



HOUSE OF COMMONS  
LONDON SW1A 0AA

July 2018

Dear Constituent,

Thank you for contacting me about prostitution.

I am aware of different legislative approaches to prostitution, for example in Northern Ireland, where all buying of sex has been criminalised and the selling decriminalised. However there is no unequivocal evidence that any one approach is better at tackling harm and exploitation, and that must remain the priority. At present, our laws are there to tackle exploitation and abuse, clamping down on activities such as brothel-keeping and kerb-crawling. The Government will of course closely monitor the implementation, enforcement and impact of the changes in Northern Ireland.

Local police forces are in the best position to identify and respond to issues around prostitution and sex work in their area, including such phenomena as 'pop-up' brothels. Forces are supported by clear operational guidance for policing prostitution and sexual exploitation. The guidance is clear that where indoor premises are identified, the safety and welfare of those working in brothels, investigation of coercion and exploitation, and reducing the impact to local communities must all be taken into account.

It is illegal to keep a brothel, or to allow premises to be used as one. The law does not distinguish between types of brothel, and it must continue to be ensured that police forces have the powers they need to identify and close down these brothels. Prosecutions for brothel keeping offences have risen, from 99 in 2014-15 to 111 in 2015-16.

As was set out in the Government's response to the Home Affairs Select Committee, it is committed to tackling the harm and exploitation that can be associated with prostitution and sex work, and we must support people who want to leave prostitution by giving them every opportunity to escape it. Through the 'Tampon Tax Fund', a total of £389,000 is being provided to organisations which help those who want to leave prostitution and sex work.

The Government also funds a victim care contract worth £40 million between 2015-2020 for all identified adult victims of modern slavery, which can include sexual



exploitation and forced prostitution, in England and Wales. This is delivered by The Salvation Army through a series of specialist sub-contractors and can include safe accommodation and psychological support.

Thank you again for taking the time to contact me.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Chris".

**CHRIS HEATON-HARRIS MP  
MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT FOR DAVENTRY**