



Knowledge Mapping & Working with Difficult to Reach Groups: Sex Work Knowledge in the City

PDF (Size: 352KB) PP. 81-88 DOI : 10.4236/aasoci.2012.21011

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ABSTRACT

This paper considers the lessons learned from researching sex markets in Northumberland and Tyne and Wear, UK. It is based on a knowledge mapping approach, working with professionals in local authorities, charities and the police involved with sex markets in the Northumbria Police Area. The research identified that the visible sex market in the area was part of a much bigger exchange system. A number of important themes emerged from the findings and strong links were found between sex work and issues such as drug misuse, mental and physical health and the use of services. A key theme was that many sex workers suffered economic, housing, health, social and physical vulnerabilities. These themes have implications for local statutory and voluntary services. However, despite increasing calls for more open public debate on sex work and prostitution, our experience is that this remains a complex and restricted research area in the UK. The knowledge mapping approach detailed in this paper represents an important step in furthering the debate.

KEYWORDS

Knowledge Mapping; Sex Markets; Prostitution

Cite this paper

Hartworth, C. , Hartworth, J. & Convery, I. (2012). Knowledge Mapping & Working with Difficult to Reach Groups: Sex Work Knowledge in the City. *Advances in Applied Sociology*, 2, 81-88. doi: 10.4236/aasoci.2012.21011.

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