safe place. For example, the researchers will not convey the names of the bars they have observed to others, including other bar owners, the authorities, or other scholars."*

No interviewee will be informed of the identity of any other interviewee —

**The Chairperson:** Sorry, Dr Ellison, you are reading out the reason why you cannot tell me.

**Dr Ellison:** Yes.

**The Chairperson:** I thought that you were going to read out the part of the research that your paper is based on.

**Dr Ellison:** Sorry. It is based on a number of interviews that I carried out with online providers, who said that they have expanded into Sweden and Norway in the past two years. They also said — I have no reason to doubt them, although I will maybe check — that business was booming.

**The Chairperson:** You have no reason to doubt the online suppliers, if that is the phrase that you want to use. However, the authorities in Sweden tell us that they are cracking down on organised crime, they are going after the money, they are being successful and their wiretaps of these international organisations are saying that Sweden is a very difficult and hostile environment.

**Dr Ellison:** You and I could go on the Internet, and we would find that a printout of all the information about Sweden would probably fill this room. We could lay it all out and read it, and I think that, at the end of that process, neither of us would be in a position to say —

**The Chairperson:** So, the Swedish police officer who told us that was lying; you disbelieve him.

**Dr Ellison:** I did not say that.

**The Chairperson:** You believe the online provider of the service, but you put a question mark over what the Swedish authorities tell us.

**Dr Ellison:** I think that the Swedish authorities have an interest in promoting the system. I also know that Swedish police officers, when speaking off the record, are slightly more sceptical about the effects of the legislation than they are when talking on the record. You have to bear in mind that this is official Swedish Government policy. So, a Swedish police officer cannot really tell you that this is not working. Or, it may be that they can tell you that it is not necessarily working, but they certainly cannot tell you that they disagree with it. The same goes for social workers; they have to sort of buy in to the system. However, any cursory hunt around the Internet will reveal a huge online market for sex in Sweden and Norway. That is all that I am saying.

**The Chairperson:** Earlier, you said that the PSNI is against clause 6 of Lord Morrow's Bill. Is that its corporate view?

**Dr Ellison:** I cannot speak for the corporate —

**The Chairperson:** You did earlier. You put out this sweeping statement that the PSNI is against Lord Morrow's clause 6.

**Dr Ellison:** The officers who I have spoken to in the PSNI are against it, and I assume —

**The Chairperson:** Do you want to correct your original, very sweeping statement?

**Dr Ellison:** No. I am assuming that the officers who commented in the newspapers had their remarks sent upstairs to be sanctioned.

**The Chairperson:** Is this the same officer who said that we should legalise prostitution — Superintendent Marshall?

**Dr Ellison:** I am not sure which one that is.

**Mr Wells:** Philip Marshall.

**The Chairperson:** The one who said it in the newspaper was subsequently brought into line by his superiors, and the PSNI as an organisation then provided an official statement. That is just for the record, because, like you say, when people make sweeping statements, it is important to test the evidence.

**Dr Ellison:** I do not think that he was making an argument for legalisation, surely.

**The Chairperson:** Yes, he was. It was on the front page of the 'News Letter'. You can check your research, however.

**Mr Humphrey:** Thank you both very much for your presentation. Dr Ellison, I am not doing this to trap you or to trip you up, but, during your evidence to the Committee, did you more or less suggest that section 64A of the 2009 Act was robust enough to deal with this issue?

**Dr Ellison:** Yes. Do you mean paying for sex with a coerced or trafficked victim?

**Mr Humphrey:** Yes.

**Dr Ellison:** Yes, my opinion is that it could be done through that legislation plus other interagency activities that could be done by you and the Assembly or perhaps be devolved. That is my position.

**Mr Humphrey:** In part of your evidence, you used the term "do not rock the boat". I am confused, because you also said that prostitution will not be abolished or crushed.

**Dr Ellison:** Yes.

**Mr Humphrey:** That suggests to me that, if it will not be abolished or crushed, the law that you are talking about is not sufficient and is not robust enough to deal with the issue.

**Dr Ellison:** I do not necessarily agree, Mr Humphrey, that prostitution equals trafficking. You know my position on that. At some level, of course —

**Mr Humphrey:** I will come back to that point.

**Dr Ellison:** I think that the legislation that you are talking about on trafficking is robust but can potentially be enhanced.

It remains my view that you will never be able legislate against paying for sex. This law has not been tested before, Mr Humphrey. This will be the first test of it outside the Nordic region. It has gone to South Korea and has been debated in France and the Republic of Ireland, but it has not been implemented anywhere else.

**Mr Humphrey:** I was one of the members of the Committee who travelled to Stockholm, and where I will agree with what you said is on it being driven underground.

**Dr Ellison:** You do or do not agree?

**Mr Humphrey:** I do. When we were there, we were told by the police that you can phone a number that is a Stockholm number found on a card in a phone box and that that will get you through to the service that you want. However, the number is not a Stockholm number but redirects to Bucharest. Therefore, it is driven underground. I therefore have sympathy for your argument from the point of view that laws will not deal with this. However, I do not believe that the law that you believe to be robust enough deals with it. That is my opinion, and yours will differ. We as a Committee have listened to a lot of evidence over the past number of months, and I honestly have to say that a lot of it suggests that it is driven underground. Therefore, getting reliable statistics is virtually impossible. You said yourself during your evidence that it is very difficult to get sex workers to come forward.

**Dr Ellison:** Absolutely.

**Mr Humphrey:** You also said that it can be worth between £30 million and £50 million to the economy.

**Dr Ellison:** That is a figure that I have heard.

**Mr Humphrey:** My point is that the variable between £30 million and £50 million is so huge that it proves that people will not come forward, proves that it is driven underground and proves, I put to you, Dr Ellison, that the law that exists at the moment is not robust enough to deal with the issue.

**Dr Ellison:** Again, I will go back to what I said earlier, and perhaps Dr Huschke can comment as well. I accept that there is trafficking for sexual exploitation, for labour exploitation, or whatever, but I do not see all sexual commerce as involving trafficking, which is perhaps what you are implying.

**Mr Humphrey:** I did not imply anything.

**Dr Ellison:** OK, sorry. The law is potentially robust enough to deal with trafficking issues if it looks at other issues such as, for example, migration, immigration, and so on, and if it is embedded in a broader interagency framework. I quoted the figure of £30 million to £50 million because it was quoted in the Committee. That is the only reason that I mentioned that figure.

**Dr Huschke:** Does that not refer to the sex industry as a whole?

**Dr Ellison:** I think that it refers to the sex industry as a whole.

**Mr Humphrey:** It is like trying to herd sheep.

**Dr Ellison:** I agree with you, Mr Humphrey. I do not think that you can do that.

**Mr Humphrey:** And therefore it cancels out, sorry. You made mention that you come from a Presbyterian background and so on. I take it that the point that you are trying to make is that you are individualistic. I, too, come from a Presbyterian background. I am a communicant member and committee member of my local Presbyterian church. However, I see no difficulty, and I do not call it

moralising. I believe that it is my job as a legislator to stand up for the most vulnerable people in society. I am not here to change the world, as you put it. I am going to admit to being here to make Northern Ireland, and the city that I represent part of, a better place. To be honest with you, you have your view, I have mine and colleagues have theirs on Gunilla Ekberg's opinions and on other things. On this issue, I am with her, yes. Just before you come back at me, let me say that, on this issue, I am also with the Irish Congress of Trade Unions and the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission, and I normally would not be. On this issue, I even share the opinion of most nationalist parties on this island, but it does not make me a United Irelander. The point is that it is my job — our job — to protect the most vulnerable, including a young lady — a teenager — who was trafficked from eastern Europe to Stockholm and who, the police told us, on one day had to service 33 clients in a bedroom. She gets no pay. She has to ask if she can have a drink or get a packet of cigarettes. She has no human rights and no protection, and she is living in appalling conditions. They showed us photographs of the room that she was living in.

**Dr Ellison:** But why could not, Mr Humphrey —

**The Chairperson:** Let Mr Humphrey finish, please.

**Dr Ellison:** Sorry.

**Mr Humphrey:** The point that I am making is that I believe that it is my job and it is incumbent upon me, us as a Committee, and this legislature, to ensure that — whether the young lady was trafficked here or is indigenous to Northern Ireland — we do not allow people to go through that sort of gross indecency and complete violation of human rights. She does not have any rights; she is living an existence. You know, they make tens of thousands of euros a month from that young lady, and she gets nothing. And I make no apology for trying to get laws to protect her and those like her. You may take the view that there are people outside that, but it is our job to protect the most vulnerable in this particular area, Dr Ellison, and that is what we are trying to do.

**Dr Ellison:** I do not dispute what you are trying to do, Mr Humphrey. I was not saying that at all. All I am saying is that this Swedish law has been untested outside Sweden. I do not know what the knock-on consequences will be of introducing it in an environment that is unlike Sweden. We do not have the welfare state infrastructural support here. We are not very homogeneous; we have our little ethnic sectarian schisms and whatever. So it is my job as a researcher to think a bit outside the box about what the consequences of this might be. Might it make a situation better in some respects for some people? Might it make things much worse for many more in other respects? That is not to say that I disagree with what you are trying to do, but I just wonder whether, potentially, it could be done within the existing legislative framework, if that were tweaked, amended or whatever.

**Mr Humphrey:** I accept your point. Just to finish, let me go back. You have talked about Sweden and Holland, which are two of the most liberal democracies on the globe. They deal with this in a very different way. In giving the benefit of the doubt — if that is the right term, and it is probably not — I believe that it is our job to go with the system that prevents over 140 people being murdered, and people losing the most basic human rights. Yes, in Stockholm and Sweden, it is driven underground, but there is a crush on it and a check on it and a police presence and resource being applied. I do not think that police resource is an excuse not to deal with it. I appreciate the point that police resources are stretched. I go back to the start of my contribution: I genuinely do not believe that section 64A of the 2009 Policing and Crime Act, which deals with the issue of sexual services from someone who is being coerced, is enough to deal with it. That is why I support the Bill.

**Mr Wells:** I have a few things. First, I have sent you the link to the Swedish newspaper that verifies that there have been 127 murders of women prostitutes —

**Dr Ellison:** In Sweden?

**Mr Wells:** — in the Netherlands in the past 30 years. That is a society in which, of course, prostitution, even before the reform of 2000, was very liberal.

**Dr Ellison:** Would you like me to respond to your email?

**Mr Wells:** Yes, certainly — when you get it.

**Mr McCartney:** Be careful what you say in it.

**Mr McGlone:** That is a given.

**Mr Wells:** Secondly, I am about to send you the link with Mr Marshall's comments. He is the police superintendent who called for the liberalisation of the law in Northern Ireland. The only reason that I have not yet sent you the link about Dr Huschke is that I have to get the consent of the lady who sent it to me. Clearly, she is in a very vulnerable position. I cannot reveal her identity for very obvious reasons. That is where I got it from.

The experts in the Building have said that there is no problem with falsifying, duplicating or changing IP addresses. That is very easily done. Therefore, indicating that you are dealing with the same people is the easiest thing in the world. They cannot do that if they do it on Apple Macs, but they can do it quite easily on ordinary computers.

Dr Ellison, I looked up your website while you were speaking. You told us earlier that you had no connection with Amnesty International. Were you not an adviser to Amnesty International?

**Dr Ellison:** Not as far as I know.

**Mr Wells:** Well, why in your website does it say that you are? I have shown it to the Chairman. For some reason, that was taken down within the past week, but we did a photo snap of it. Why did you say —

**Dr Ellison:** You will have to show me.

**Mr Wells:** It says that you are the human trafficking and sexual exploitation adviser to Amnesty International. That is black and white: either you are or you are not, and yet you deny any connection.

**Dr Ellison:** You can check with Amnesty International. I have never advised it on that.

**Mr Wells:** That is a strange one.

This is even more serious, and I ask both of you this: has either of you had any direct contact with Mr Peter McCormick or his sons?

**Dr Ellison:** Absolutely not.

**Mr Wells:** You have never heard of Mr Peter McCormick?

**Dr Huschke:** I have never heard of his name.

**Mr Wells:** You have never heard of him?

**Dr Huschke:** No.

**Mr Wells:** You have never heard of escortireland.ie or any similar phrase?

**Dr Ellison:** I have heard of escortireland.ie.

**Mr Wells:** Have you had any dealings with escortireland.ie?

**Dr Ellison:** In what sense?

**Mr Wells:** Did you co-author a paper with escortireland.ie or with anyone who controls it? Be very careful about how you answer that, because I have stuff before me that indicates otherwise. Have you had any contact with —

**Dr Ellison:** I have not co-authored a paper with escortireland.ie. I have co-authored a paper based on escort.ie data. Is that what you mean?

**Mr Wells:** What is escort.ie?

**Dr Ellison:** Escortireland.ie?

**Mr Wells:** What is it?

**Dr Ellison:** It is an online web provider.

**Mr Wells:** What does it provide?

**Dr Ellison:** It advertises profiles for —

**Mr Wells:** Prostitutes.

**Mr Elliott:** For sex workers, yes. I am not sure what your point is.

**Mr Wells:** Well —

**Dr Ellison:** Excuse me. I was researching the indoor off-street online sex industry. I asked a number of providers to give me anonymised data, which they did. We then put that data on my computer. We loaded it up in SPSS, which is a statistical package. I was able to look at the ages of sex workers, the jurisdictions where they came from, the income they charged or whatever. I got raw data, and I used it —

**Mr Wells:** From the largest prostitution website in Ireland, which controls the overwhelming majority of —

**Dr Ellison:** Are you suggesting, Mr Wells, that I get it from a website with no profiles on it? Of course I would take it from the one that had the most clients.

**Mr Wells:** The site makes €150,000 a month.

**Dr Ellison:** What it makes is irrelevant to me. The fact is that I asked it for data. In fact, I did not even ask for the data. Is this Paul Maginn you are talking about?

**Mr Wells:** I am talking about Peter McCormick and his son.

**Dr Ellison:** I do not know Peter McCormick. I do not even know who his son is. I co-wrote a chapter, which, I guess is what you are talking about —

**Mr Wells:** Yes.

**Dr Ellison:** — with Paul Maginn. Is that what you are talking about?

**Mr Wells:** Yes, but you told me earlier that you had never heard of Peter McCormick, who runs that site.

**Dr Ellison:** I have not, no. I have never met Peter McCormick.

**Mr Wells:** You said that you did not know him.

**Dr Ellison:** I do not know him.

**Mr Wells:** Right, but you have heard of him.

**Dr Ellison:** Only because you talked about him last week.

**Mr McGlone:** I have heard of the Dalai Lama, Chair. Do you know what I mean?

**Mr Wells:** Yes, but as we will find out later, this is the main —

**Dr Ellison:** Mr Wells, you are being slightly disingenuous here. I have heard of Peter McCormick.

**Mr Wells:** We will move on.

**Mr McCartney:** You are making a very bad job of a bad job.

**Dr Ellison:** I have heard of Peter McCormick because you talked about him at the last hearing. I did not even know who he was until you talked about him.

**Mr Wells:** You said that the Swedish model —

**Dr Ellison:** Sorry, can I just clarify something? You are sitting looking at your computer there. I am not allowed to use my phone for some reason, so I cannot look at my own website. I have never been an adviser to Amnesty International; I do not know where that came from. I do not know why the website was taken down. I know that Queen's is operating two websites now.

**Mr Wells:** I will send it to you so that you can check.

**Dr Ellison:** If you show it to me before I go out, I can —

**Mr Wells:** I was about to do that, only it says here that the thing is going down for the last hour, unfortunately.

**Dr Ellison:** I will check with Amnesty when it comes in and ask it. No, I have —

**Mr Wells:** You said that the Swedish model had only been tested in Sweden, but the Swedish model has already been introduced in Norway and Iceland.

**Dr Ellison:** No, I said that the Swedish model has only been introduced in the Nordic region. I can check my wording.

**Mr Wells:** It is about to be introduced into France.

**Dr Ellison:** No. It has to go to a vote in the upper Chamber.

**Mr Wells:** It is going through the lower Chamber.

**Dr Ellison:** The lower Chamber, sorry.

**Mr Wells:** This is my final point. The phrase that you used about the DUP is extremely offensive.

**Dr Ellison:** OK. I apologise for that.

**Mr Wells:** That is good.

**Dr Ellison:** But, can I maybe put a little bit of context on that as well?

**Mr Wells:** OK.

**Dr Ellison:** I have tried on, I do not know, about 20 different occasions — seeing that we are all keeping records of emails and stuff — to contact you and you, Mr Givan, way before this research started, asking for an interview in connection with the project. I have spoken to Lord Morrow's PA and to your press office. I have had no luck whatsoever in getting anyone from the party, nor, indeed, from CARE, to come to speak to me. So, I guess that maybe I was a bit frustrated. I was thinking, "Well,

why will this party that is promoting this Bill, Act or whatever not speak to me?" Every other political party has. The DUP is the only party that has not. Then I was thinking, "When this report goes to the UK Government, which it will in September, I am going to be put in the really awkward position of saying, 'I have had the cooperation of all the political parties in the Assembly with the exception of, I guess, the biggest one'".

**Mr Wells:** Dr Susann — I will call you — you remained very silent during my questioning about your links —

**Dr Huschke:** I was just going to say something about that.

**Mr Wells:** I think that you need to tell us exactly what is going on.

**Dr Huschke:** We all agree that we need research on the sex industry and on human trafficking, and we all want to know how many people are involved in it, what is going on and who is doing what. We all agree, I suppose, that the online sector is a growing sector and is really important. We agree on that, right?

**Mr Wells:** Right. Keep going.

**Dr Huschke:** So, I am just wondering how you suggest you find out anything about the online sector without actually ever contacting any people in the online sector. I do not know this guy you were talking about. I have never heard of his name, and I certainly have not had any dealings with him. In order to get information about the online sector, yes, I emailed the email addresses that are visible on the websites of different companies that advertise in the online sector. If I am not supposed to do that for moral reasons or ethical reasons, how I am supposed to find out anything about the online industry?

**Mr Wells:** Maybe you should have told us that when you were telling us about your research. Your main source of information is the main prostitution website in Ireland.

**Dr Huschke:** I did say — it is probably on the record — that the way I got people to answer the survey was by having it posted on some of the websites; yes, of course.

**Mr Wells:** That is where I saw it.

**Dr Huschke:** I am sorry?

**Mr Wells:** That is where I saw it. It was there.

**Dr Ellison:** But, if you are doing research on the online sector, you have to —

**Dr Huschke:** So, how are you going to find people if you are not using the online sector? I mean —

**Dr Ellison:** You might not like it, Mr Wells, but people have to do research on this.

**Mr Wells:** Right. I will finish with this. You have now admitted that you had direct links with the largest prostitution website in Ireland, and you have not met people like Rachel Moran.

**Mr McGlone:** That is a big leap of faith there.

**Mr Wells:** I am saying it.

**Dr Huschke:** Rachel Moran is not the only one who can provide that kind of experience. I have talked to other people who have had a similar experience.

**Dr Ellison:** I have not had direct links. I asked them; I did not even ask them. Paul Maginn, which I guess is what you are sitting there looking at, or were looking at — Escorts Ireland is a company. Of course, I have not written with a company. Paul, who is based in Australia — he is from Belfast — teaches at the University of Western Australia. He got anonymous data from them, which we loaded

up into our own computers and ran some statistical packages on. I could tell you the ages of people and their nationalities. Would you not be more interested in listening to that? It would give you a better idea of who and what these people are.

**The Chairperson:** Dr Ellison, I have heard what you have said about excusing why you would be so abusive to Gunilla Ekberg in your email. You may well be frustrated about the DUP and not having got a response. It certainly does not justify emailing a fellow academic —

**Dr Ellison:** She is not an academic.

**The Chairperson:** Well, again, you can run her down if you wish.

**Dr Ellison:** I am not running her down, but where is she teaching?

**The Chairperson:** You can continue in that train of thought if you want about that individual. One might say, "When you are in a hole, stop digging", but it never justifies the type of abuse that you sent to that individual via email. You can excuse it if you wish. It is not acceptable. Given the views that you hold about my party, why would I ever engage in any research that you would want to put forward, given the prejudicial views that you hold against my party?

**Dr Ellison:** Obviously, not at this point in time, but I am sure I had asked your party long before the email. I think that the email was born out of frustration.

**The Chairperson:** It is an offensive email —

**Dr Ellison:** I do not —

**The Chairperson:** I am not here to now get a response, because we have finished this session. It is an offensive, obnoxious email, and it prejudices the witness and testimony that you have given — in my opinion — because of the views that you have expressed about the party that I belong to, which gets the most votes of any other party in Northern Ireland. Therefore, you have not just offended that party; you have offended those people as well.

However, people will be able to read your evidence and judge for themselves. I thank you both for coming to the Committee and giving up your time.