

Stay Safe... Work Wise

S a f e t y f o r W o r k i n g W o m e n

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In creating this safety resource we have drawn from 'Keeping Safe' a booklet the UK Network of Sex Work Projects (UK NSWP) and 'Safety First', a booklet produced by the Armistead Project in Liverpool

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introduction

Stay Safe – Work Wise Safety Advice for Working Women

This booklet has been written for women working in the sex industry. It contains common sense information about keeping safe when working, whether on the streets, in flats or doing out-calls to homes or hotels.

This booklet also has information about what to do if things go wrong.

If you or one of your friends has experienced a violent incident while working, please report this to Chrysalis (contact details can be found at the back of this booklet). We can circulate descriptions of dodgy punters and dangerous people to other working women.

We will not report this to the Gardai UNLESS YOU ASK US TO and if you do want to report incidents to the Gardai we can come with you.

Chrysalis: Chrysalis is a community drug project and registered charity based in Dublin 7. Chrysalis provides keyworking, counselling, case management, info/advice and holistic treatments to individuals affected by drug use who work or live in the wider Stoney-Batter area of Dublin. As part of this service Chrysalis also provides a range of additional services to sex workers/women working in prostitution.

Context: This resource was created through the use of focus groups with working women. The term sex worker refers to a woman or man who exchanges or trades sexual acts for money over a sustained period of time. However, the women Chrysalis meet and work with identify as 'working girls' or 'working women'. To this end, working women will be used throughout this booklet.

CONDOMS ★ Pick and mix for safe tricks

- Always have a condom ready and easy to reach
- Use only one condom per job
- Use flavoured for oral
- Use extra/ultra strong or natural for sex
- Use extra/ultra strong for anal
- Practice different techniques of putting a condom on
- Use lubricant with each condom to prevent the condom from bursting
- Try not to use baby oil or lotion, any skin creams, any hair products or anything that's not proper lubricant

GETTING READY FOR WORK

- Prepare before going out – think of what you are happy to do and how much you charge for each thing. Think of this as a menu and decide what you will and will not do -that way you will be in control of negotiations
- Decide **how long you are going out for** and if you can, tell someone to expect a call from you around a certain time. Agree what they should do if you do not come home or call them by a certain time
- Wear **footwear that is comfortable** and allows you to run in case you need to
- If you wear trousers or jeans and need to take them off for business, **always take them off fully. You can't run with them around your knees** and they will slow you down
- Avoid sharp jewellery which can damage condoms
- Bring **condoms, lubricant, and a personal alarm** (or a whistle to blow if something goes wrong and you need to get passers by attention!)
- Make yourself familiar with **free condom outlets** and opening times. See the back of this booklet
- Take your mobile phone, charged and with credit or some change if you don't have a mobile
- Put 999 into your mobile under 'ICE' (In case of emergency) so it is easy to find

menu

	Yes	No	Sometimes	Price
Kissing				
Teasing				
Dirty Talk				
Licking Nipples				
Strip tease				
Finger Sucking				
Dressing Up				
Hand job				
Spanking				
Using toys				
Blowjob				
Full Sex				
Doggy Style				
Anal sex				

GETTING READY FOR WORK

- Remember you **do not need credit to phone 999** from either a mobile or landline
- Put **999 (ICE) on redial** on your phone for easy access should something go wrong
- At tip also is not to save your family members names under 'mam', 'dad' and so on, as if someone robs your phone they may ring these people and cause trouble by sharing info you may want to keep private (put family's first names instead)



alcohol and drugs

- **Know your limits** -Don't work if you are too stoned or drunk. You are much more likely to get ripped off or attacked. Use just enough so you are not 'sick' but not so much you are 'goofing' or 'off your head'
- Don't let the punter know you are a drug user as they could use it against you. They may offer you drugs, rather than cash or less cash than you should make for a job

SPIKED DRINK, DRUGS OR FOOD

- If you are offered a drink by a punter **ask for an unopened can or bottle** or serve yourself
- With food also, **don't accept it unless it is in a sealed wrapper** or you have seen it prepared from start to finish



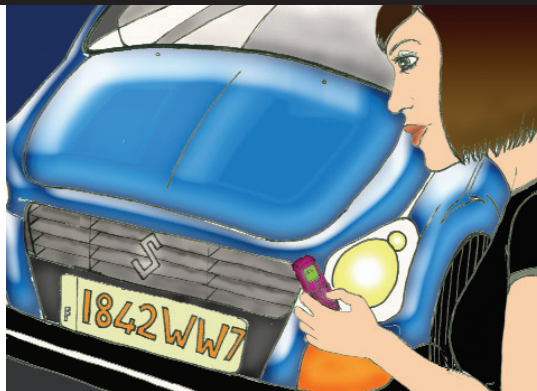
- Make sure your punter is happy to drink or eat the same drink or food as you are being offered
- Avoid accepting drugs from or taking drugs with punters; you can never be sure what they are or what they have been cut with

Working on the Street

- **Know the area**— especially the escape routes, Garda stations, pubs, shops and garages.
- Know the bus routes and where to get a taxi
- **Avoid** working in areas with **no easy escape routes**
- Try to **work near a busy road** and stay on the same side as oncoming traffic. If a car pulls up and you think that something is not quite right, walk quickly in the opposite direction to the traffic, that way they can't follow you
- Be aware of local policing activities and also try to be respectful of residents and others living and working in the area
- **Keep fellow workers informed** of bad experiences and give descriptions of clients involved
- Even a regular client can be capable of violence so stay aware at all times
- Do one or all of these as you are about to get into a car:
- Shout back '**did you get that?**' and say 'we always take car registrations for each other' even if there is nobody there
- **Take registration** yourself as you walk up to the car
- **Make sure the client sees you** - tell him you always text the reg to a friend

Working on the Street

- Even better if you actually have someone you can send it to, or save it in your draft text message file. Although the important thing is that he thinks you have sent it on
- Shout over your shoulder “back in fifteen” to make it look like someone is looking out for you
- **Check the car out** - have a good look in the back seat to make sure nobody else is in it. In vans, check the back of the van in case another person or people are hiding in it before you get in
- If you know someone you can work with, do, it's safer



- **You pick the spot to go to, do not go to a remote spot.** Go somewhere that if you scream there is likely to be someone around to hear you

Working on the Street

- **If you're doing business in a parked car make sure you are able to open the door to get out if you need to.**
Parking too close to a wall for example can prevent you getting out
- **Get the money first!** Or get them to show you at least they have it
- **Try to come across as confident and assertive,** even if you do not feel it. Show clients you are in control. This can put a potential attacker off as you may not seem an easy target
- Keep some money in your bag but put most of it in your sock or bra so if someone tries to rob you; you can hand over the bag
- **Never get into a car with someone wearing gloves.** Gloves can disguise fingerprints and may be worn by someone who wishes not to be identified
- **Always leave finger prints somewhere in the car** (firmly place your fingerprints under the dash in front of you for example) just in case evidence is needed later by Gardaí, should something happen
- **Trust your gut instinct** – if something does not feel right it is probably not

Outcalls to a home/hotel

- Hotels are generally safer than flats or houses as there are other people around and the hotel may have the client's credit card details
- **Tell someone the name of the hotel** and the room number you are going to if you can
- Decide **on the phone** before you go with the client **what the price is, and what that price includes**
- If you can, **bring a friend**. You can make it sound exciting to them if you need to convince them i.e. someone watching or else joining in
- If you go in a taxi with a client **ask the taxi driver to remember you** as you get out and where he dropped you. Let the client hear this if they are with you

Working in a flat



- **Avoid working on your own** anywhere as violent clients are more likely to attack you if you are on your own. If you are on your own, pretend someone is with you. You could call to someone in the kitchen as you go to the room with the client

- **Have a plan** ready in case the client attacks you. Know the escape routes from the building
- Get the money first and stash it away
- Always take a **personal alarm** into the room with you
- Never leave a key in the door as you could be locked in
- If you are not entirely comfortable with the client do not lock the door
- **Keep an eye** on what the client is up to at all times
- If you feel scared or are attacked **keep calm and get out** of the room as soon as possible. Run out with no clothes on if you have to
- **Be clear** about what services you offer and the prices

negotiating and staying safe

- Be clear on **your menu or price list** (what you do and how much you do it for) at all times, that way you cannot be easily convinced to do something you do not wish to do
- Be friendly but firm when negotiating your services with a client or punter, explain your limits and be firm about what you will and will not do
- **Tell him that you don't under any circumstances do it without a condom**
- Remember it is safest when he has a **condom on for oral, anal and vaginal sex**
- **Check the client's penis and surrounding areas** for any noticeable marks, bumps or crabs. Even with a



negotiating and staying safe

condom on - crabs, warts and herpes can be caught. It may help to make this seem naughty and fun to draw attention from the fact that you are checking him

- Make excuses and leave if you suspect there is something not right with his health or offer a hand job only
- Using wet wipes to clean yourself or the client's penis does not prevent the spread of sexually transmitted infections (STIs)
- Get as much info as possible from projects or health clinics about signs and symptoms of STIs, so you are well informed on what to watch for
- **Hold the condom on** while having sex when you can
- Lubricant is really important to stop condoms breaking, and can make the job end faster, look at the list below for some pretty convincing reasons to use lube:
- **DO NOT USE VASELINE AS LUBE, THIS MAKES CONDOM UNSAFE-** use only water based lube such as KY Jelly
- The condom is less likely to break as there is less friction
- It will be more comfortable
- You can use it to make guy think you are turned on
- Lube can be used for hand jobs
- Lube makes guy harder and job is done quicker

if things go wrong



If you are followed:

- **Cross the road**, maybe twice to be sure they are not following you
- Head for the nearest pub, police station, garage or shop as quickly as you can.
Go the most public route to the most public place
- **Be confident** in your actions; focus on heading to a safe place. Do not head home as it is safer to go to a public place, than let them know where you live
- If the person leaves the place **wait 20 to 30 minutes** to ensure they do not return and are not waiting outside. Either wait for your friend or if it feels safe, leave at the same time as **other people**



YOU'LL
GET OUT
WHEN I
SAY...

THIS FEELS
DODGY, BETTER NOT
LET HIM SEE ME
RINGING THE COPS.

if things go wrong

If someone becomes aggressive:

- If they want your money or bag, decide if it is really worth the fight and potential risk to your life to keep it
- If you can, **phone someone** you trust who can come and meet you there. If you do not have anyone who you can call and feel really threatened, you should contact the Gardaí
- **Stay calm** – try to calm the person and talk to them using **open handed gestures** and speaking in a **low quiet tone**
- Use friendly sensitive language to try and calm the situation down
- Think of **how you will get out of the situation**
- Do not allow fear, anger or panic to take over
- Tell them **someone knows where you are**, is meeting you, expecting you home soon or waiting for you and remind them that you have texted their reg number to your friend
- **Pretend you are feeling sick** and about to vomit and then get out, and get away.
- **Cry hysterically**, this may also give you valuable time to get away
- **Do not carry weapons** which could be used against you
- Consider passing on **information about the incident to Chrysalis** or your local project that works with working women, so they can give a description of the person to other working women

if you are attacked or raped

- If you have a **personal alarm – use it**, hold it close to their ear if possible or throw the cord from it so they can't take it off you to turn it off (Chrysalis provide these alarms)
- If you are **in a car, hit the horn or flash the lights** to attract attention
- **Do whatever you can not to be brought to another location.** Stay where others are at least in earshot
- An **attacker's worst fear is getting caught**, so if you are on the street drop to the ground to prevent him from carrying you away. If you are in a private location go to people
- **Run out the door** to a neighbour or to where there are lights and other people
- Make it as difficult as you can, the more time it takes him, the higher the risk of getting caught
- He may say “don't scream or I will hurt you” this is exactly what will ruin his plan. Go ahead **scream, create a disturbance, throw things and blow the horn**. You can't count on others coming to your aid, but you want to **make him fear being caught**. Make him think someone could hear you and come to help you
- Also, screaming can **get your adrenalin back moving** around your body – this is what can make you freeze, not letting the adrenalin flow - so scream

if you are attacked or raped

At this stage you must decide yourself whether you will fight back or not. You may choose to submit if you feel it will preserve your life

If you decide to fight back to escape:

- **Control his hips and his hands.**
This may sound strange if you have not done a rape escape self defence class but can be useful to know
- If you are on the ground and he is on top of you, **get your feet on his hips**, you can control the distance between the two of you. His hands are his weapons so keeping the distance between his hands and you is important

- **Use your strongest weapons against his weakest targets.** His eyes, throat, testicles and knees are your primary targets. Your secondary targets are his face and abdomen
- Strong weapons that you can use are your kicks using the bottoms of your feet, your elbow, and hammer fists (*Courtesy of Defend U Ireland*)

What to do after being attacked or raped:

- Remember, the attack is **not your fault**
- Find a **safe place** away from the attacker. Ask a friend or project worker to stay with you

if you are attacked or raped

- Seriously consider reporting the incident to the Gardaí or one of the support organisations listed in this booklet. They are there to help you
- **If you decide to go the Gardaí, preserve the evidence against the attacker.** Do not wash, brush your teeth, or change your clothes
- If you do change your clothes, **don't wash** the ones you were wearing when you were attacked. Put them in a plastic bag and tie it closed. This will help preserve the evidence
- If the attack happened at home, do not disturb anything as there may be important evidence there
- If you can, **write down anything you can think of** to remember the attack. What did they do? What did they look like? What did they say?
- If you decide to report a sexual assault you will be brought to the nearest sexual assault unit which will be in a nearby hospital. This may mean the process takes a bit longer as they will need to examine you and get as much evidence as possible against the attacker
- Things may come back to you days or weeks later; you can still go to the Gardaí and tell them if you remember more

if you are attacked or raped

- **Healing from any attack takes time;** give yourself all the time you need
- **Get support** from your local projects such as Chrysalis, the Rape Crisis Centre or local counselling service
- **Learn self defence** to help prevent future attacks. This will help you feel more confident and in control
- Try to discourage your friend from taking a bath or shower if they are thinking about reporting the attack. She may be desperate to wash, so **gently explain** why it is important she does not
- **Support** your friend to get medical help
- Encourage her to **write down details** of the attack. If she is shaky you might be able to write things down for her
- **Be patient;** remember it will take your friend time to deal with the attack

How to help a friend who has been attacked:

- **Listen** and be there
- Encourage your friend to **consider reporting** the attack to the Gardai/Police

keeping notes on dodgy punters

Use the next few pages to keep notes on dodgy punters

Date of incident

Time

Place

DESCRIPTION OF ATTACKER

Age

Height

Build

Hair

Moustache/beard

Eyes/glasses

Clothing

Accent

Ethnicity

Other Info

Vehicle – Colour/Type/Reg

What happened?

keeping notes on dodgy punters

Date of incident

Time

Place

DESCRIPTION OF ATTACKER

Age

Height

Build

Hair

Moustache/beard

Eyes/glasses

Clothing

Accent

Ethnicity

Other Info

Vehicle – Colour/Type/Reg

What happened?

keeping notes on dodgy punters

Date of incident

Time

Place

DESCRIPTION OF ATTACKER

Age

Height

Build

Hair

Moustache/beard

Eyes/glasses

Clothing

Accent

Ethnicity

Other Info

Vehicle – Colour/Type/Reg

What happened?

USEFUL contacts

Garda /Police Emergency number 999 or 112



Chrysalis

33 Manor St. Dublin 7

Tel: 01 8823362 or 086 2198853

www.chrysalisdrugproject.org

Chrysalis provides information and support to working women as well as services to drug users and their families. Services to working women include:

Condoms/ Safer Sex Info

Advice/Advocacy

Referral to Drug & Alcohol Treatment

Support/Counselling

Self Defence Classes,

Personal Development Courses

Street Outreach

Personal alarms

Needle Exchange

Opening times: Mon-Fri 9.30 - 5

& out of hours service (ring or text for details)



Women's Health Project

19 Haddington Rd. Dublin 4

Freephone 1800 201187

Medical Services

Outreach to Place of Work

Support and Advice

Screening

Contraception/Condoms

Drug Treatment

Condoms and Safer Sex Info

Translation Services

Welfare Advice

Vaccinations

**Drop In Wednesday 2-5pm and Thursday
8.30-10.30pm**



**Free Condoms available
where this icon is shown**

USEFUL CONTACTS

GUIDE Clinics (Department of Genito-Urinary Medicine and Infectious Disease)

These clinics specialise in the care of people with sexually transmitted infections (also called STIs, or STDs), HIV and general infectious diseases (ID). The service is confidential and is free of charge.

St. James's Hospital. G.U.I.D.E. Clinic,
Hospital 5,
James's Street,
Dublin 8
Tel: 01-4162315 / 4162316.

Mater Hospital. Infectious Disease Clinic,
Outpatients Dept.,
North Circular Road,
Dublin 7
Tel: 01-8032063.

Male sex workers can contact the **Gay Men's Health Project** for health and support services. **The HIV Testing Centre** (open to all) is in the same building-

The Baggot Street Clinic,
19 Haddington Road,
Dublin 4.
FREEPHONE 1800201187

Ruhama
Tel: 01 8360292
www.ruhama.ie

Ruhama is a Non Governmental Organisation that works with and for Woman involved in Prostitution and women who have been trafficked for sexual exploitation.

***Support,
Advocacy,
Outreach,
Counselling,
Education Programme***

Ruhama also offer support in accessing accommodation, healthcare, Legal services and translation.

USEFUL CONTACTS

Rape Crisis Centre (RCC) **FREEPHONE 1800 778888**

Confidential 24-hour telephone helpline 7 days a week

The RCC is staffed by trained counsellors who are available to listen to you and any concerns you may have in regard to issues of rape, sexual assault, sexual harassment or childhood sexual abuse.



The Mews Clinic,
North Circular Road,
Dublin 7: Tel: 01 8383852

Drug using women only

Opening Times: Mon – Fri 9 – 5
Ask for the Outreach Worker, Pam Whelan

Other Useful Numbers:



Dublin AIDS Alliance
53 Parnell Square West, Dublin 1
Tel: 01 8733799

Opening Times:

Mon – Thurs 9.30am – 5.30pm & Fri 9.30am – 5pm

The Well Woman Centre
Tel: 01 8749243

Drugs/HIV Helpline
Tel: 1800 459459

For Homeless Services contact
Freephone: 1800724724

