



Chris Heaton-Harris
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Dear Constituent,

Thank you for contacting me about commercial sexual exploitation.

I know the Government is committed to protecting those selling sex from harm and enabling the police to target those who exploit vulnerable people involved in prostitution. It is also very important to ensure those who want to leave prostitution are given every opportunity to find routes out.

I am aware that there are different approaches to prostitution around the world, including New Zealand and in Scandinavia, as well as recent legislative developments in Northern Ireland. In addition, a Sexual Exploitation Bill was recently introduced in the House of Commons by Labour MP, Dame Diana Johnson. The Bill seeks to criminalise paying for sex and decriminalise selling sex.

I understand the Home Office has not yet seen unequivocal evidence that any one approach is better at tackling harm and exploitation. The law around prostitution in England and Wales focuses on tackling harm and exploitation caused to those involved. Ministers have assured me that they continue to meet and engage with experts, academics, the police and those who sell sex themselves, to further their understanding on the issues around prostitution and this is all the more important during the Coronavirus outbreak. I will continue to press the Government to ensure those affected by the outbreak have access to the support they need.

The Government is working to combat the use of online classified websites to facilitate sex trafficking. This action includes the National Crime Agency leading a multi-agency operational plan to investigate, disrupt and prevent sex trafficking facilitated via these websites. New innovative technological capabilities to help identify trafficking online are also being developed. It is good news that the Government is urging the largest adult services websites operating in the UK to take a more proactive role in identifying and preventing trafficking related content from being hosted.

Thank you again for taking the time to contact me.

Yours faithfully,

CHRIS HEATON-HARRIS MP
MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT FOR DAVENTRY

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