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Opportunity?

# ROUTES IN, ROUTES OUT:

Quantifying the Gendered Experience of Trafficking to the UK

POPPY Project

August 2008

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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POPPY would also like to thank all the women who shared their experiences with us. This report would not have been possible without their assistance. It is dedicated to them.

### Routes in, Routes Out: Quantifying the Gendered Experience of Trafficking to the UK

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## CONTENTS

|            |   |    |
|------------|---|----|
| 1.         | Introduction  | 4  |
| 2.         | Summary and key findings                              | 5  |
| 3.         | Pre-departure Stage                                   | 6  |
| 3.1        | Individual characteristics                            | 6  |
| 3.1.1      | Age when trafficked                                   | 6  |
| 3.1.2      | Countries of origin                                   | 6  |
| 3.1.3      | Family situation in country of origin                 | 7  |
| 3.1.4      | Civil status in country of origin                     | 8  |
| 3.1.5      | Dependants in country of origin                       | 8  |
| 3.2        | Pre-trafficking background                            | 9  |
| 3.2.1      | Standard of living                                    | 9  |
| 3.2.2      | Level of education                                    | 10 |
| 3.2.3      | Experience of violence                                | 10 |
| 4.         | Travel and transit stage                              | 12 |
| 4.1        | Recruitment process                                   | 12 |
| 4.1.1      | Recruitment method                                    | 12 |
| 4.1.2      | Factors leading to recruitment                        | 12 |
| 4.2        | Transportation  | 13 |
| 4.2.1      | Documentation   | 13 |
| 4.2.2      | Journey to the UK                                     | 13 |
| 4.2.3      | Trafficking route                                     | 13 |
| 5.         | Destination stage                                     | 14 |
| 5.1        | Expectation of work in UK                             | 14 |
| 5.2        | Nationality of trafficker(s)                          | 15 |
| 5.3        | Trafficking situation                                 | 17 |
| 5.3.1      | Length of time in trafficking situation               | 17 |
| 5.3.2      | Location  | 17 |
| 5.3.3      | Clients per day                                       | 18 |
| 5.3.4      | Contact with police/immigration                       | 19 |
| 5.3.5      | Re-trafficking  | 19 |
| 5.4        | Escape method   | 20 |
| 5.5        | Access to health services and reported health effects | 20 |
| 5.6        | Violence and control                                  | 22 |
| 5.7        | Grooming methods                                      | 23 |
| 6.         | Conclusions and recommendations                       | 25 |
| Appendices |   |    |
| Appendix A | Bibliography  | 27 |
| Appendix B | Methodology   | 28 |
| Appendix C | Data collection form                                  | 29 |
| Appendix D | About Eaves   | 34 |

## 1. INTRODUCTION

In April 2004 the POPPY Project published 'When Women Are Trafficked'<sup>1</sup>. This report provided an outline of the experiences of 26 women trafficked into the UK and subsequently supported by the POPPY Project between March 2003 and March 2004 and was the first report of its kind to be published in the UK<sup>2</sup>.

Since then, research based on case studies of trafficking victims has been lacking from discussions on how to tackle human trafficking in the UK, as identified in 2007 in the UK Action Plan on Tackling Human Trafficking<sup>3</sup>. This report responds to this need for more detailed research data, providing valuable information about the types of experiences women trafficked into the UK had prior to, during and after escaping their trafficking situation and includes information about:

- women's individual characteristics
- social background in the country of origin
- motives for migrating
- recruitment methods and
- the deleterious effects of pressure, coercion and violence that are so often experienced by women who are trafficked.

The report provides a snapshot analysis of these women's cases and makes policy recommendations aimed at finding durable solutions for preventing and combating human trafficking in the UK.

### Who should read this report?

This report should be read by anyone with a responsibility to develop and implement effective policy responses to combat the trafficking of women into prostitution in the UK.

### Methodology

The data analysed in this study is collated from the case files of 118 women supported by the POPPY Project (on either an acute or outreach basis) long enough to have developed a trusting relationship with their Senior Support Worker between March 2003 and July 2007<sup>4</sup>. During this time POPPY has provided full support to 189 women and supported a further 148 women on an outreach basis only<sup>5</sup>.

A range of quantitative and qualitative methodological approaches were used in the course of the research. A full analysis of the research methodology is set out in Appendix B.

## 2. SUMMARY & KEY FINDINGS

### Pre-departure stage

- 50% of women left their countries of origin between 18 and 24 years of age and had experienced some form of sexual or physical violence **before** they were trafficked, nearly double the global average<sup>6</sup>.
- 70% of women lived with their immediate or extended family before being trafficked to the UK. The majority (92%) of victims were unmarried, although nearly one-third (28%) had one or more dependent children.
- More than half (61%) of the women surveyed had received secondary level education and 73% had never had permanent employment or had only been employed sporadically prior to leaving their home country.

### Travel and transit stage

- Women's motives for accepting offers from traffickers were primarily financial, i.e. in order to escape poverty or debts. 58% of women described their standard of life prior to being trafficked as 'poor' or 'very poor'. Only 3% described themselves as affluent in the societies they came from.
- Women were recruited by strangers (27%) who arranged their travel documents (55%) and often paid their travel expenses (82%). Although most of the traffickers were men, in 14% of cases a female trafficker was involved.
- Women often took convoluted routes to the UK (accompanied by traffickers), travelling by plane, bus and car, often sold several times en route. Italy (23%), France (17%), Germany (14%) and Belgium (12%) were the main transit countries used by traffickers.

### Destination stage

- Women suffered physical (69%) and psychological (81%) abuse; had their documents taken away (66%); were allowed limited freedom of movement (69%); and were continuously threatened (81%).
- Women were regularly pressured to see between six and 20 clients per day. 53% of women stated that they were unable to negotiate safe sex whilst being forced to work as prostitutes. The length of time that women spent working in the sex industry varied but in six cases lasted for more than five years
- Only 8% of women expected to be working in prostitution upon arriving in the UK.

1. Dickson, S 'When Women are Trafficked: Quantifying the Gendered Experience of Trafficking in the UK' Eaves POPPY Project, available at: [http://www.eaves4women.co.uk/POPPY\\_Project/Documents/Recent\\_Reports/When%20Women%20are%20Trafficked,%20April%202004.pdf](http://www.eaves4women.co.uk/POPPY_Project/Documents/Recent_Reports/When%20Women%20are%20Trafficked,%20April%202004.pdf) [Accessed on 29th May 2008].

2. Between March 03 and March 04 the POPPY Project supported a total of 46 women and received referrals for 114 women.

3. See UK Action Plan on Tackling Human Trafficking, (Home Office/Scottish Executive, (2007) UK Action Plan on Tackling Human Trafficking) which highlighted the need for reliable data on the phenomenon of human trafficking in the UK.

4. Many of these experiences will not have been raised by women in any other setting and are disclosed only because they are in a place of safety where they are believed, and where the gendered nature of the violence they have experienced is acknowledged.

5. Between March 2003 and March 2008 the POPPY Project received a total of 925 referrals.

6. Heise, L., Ellsberg, M. and Gottemoeller, M. Ending Violence Against Women. Population Reports, Series L, No. 11., December 1999



### 3. PRE-DEPARTURE STAGE

#### 3.1 Individual characteristics

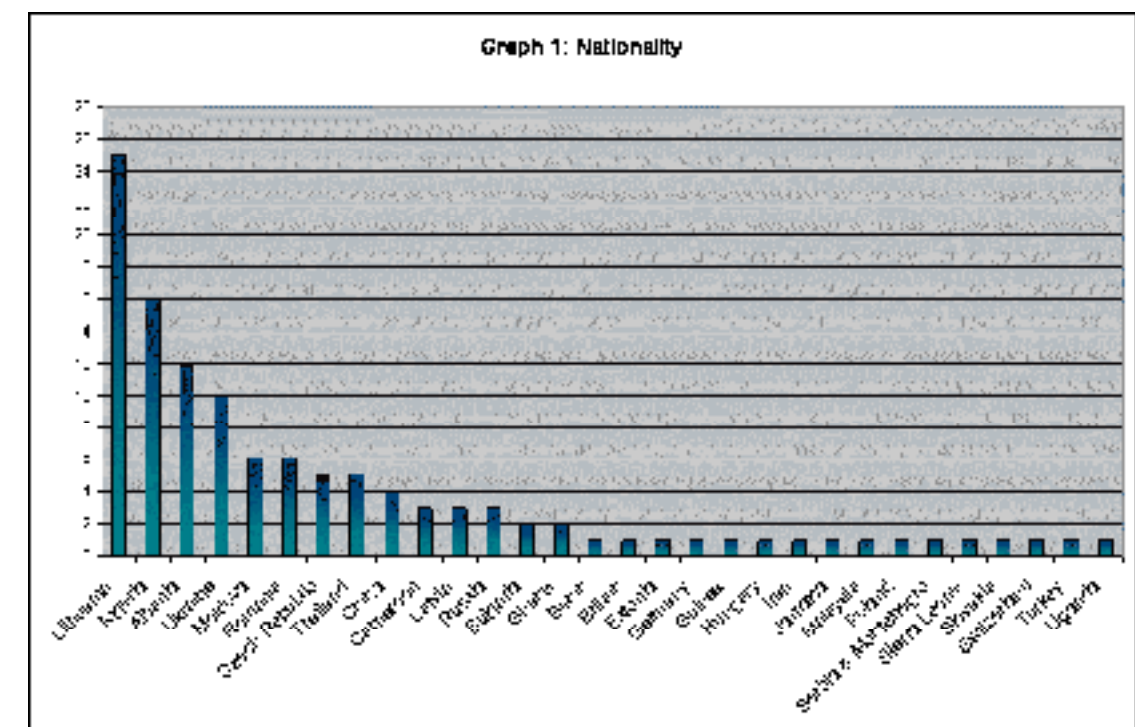
##### 3.1.1 Age when trafficked

| Age        | Service Users | Percentage |
|------------|---------------|------------|
| <13        | 5             | 4.2        |
| 14-17      | 16            | 13.6       |
| 18-24      | 59            | 50.0       |
| 25-30      | 25            | 21.2       |
| 31-35      | 5             | 4.2        |
| 36-40      | 5             | 4.2        |
| Not stated | 3             | 2.5        |

The ages of women when they were first trafficked range from 12 to 40 years of age. Women were most frequently trafficked at ages 19 (12.7%) n=15, 21 (9.3%) n=11 and 18 (8.5%) n=10. These ages are unsurprising for a number of reasons, including the demand for young women in the sex industry in the UK, and the increased vulnerabilities of young women to all forms of gendered violence. Women in their late teens and early twenties are also likely to want to explore and experience the world and might therefore be more likely to take risks older women might not.

##### 3.1.2 Countries of origin

Of the 118 women sampled, 21% (n=25) were from Lithuania, 14% (n=16) were from Nigeria, 10% (n=12) were from Albania, 8% (n=10) were from Ukraine, 5% (n=6) were from Moldova and Romania, 4% (n=5) were from the Czech Republic and Thailand, 3% (n=4) were from China, 2.5% (n=3) were from Cameroon, Latvia and Russia, 2% (n=2) were from Bulgaria and Ghana, and 0.8% (n=1) were from Benin, Britain, Estonia, Germany, Guinea, Hungary, Iran, Jamaica, Malaysia, Poland, Serbia & Montenegro, Sierra Leone, Slovakia, Switzerland, Turkey and Uganda<sup>7</sup>:



Countries of origin include nine current European Union<sup>8</sup> member states, (Czech Republic, Poland, Lithuania, Romania<sup>9</sup>, Latvia, Bulgaria, Hungary, the UK and Germany); one European Union candidate country (Turkey<sup>10</sup>); seven African states (Nigeria, Benin, Cameroon, Ghana, Guinea, Sierra Leone and Uganda), and three Asian states (China, Malaysia, and Thailand).

##### 3.1.3 Family situation in country of origin

Women's family situation in their country of origin could be determined in 109 cases (92%). Eighty-one (69%) women lived with their immediate or extended family before being trafficked to the UK. Of those, the majority (33%; n=39) lived with both parents. Twenty-five (21%) came from single parent families. Less than a quarter (n=17) of women lived with other family members, often aunts or grand-parents (14%). Nine (8%) lived alone and nine (8%) were living with a partner/husband. Only one woman reported being homeless at the time she was trafficked.

G lived in very crowded living conditions, sharing one room with her three children, grandmother and two other people. She was recruited by a friend who took advantage of G's inability to support herself and her children.

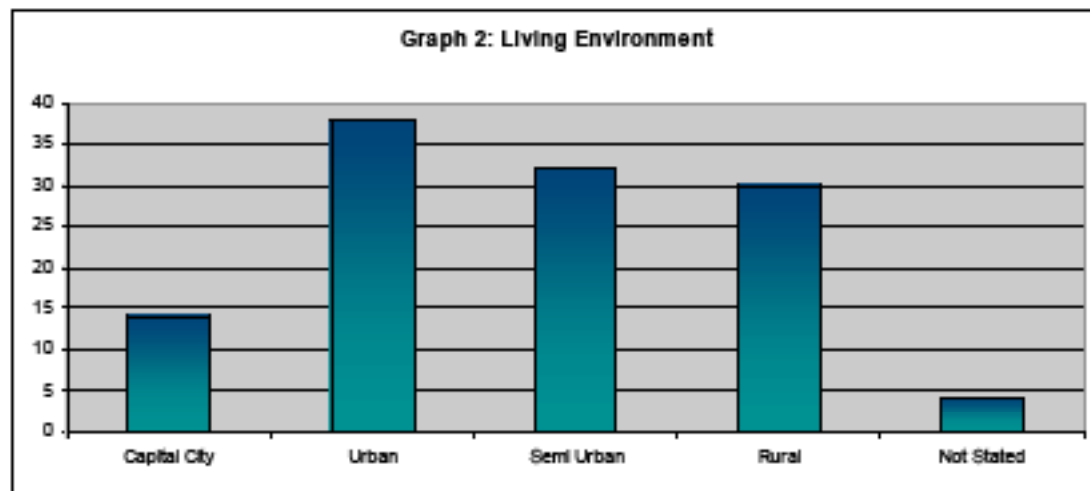
The fact that 42% of women reported being economically responsible for their families is of interest, as is the fact that nearly 28% of women had one or more dependant children. Women reported living in a variety of environments, including: urban (32%); semi-urban (27%) and rural (25%) locations. Only 12% of women were living in a capital city when they were trafficked.

7. This is not a true indication of the countries of origin from which the POPPY Project receives referrals. From March 2003 to July 2007, POPPY received 699 referrals from a total of 66 different countries. We were unable to accept all of these referrals for several reasons, the first and most important of which is that the POPPY Project regularly operates at full capacity (as of July 2007, 68 women had been refused accommodation as the Project was at capacity). This means we regularly receive referrals of women we are unable to assist. Additionally, the referral criteria we operate under restrict many trafficked women from accessing our services. At the time of writing, the POPPY Project was unable to offer support to women trafficked internally unless they have been brought into the UK, in direct contradiction to the UN Palermo Protocol, 2000 which the UK ratified on 9th February 2006. Recent UK legislation such as the Sexual Offences Act 2003 also criminalises internal trafficking but as yet there are no services for those trafficked internally in the UK. Additionally, if trafficked women are identified at point of entry before they have been prostituted in the UK, they cannot receive services here, but will be returned home. This places women at extreme risk of re-trafficking. The three month restriction excludes women who independently escape from their trafficking situation, as they are extremely unlikely to find their way to the POPPY Project in time. Finally, for women to stay on the Project longer than 28 days, they must be prepared to co-operate with the Police. This is perhaps the most exclusionary criteria of all, as women have no guarantee of their safety after co-operation. In fact, unless a woman has independently made a successful claim for asylum, she will have to return home even after testifying in court to support the prosecution of her trafficker. It is important that the prosecution of traffickers is prioritised by law enforcement agencies, but it is equally important that support to recover from trafficking does not place women in increased danger.

8. Political upheaval in Eastern Europe since 1989 and the collapse of the Soviet Union have precipitated a widespread crisis of poverty and the disintegration of political and social structures. This in turn has created a fertile ground for organised crime and the exploitation of poverty in the region.

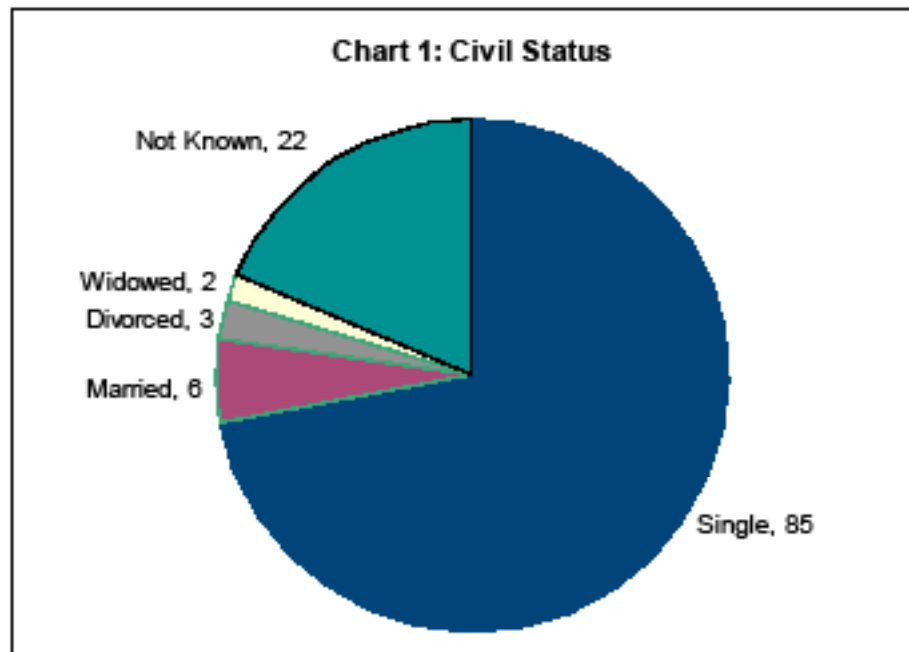
9. According to Lazaroiu, S., 2004, a much higher incidence of trafficking takes place among young women from dysfunctional families than among women and girls living on their own in Romania.

10. Various sources indicate that Turkey is one of the major counties of origin for women trafficked to Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova, Romania, Russia and the Ukraine. See Erder, S., Kaska, S., 2003 for more information on trafficking in Turkey.



### 3.1.4 Civil Status in country of origin

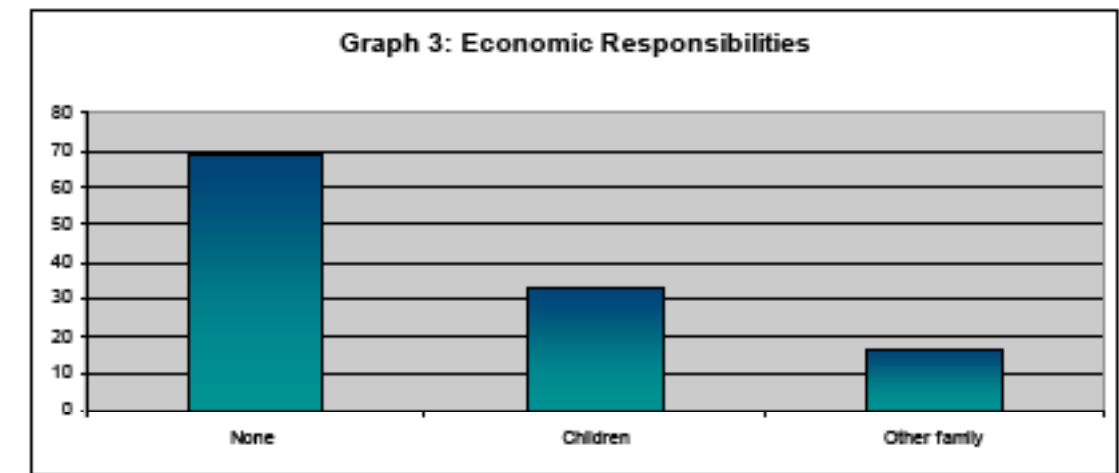
Only 5% women were legally married at the time they were trafficked. In a large majority of cases (71%) women reported being single or were legally divorced. A further 2% of victims were widowed. In 19% of cases there was no information on a woman's civil status in her country of origin.



These figures reflect the findings of a European-wide study into the health of 207 women who had been trafficked which found that 71% of women interviewed reported being single at the time they were trafficked, 11% were married, a further 17% were either separated or divorced, and 0.5% were widowed<sup>11</sup>.

### 3.1.5 Dependants in country of origin

According to available information, the majority of women 58% (n=69) had no dependants in their country of origin. Of those remaining, 28% (n=33) were responsible for their children and 14% (n=16) were responsible for other family members<sup>12</sup>.

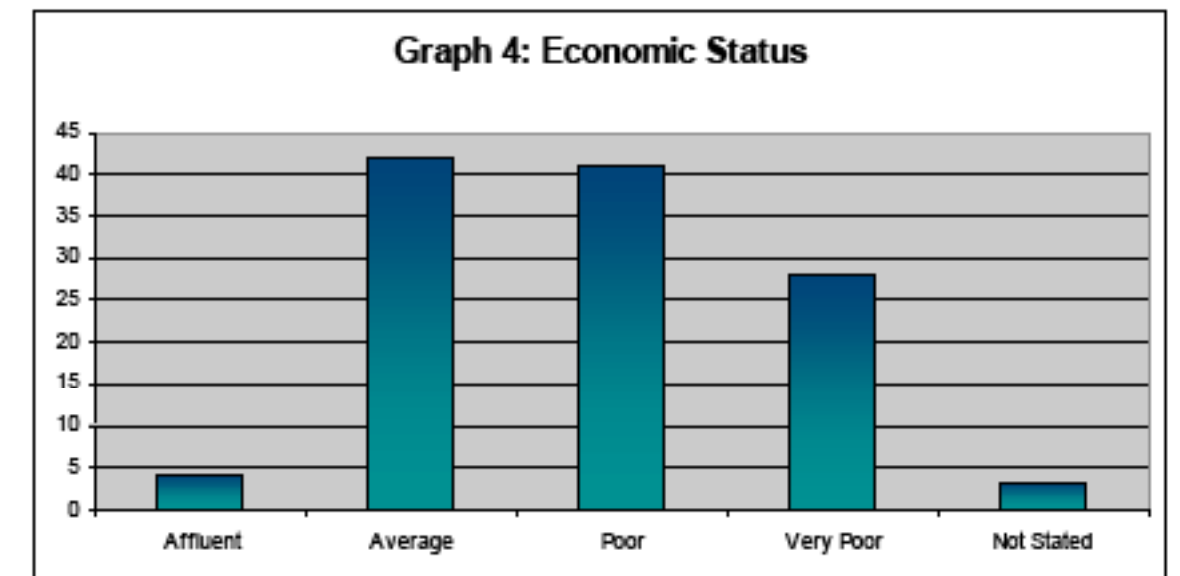


Significantly, of the 33 women supported by the Poppy Project who reported having children, 42% (n=14) said that they were not married or living as married before being trafficked. A further 64% (n=21) of women with children reported being either poor or very poor and 73% (n=24) had never had permanent employment or had been employed sporadically prior to leaving their home country. This is of relevance as it suggests that women who are raising their children single-handedly are more at risk of being trafficked than women who receive support from a husband/partner.

## 3.2 Pre-trafficking background<sup>13</sup>

### 3.2.1 Standard of living

Before they were trafficked, 89 (75%) of the 118 women in the research sample had never had any permanent employment or had secured only sporadic employment, while 69 (58%) described themselves as 'poor' or 'very poor'.



Only 3% of women described themselves as affluent in the societies they came from, which may of course, not necessarily translate to affluence in the UK. 36% described their economic status in their country of origin as average. This confirms previous findings<sup>14</sup> that it is those seeking to improve their living conditions that are more likely to seek to migrate to find employment<sup>15</sup>.

11. *Stolen Smiles: a summary report on the physical and psychological health consequences of women and adolescents trafficked in Europe*, (2006) Zimmerman et al, London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine.

12. Similar figures were reported by the women interviewed for the above study investigating women's health outcomes already referred to above. Of the 207 women interviewed, nearly 38.6% reported that they had children compared to just 28% in the current sample.

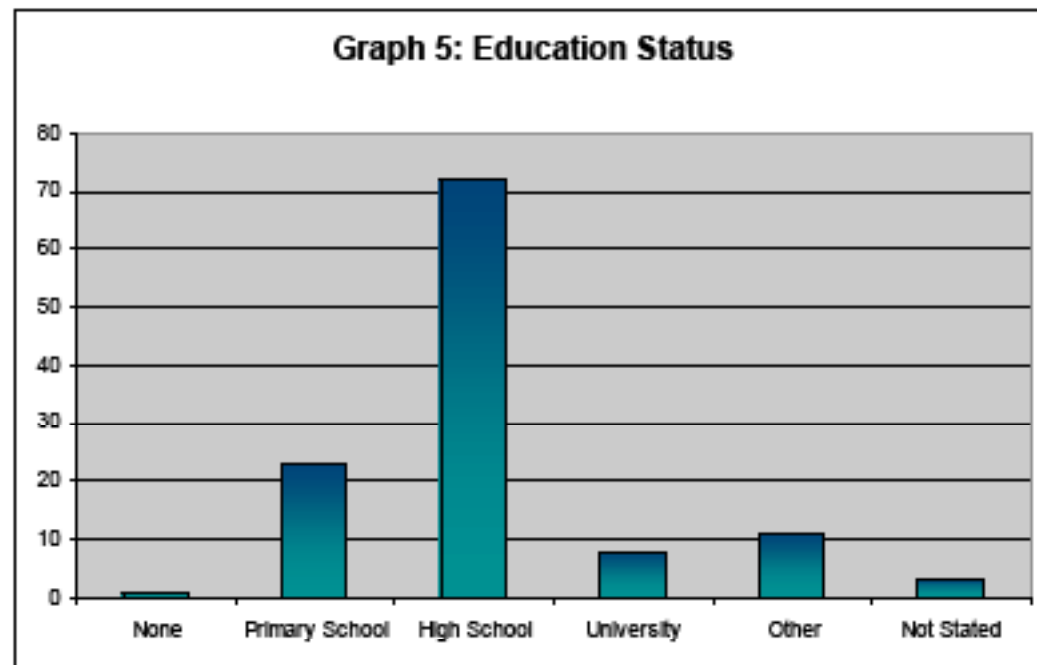
13. Most studies agree on some combination of the following causes of trafficking into and through Europe, most studies agree on some combination of the following factors: globalisation of transports, markets and labour; poverty; women's socio-economic inequality; economic transition; economic and social dislocation as a result of conflict. See for example, Kaye, M., 2003, which lists women's low levels of education and lack of information about the processes of recruitment as a push factor in migration.

14. See for example, Kaye M., 2003, which examines poverty as a push factor in migration. A woman's decision to migrate in search of better jobs and better living standards is often a family survival strategy to ameliorate conditions of impoverishment.

15. Even though 59% of women highlighted the issue of poverty in their pre-trafficking background, to focus exclusively on the role poverty has to pay in propelling women to accept dubious offers of employment would be an oversimplification of the issue. For example, the feminization of poverty in, and migration from, source countries is the outcome not just of poverty, but of increasing gender inequality and sex discrimination.

### 3.2.2 Level of education

More than half of the women in the research sample (61%) had completed secondary education. A total of 7% of the women had received higher education. A total of 20% had no formal education and/or had completed primary education only.



### 3.2.3 Experience of violence

The types of information collected on women's experiences of violence include sexual abuse and rape, gang-rape, physical violence including assaults, domestic violence and politically motivated violence. In total, 59 women disclosed experiencing violence before they were trafficked (50%)<sup>16</sup>.

#### a) Sexual abuse and rape

Forty (34%) of the 118 women sampled disclosed having experienced sexual abuse or rape prior to being trafficked. Of these 40, 17 women (43%) were raped by someone they knew (either a family member, partner or 'friend'). For eight of these women, these rapes were not isolated events but were repeated by the same known perpetrator over periods of time. Four women (10%) were raped by strangers not in a relationship with them in any way and two women (5%) had been forced into prostitution by their family members before they were trafficked.

*A was regularly beaten by her father up until she was eight. When her mother later formed a new relationship her stepfather was also violent to her while she was still a teenager. Once married, A was repeatedly beaten by her husband who abused alcohol.*

Fourteen women (35%) were sexually abused/raped while under the age of 16, and four women (10%) were sexually abused/raped while aged 16 years or older<sup>17</sup>. Several women who experienced sexual violence were threatened with this being exposed immediately prior to being trafficked.

*B was gang-raped by a male friend and two strangers, who took photographs of their sexual assault on her. They threatened to show these photographs to people in her village, and tell everyone that the sex was consensual unless she agreed to travel with a friend of theirs to the UK. She knew she would be working in prostitution when she arrived.*

One woman was forced to have an abortion prior to being trafficked when she became pregnant as a result of being repeatedly raped when she was 15.

16. It is not possible to say that the 59 women who have not discussed experiences of violence prior to trafficking have not actually experienced violence; it may be the case that over time some or all of these women will disclose sexual or physical violence. Because of the difficulties in disclosing sexual violence in particular, we are well aware that assuming violence has not taken place is erroneous.

17. Four women were sexually abused or raped both before and after they were 16.

#### b) Physical violence

Forty-one women (35%) disclosed having experienced physical violence of some kind prior to being trafficked, either from family members or from others in their community. Of these 41 women, 18 reported suffering this violence from their father or step-father (44%); 11 women were assaulted by their mother or step-mother (27%); three women (7%) were physically assaulted by their brother; and four women (8%) were attacked by another family member<sup>18</sup>. For four women, this violence took place when they were aged under 16.

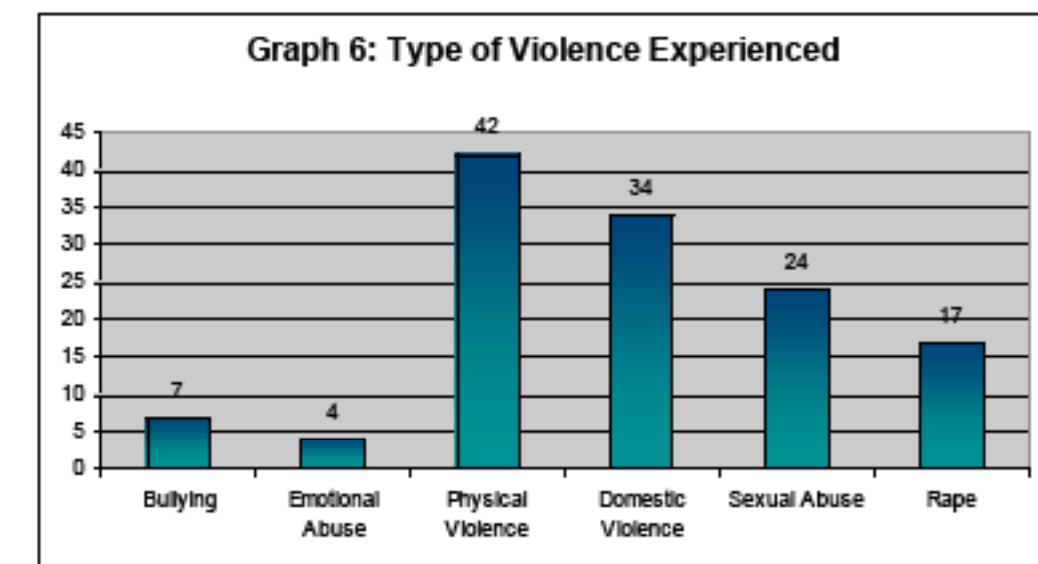
#### c) Domestic violence

Thirty-four women disclosed having experienced domestic violence (including physical and/or psychological abuse) prior to being trafficked (29%). Of these, 29 women (85%) disclosed domestic violence experienced as children from a parent. For 18 of the 29 women (62%), this parent was male – either a father or a step-father. Nine women experienced domestic violence solely from their mother or step-mother. Five women (15%) disclosed having experienced domestic violence from a male partner.

*K was raped by a stranger aged 14 and again aged 18. She was a victim of ongoing domestic violence and was repeatedly tied up and raped in the presence of her husband's friends. She was also abused and raped by associates of her husband.*

#### d) Emotional abuse and mental health

Eleven women reported experiencing bullying or emotional abuse prior to being trafficked (9%).



There would appear to be two main explanations for the high incidence of gender-based violence experienced by women trafficked into the UK: the first is that trafficking networks and recruiters target women previously victimised by male violence<sup>19</sup>; the second explanation is that violence is perpetrated against women with the explicit intent of grooming for trafficking.

Additionally, 38 (32%) of the 118 women reported experiencing mental health problems before they were trafficked. These included depression (14%; n=17); suicidal ideation (11%; n=13); anxiety and panic attacks (3%; n=3); and self-harm (2%; n=2)<sup>20</sup>. Twenty-eight women (24%) reported substance misuse issues prior to being trafficked including using heroin, amphetamines, alcohol and multiple drug use<sup>21</sup>.

18. Two women were assaulted by other non-family members. The total adds up to more than 41 as some women reported suffering abuse at the hands of several members of their family simultaneously.

19. In support of this is the fact that for many of women supported by the POPPY Project, the violence they experienced occurred well before their trafficking episode began. It is also common for women to have disclosed previous experiences of gendered violence to recruiters.

20. Out of the thirty-seven women that reported experiencing mental health issues prior to being trafficked, nineteen (54%) women were suffering from more than one issue.

21. A study into the substance use and health needs of trafficked women in the London Borough of Tower Hamlets revealed evidence of substance use amongst women trafficked into prostitution but only after escaping their trafficking situation. See Dibb, R, Mitchell, T., Munro, G., Rough, Elizabeth, R, 'Substance Use and Health Related Needs of Migrant Sex Workers and Women Trafficked into Sexual Exploitation in the London Borough of Tower Hamlets and the City of London' (2006) Research and Development Unit, The Salvation Army.



## 4. TRAVEL AND TRANSIT STAGE

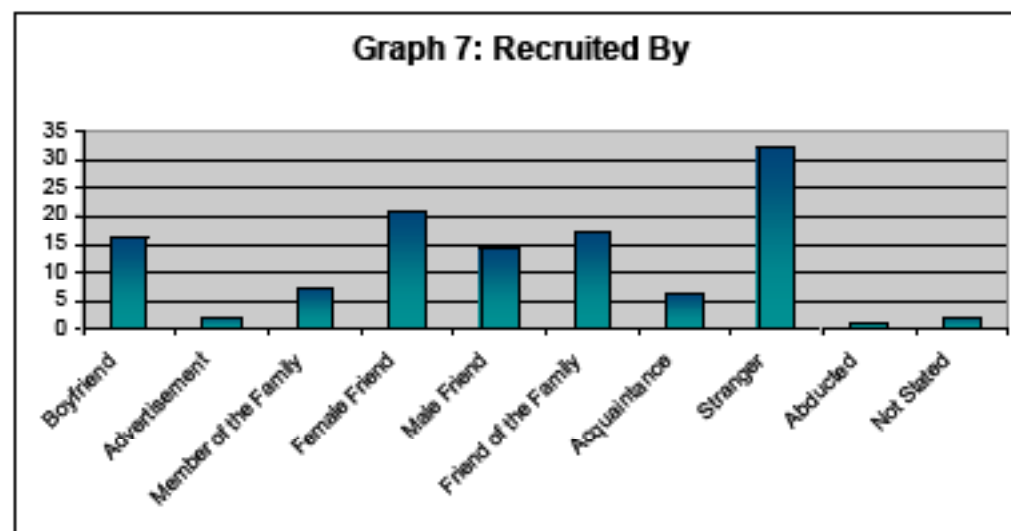
### 4.1 Recruitment process<sup>22</sup>

#### 4.1.1 Recruitment method<sup>23</sup>

Women were recruited in a variety of different ways, with the highest percentage (27%) being approached by strangers in social settings. Women were also recruited by people they knew: particularly by female friends (18%); their partner (14%); a male friend or acquaintance (12%); or a friend of their family or partner (14%)<sup>24</sup>.

M was recruited by the father of her pimp, who was a friend of her step-father. Her trafficker said that his son could get her work in the UK. He spoke to M's mother and convinced her to give her consent for M to go to the UK. Her mother saw it as a solution to their financial problems.

It is apparent that previous experiences of sexual or physical violence may result in women being targeted by traffickers. Women who have suffered abuse are vulnerable to accepting offers from people who can offer a way out of the situation. This could be from a stranger; from an acquaintance who knows about the abuse; or from someone in a position of trust, such as a partner.



#### 4.1.2 Factors leading to recruitment

Most of the women in this research sample provide clear reasons as to why they sought the opportunity to work overseas and in some cases several reasons were put forward as to why they chose to migrate. The most frequently mentioned factors were poverty or debts (49%; n=58); unemployment or seeking job opportunities (53%; n=62); fleeing violence (25%; n=30); and family breakdown (20%; n=24). Four women (3%) did not make any kind of 'decision'. One woman was abducted, two women were fleeing political persecution and another woman was threatened with death if she did not leave her country of origin.

22. There are at least six common patterns of recruitment identified in the literature on trafficking: complete coercion through abduction or kidnapping; being sold either by family members of a "boyfriend"; deception through offers of employment; deception through offers of marriage; deception regarding the conditions in which women will undertake prostitution. According to the literature, the most common route seems to be deceptive job offers, ranging from domestic work and child care to work as dancers, either made in person or through advertisements and employment agencies. There is widespread consensus that forced recruitment through practices such as kidnapping is rare.

23. CATW study shows how recruitment methods vary between countries. For example, women from Indonesia reported being recruited by men posing as potential boyfriends while Filipino women were recruited by neighbours and relatives of friends, or women who had been trafficked abroad. In Thailand, traffickers use a variety of methods including: kidnapping, abduction and rape, to fake marriages, material inducements for parents and befriending vulnerable women. Russian women and women from the NIS meanwhile were recruited through newspaper advertisements and employment agencies offering jobs.

24. These findings mirror those of a recent study in which almost one in five women (20%) reported that a relative knew her trafficker. Numerous women were recruited by a friend or an acquaintance. See *Stolen Smiles* (2006) supra n.xi above. While these various recruitment processes have been identified, including the frequent involvement of friends and acquaintances in making initial contacts, there are surprisingly few details about the process itself, the numbers of individuals involved or the range of fees recruiters receive.

R was trafficked by her boyfriend after her family forced her to choose between him and them as they disapproved of her relationship with him. As her family had disowned her she had little choice but to go with him to Italy after he threatened to kill her. She was sold by her boyfriend in Italy, and then again a further two times once in the UK.

### 4.2 Transportation

#### 4.2.1 Documentation

False immigration paperwork was organised by traffickers for 65 women (55%). A further 28 women (24%) arranged their own documentation. forty women (34%) used their own passports to travel. One woman had no documents as she was smuggled into the UK illegally. In 82% of cases (n=97) traffickers paid for women's travel to the UK, however in 56% of those (n=54), the traffickers expected to be paid back upon arrival in the UK.

#### 4.2.2 Journey to the UK

Women reported travelling by a range of transportation on their journey to the UK, including overland - by train, bus, car, lorry or on foot - and by boat or plane. Routes were often convoluted, presumably to escape detection. Traffickers sometimes made more than one attempt to move women across borders, and women assumed that border and immigration officials had received bribes to allow them to pass through unchallenged.

Sixty-one women (52%) were accompanied for their entire journey to the UK, often by different traffickers, and some women were sold several times en route. Thirty-two women (27%) travelled unaccompanied, usually those in possession of their own travel documents, all of whom were met on arrival. Women also reported travelling with friends (4%; n=5), in a group (4%; n=5) or with their family (2%; n=2).

M was taken to Kosovo by her fiancé who told her that she was going to meet his family. When she arrived she was taken to a brothel and forced into prostitution for two months. She was then taken back to Albania and re-trafficked to the UK.

#### 4.2.3 Trafficking route

Information about routes to the UK could be identified in 69 cases. Lithuania (16%), Albania (14%), Nigeria (9%) and Moldova (9%) are the most common departure countries. The main transit countries used by traffickers as identified by women in this study included Italy (23%), France (17%), Germany (14%) and Belgium (12%). Women also reported travelling through the following European countries: Albania, Czech Republic, Ireland, Italy, Belgium, Croatia, Serbia and Montenegro, Slovenia, Turkey, Moldova, Romania, Poland, Hungary, Austria, Denmark, Lithuania and Finland; African countries: Benin Republic, Togo, Ghana, Mali, South Africa and Chad; and Schengen<sup>25</sup> visa countries: Spain, France, Germany and the Netherlands.

Six women have disclosed that they were forced into work 'en route' to the UK. Five of these women were forced into prostitution in other European countries<sup>26</sup> and one woman was forced to work 'en route' from Uganda in unidentified location(s).

25. In June 1985, seven European Union countries signed a treaty to end internal border checkpoints and controls. At present, there are 15 Schengen countries, all in Europe: Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Iceland, Italy, Greece, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Spain and Sweden. All these countries except Norway and Iceland are European Union members. With a Schengen visa, you may enter one country and travel freely throughout the Schengen zone.

26. Four women were forced into prostitution in Italy; one in Albania, Holland and Germany and one in Austria and Hungary.

## 5. DESTINATION STAGE

### 5.1 Expectations of work in UK

Although 49 women (42%) had no expectations of the type of work they would be doing when they arrived in the UK, the majority of women supported by the POPPY Project were actively seeking employment or increased life chances overseas when they were trafficked<sup>27</sup>.

The international definition of trafficking in the Palermo Protocol<sup>28</sup> includes recruitment through coercion, deception and fraud, or the abuse of a position of vulnerability, in addition to abduction, threat of or actual use of force.

C was 23 when she left Lithuania having been promised work as an agricultural labourer by her 'boy-friend' who was living in the UK. She was told she could earn a lot more money if she worked in the sex industry by another woman working at the farm. She later discovered that she was expected to work in prostitution.

Of the women who were actively recruited for employment, 16 believed they would be working in the catering or bar industry (14%); 11 believed they would be providing cleaning services (9%); eight women believed they would be doing domestic work (7%) and one woman believed she was being offered the opportunity to further her education (0.8%). Women also reported being promised jobs as shop assistants (2%), farm workers (2%), hairdressers (0.8%), au pairs (0.8%), accountants (0.8%), dentists (0.8%), florists (0.8%) and sales assistants (0.8%).

A further four women (3%) were travelling as tourists on holiday, all of whom had been given this as a present by their male partners.

Four women (3%) were travelling to the UK to work in massage parlours. One woman (0.8%) had been offered work as a pole dancer and a further three women (3%) thought they were coming to the UK to work as lap dancers/escorts. But in all these cases they were told that having sex with the men they saw would not be compulsory. Only nine women expected to be working in prostitution upon arriving in the UK (7%)<sup>29</sup>.

There is a real danger of making a particularly invidious distinction between 'real victims' or those who did not know they would be working in the sex industry<sup>30</sup>, and those women who did know<sup>31</sup>. This is especially pertinent as the 17 women who knew they were coming to work in the sex industry also experienced exploitation and human rights abuses, and were misled as to the circumstances and conditions in which they would be expected to work<sup>32</sup>.

Less than 12% (n=14) disclosed already having been exploited in the sex industry in their home country or other countries.

27. One woman was abducted therefore the question was not applicable.

28. Protocol on Prevention, Suppression and Punishment of Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organised Crime [hereinafter: Palermo Protocol]

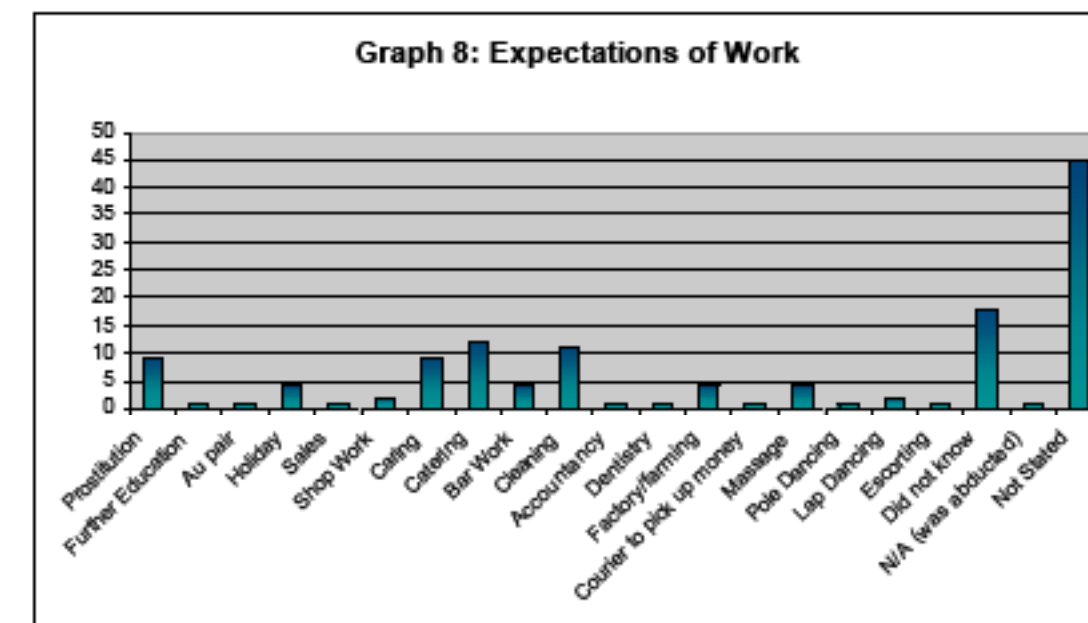
29. There is ongoing speculation and disagreement amongst service providers and advocacy groups about the degree of 'trafficking' versus the degree of 'migration for sex work' into sex industries worldwide. This is an extension of longstanding disagreements over the extent to which women involved in the sex industry exercise agency in choosing prostitution. While the POPPY Project is obviously not working with a representative sample of women in the sex industry, it is equally apparent women who knew they were coming to work in the sex industry also experienced exploitation and human rights abuses

30. There is an unresolved question here too about whether a woman who knows she is coming to work in prostitution, but not the degree of exploitation she will face, is as likely to be referred to the POPPY Project. Such women may not identify themselves, or be identified by agencies they come into contact with, as 'victims', even though they may have been exploited and experienced human rights abuses. It is important that we continually stress how wide the definition of trafficking actually is when training or liaising with referring agencies, and that the factors which make it difficult for women to access services, including lack of sufficient resources and restrictions due to the criteria for services, continue to be reviewed.

31. This distinction is completely irrelevant in terms of international law: United Nations Protocol To Prevent, Suppress And Punish Trafficking In Persons, Especially Women And Children, Supplementing The United Nations Convention Against Transnational Organised Crime (2000). In terms of offering support to women who wish to leave the sex industry, whether they are defined as 'trafficked' or not, these distinctions are not useful. If women are experiencing rape, physical violence, control of their movements and freedom, or financial exploitation then they should be able to access services to allow them to recover. This is fundamental and simple, and unless these services exist, evidence suggests that large numbers of migrant women will remain working in the sex industry with very limited options.

32. See sections 7 and 8 for further discussions of the forms of exploitation experienced by women.

K was forced to work in prostitution in Albania by her brother who took all her earnings. Another brother discovered what was happening and there was a fight between the two brothers but the rest of the family was apparently unaware that K had been forced to work as a prostitute.



These findings are consistent with previously established patterns of recruitment of women into trafficking for sexual exploitation, including through:

- complete coercion through abduction or kidnapping
- deception by offers of employment with no sex industry connotations
- deception through offers of marriage
- deception through offers of employment in entertainment, dancing etc.
- deception about the conditions in which the women will undertake prostitution<sup>33</sup>.

G left a violent marriage in which she had no financial independence. She accepted an offer to take up an employment contract as a domestic assistant. The salary offered seemed enormous to her and so she was prepared to travel for several days by bus in order to reach the UK. It was £60 a week.

Most women were given very little concrete information about the conditions they would be working under. Very few women were offered contracts they could understand<sup>34</sup>, and only six women received any kind of details of the amount of money they would be earning<sup>35</sup>.

### 5.2 Nationality of traffickers

Of our sample, 101 women were able to identify the nationality of one or more of their trafficker/s. They reported being trafficked by individuals from a total of 34 countries. 25% of traffickers whose nationalities were identified were Albanian, 12% were Lithuanian, 10% were Nigerian, 5% were Romanian, 4% were Chinese and 3% were Russian.

33. Home Office, 2003, The extent of Coercion and Deception, available online at [www.homeoffice.gov.uk](http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk)

34. One woman was offered a contract written in a language she did not speak; one woman who could not read or write put her mark on a contract that was read out to her. Only 5 women were given a contract (verbal or otherwise) prior to arriving in the UK.

35. Figures stated varied between £30 - £40 per day and £3000 per month.



**Table 9: Nationality of Traffickers**

| Nationality          | Number |
|----------------------|--------|
| Albanian             | 48     |
| Lithuanian           | 23     |
| Nigerian             | 20     |
| Romanian             | 10     |
| Chinese              | 7      |
| Russian              | 6      |
| Czech                | 5      |
| Moldovan             | 5      |
| Thai                 | 5      |
| Cameroonian          | 3      |
| Hungarian            | 3      |
| Polish               | 3      |
| Ukrainian            | 3      |
| British              | 2      |
| Bulgarian            | 2      |
| Ghanaian             | 2      |
| Iranian              | 2      |
| Kosovan              | 2      |
| Latvian              | 2      |
| Singaporean          | 2      |
| Slovakian            | 2      |
| Turkish              | 2      |
| Afghan               | 1      |
| Belgian              | 1      |
| Cypriot              | 1      |
| Estonian             | 1      |
| French               | 1      |
| German               | 1      |
| Greek                | 1      |
| Italian              | 1      |
| Jamaican             | 1      |
| Sierra Leonean       | 1      |
| Sri Lankan           | 1      |
| Ugandan              | 1      |
| Unknown / Not Stated | 22     |

(N.B. total n=193 due to multiple traffickers in majority of cases)

In many instances, traffickers and victims share the same nationality, although this varies from one country to another. For example, women trafficked from Nigeria are highly likely to be trafficked by Nigerian citizens, although some non-Nigerian nationals are involved in transporting Nigerian victims across borders or providing shelters and/or safe houses for victims travelling over land.

### 5.3 Trafficking situation<sup>36</sup>

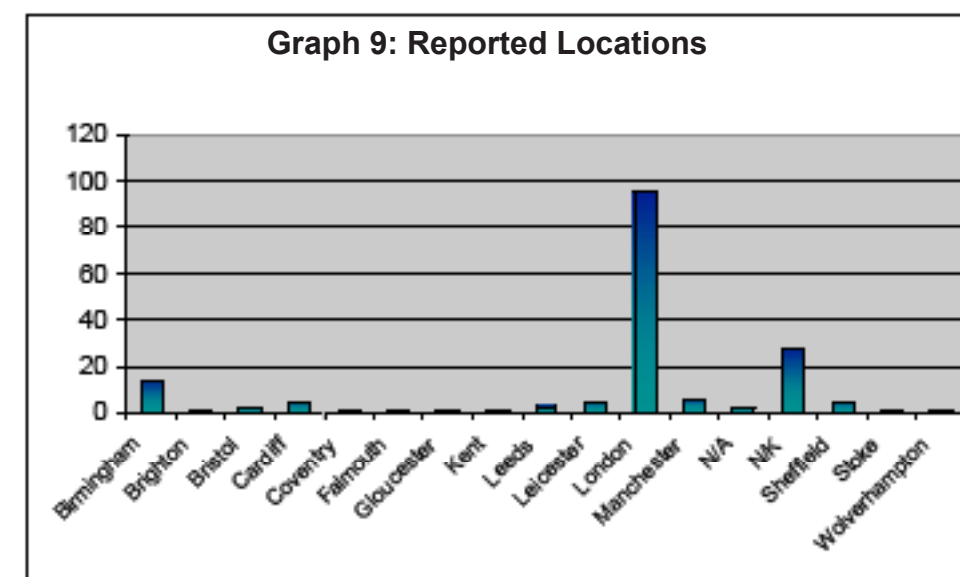
#### 5.3.1 Length of time in trafficking situation

Women reported working in the sex industry for anything from less than seven days to seven years before escaping. Fifty-nine women (50%) worked for the trafficker(s) for between one day and six months; 20 (17%) spent between six and 12 months in their trafficking situation; eight women (7%) for between one and two years, and nine women (8%) for between two to three years. Thirteen women (11%) spent longer than three years in their trafficking situation<sup>37</sup>.

J worked for six months in a sauna in Haringey, and then she was moved to escort agencies in west London, from where she was taken to men's homes and hotels. While working as an escort, J reports that many of her customers were police officers, solicitors and judges. She was forced to work almost every day. On one occasion J worked non-stop for 192 hours without any sleep or rest.

#### 5.3.2 Location

Women were trafficked between an average of three sites selling sex, with some women being moved between as many as seven sites. As well as being moved all around London, some of the women taking part in this study were trafficked between several British cities including Birmingham, Manchester, Sheffield, Luton and Brighton. This operates to isolate women from potential sources of support, as well as avoiding police detection.

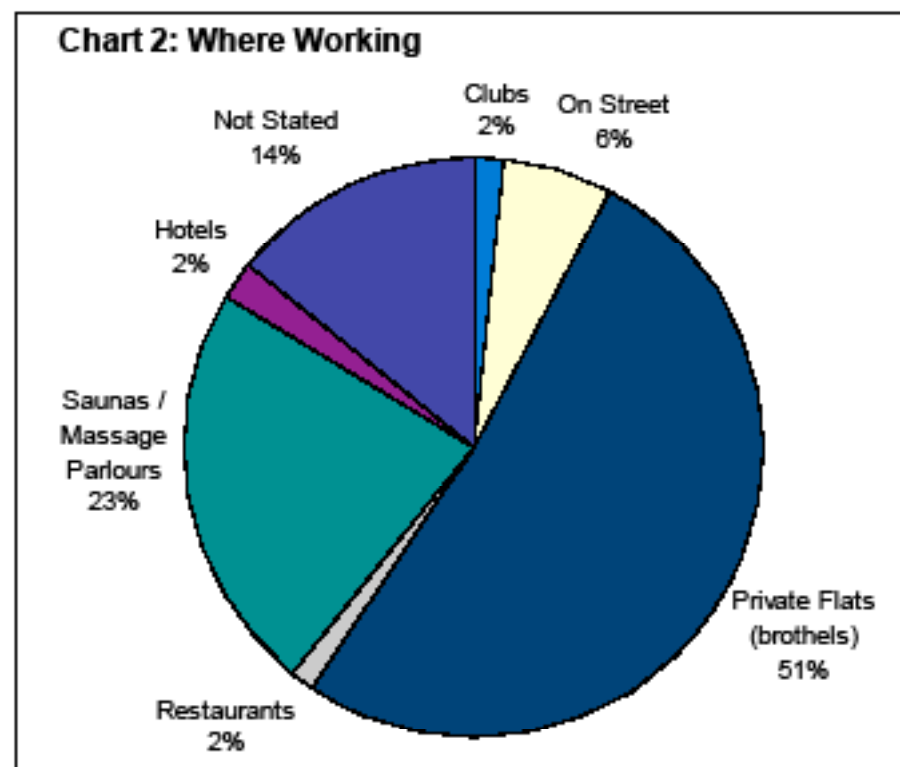


Women worked both on street 6% (n=7) and off street 81% (n=95), in flats 51% (n=66), saunas, massage parlours/brothels 23% (n=29), as well as hotels, clubs and restaurants 6% (n=7) and lap dancing clubs 0.8% (n=1) selling sex, without exception<sup>38</sup>. Over half of the women surveyed (54%; n=64) reported working seven days a week, usually 12 hour days. Some women were 'available for work' 24 hours per day, and many women reported sleep deprivation and exhaustion while they were working.

36. Because the expertise of the POPPY Project has until recently been concentrated on trafficking for the purposes of prostitution, we have collected more information on women with these experiences. The conditions that those trafficked into forced labour or domestic work experience are also exploitative, and some of the experiences of gendered violence as discussed in the next section are comparable. This section will focus on the experiences of those trafficked into the sex industry.

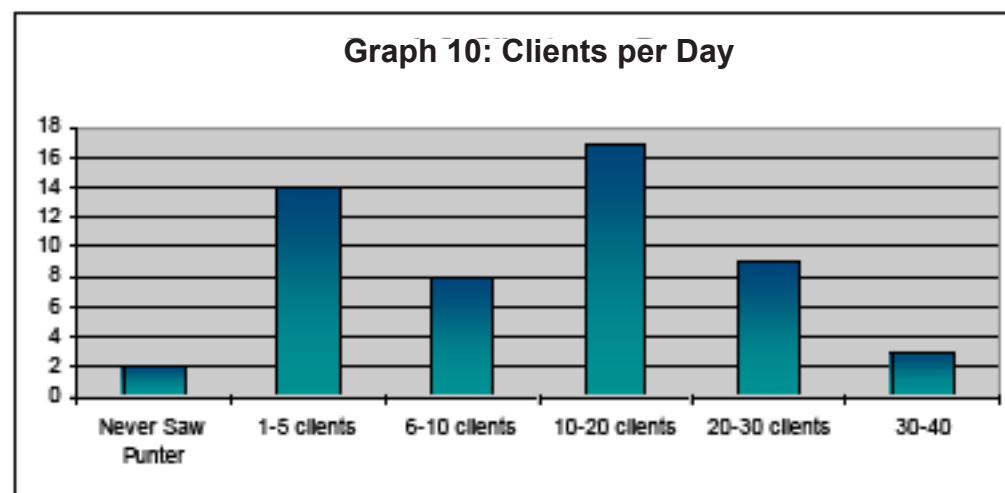
37. Nine women didn't provide any information about the length of time they spent in their trafficking situation.

38. Several women reported working in more than one type of establishment.



### 5.3.3 Clients per day

Women were regularly pressured to see large numbers of clients per day in order to earn more money, despite 27% of women reporting that some clients were violent towards them. Thirty-two women (27%) reported regularly seeing between six and 20 men per day. Women were also told that in order to pay off their debts<sup>39</sup> more quickly they should offer sex without condoms and anal sex, as these activities are more expensive (43%). Other women were forced to keep working while menstruating by using a sponge and many women 53% (n=63) were unable to negotiate 'safe sex' at all.



(N.B. total n=53. 65 women were unable to state how many clients they saw on average each day)

K worked twelve hour days in flats all over London for the same trafficker for two years. For much of the time she was involved in prostitution she worked seven days a week. K has estimated that her pimp/boyfriend took £400,000 in earnings from her over this period.

### 5.3.4 Contact with police/immigration

Seventy-four (63%) women who worked in the sex industry reported having contact with the police and/or immigration service during a raid or raids prior to their escape. Of these, 22 women (30%) were detained. Seven women were present during at least one raid in which no action was taken. Five of these women were arrested in a subsequent raid, and deported due to irregular immigration status before being re-trafficked to the UK. Another two women were arrested and then placed in an immigration detention centre to be deported, but were referred to the POPPY Project after Hibiscus (an organisation carrying out advocacy work in detention centres) identified them as victims of trafficking.

L's family alerted the police in Lithuania when they realised she had been trafficked into prostitution. The Lithuanian police registered her as a missing person with Interpol. Meanwhile, L managed to escape the sauna she was held in, and helped by two female bystanders, ran to the local police station. The police did not understand her as she could not speak English. They escorted her back to the sauna she had been trafficked into. Apparently no check was made on Interpol, nor was any attempt made to use an interpreter.

Many women identified serious impediments to seeking assistance from the police. Notably: not being able to talk to police officers alone; not having access to adequate interpreting facilities; and being treated as a criminal. One woman supported by the POPPY Project and subject to police raids on four separate occasions during her time working in prostitution explains her experience in the following way:

*"I have been in four situations like this, you feel threatened by them [the police], they don't act like they want to help you, they act like they want to deport you. They first ask are you legal, for your papers. They don't ask if you are okay"*

It is essential to highlight police responses that are not effective, both in terms of combating trafficking and in terms of increasing safety for victims of trafficking, in order to develop new responses that work. It is interesting to note that police forces around the UK have referred 225 women to the POPPY Project between March 2003 and July 2007, which equates to 32% of all the women to whom we have provided long-term housing and support<sup>40</sup>.

### 5.3.5 Re-trafficking

Twenty-five (21%) of the women taking part in this study disclosed having been re-trafficked, all 25 having been trafficked again from their family homes after being deported or returned. Only one of these women indicated that she had received support from an organisation in her country of origin. Four women were re-trafficked by people connected with their original traffickers; the other four were trafficked by entirely new traffickers. In all cases, the re-trafficking took place very soon after the women returned home. In a further 93 cases there was no information on file recording whether women had been re-trafficked or not.

E was trafficked into a sauna in Birmingham for seven months in 2003. The sauna was raided by the police, and E was put in a cell with three other women, before being deported to Moldova. She felt intimidated and under surveillance by the presence of the other women, so did not tell the police anything. She was not offered a chance to talk to a police officer by herself. After being in Moldova for two days, two men came to her house, threatened her and told her she owed them money. They gave her a passport, and flew with her to Ireland, where she was refused entry and sent back. On her return, she was locked in a flat without food for four days, then taken to Belgium, where she was locked up and sexually abused. From Belgium she travelled guarded by one of her rapists back to Birmingham. Two of the other women deported at the same time as E were also back in Birmingham.

It is clear from E's story, above, and the accounts of other women POPPY has worked with, that deporting women does very little to disrupt traffickers. Being tracked down within days of returning home contributes to women's belief that there is no escape for them; that those abusing them are all powerful and above the law. When women's experiences of the police are only punitive, they are highly unlikely to see the police in the UK as a source of possible support. Additionally, women often face even more extreme violence when they are re-trafficked, to ensure that they do not try to escape<sup>41</sup>.

40. POPPY Project statistics, July 2007

41. According to the 25 women who took part in our study and had been re-trafficked, they experienced greater levels of violence the second time they were trafficked.

39. See following section for more in-depth discussion of the use of debt bondage as a control strategy.

M was 18 when she was first trafficked. In May 2003 she was deported from the UK to Romania. She was told by an immigration official that she would get a stamp on her immigration record which meant she could not leave Romania for five years unless she gave him oral sex. She was afraid of her family knowing she had been involved in prostitution so she complied. When she returned home she was threatened by her trafficker who told her she must return to the UK or he would tell her family. She was re-trafficked to the UK after being given false Italian travel documents and bribing Romanian immigration officials.

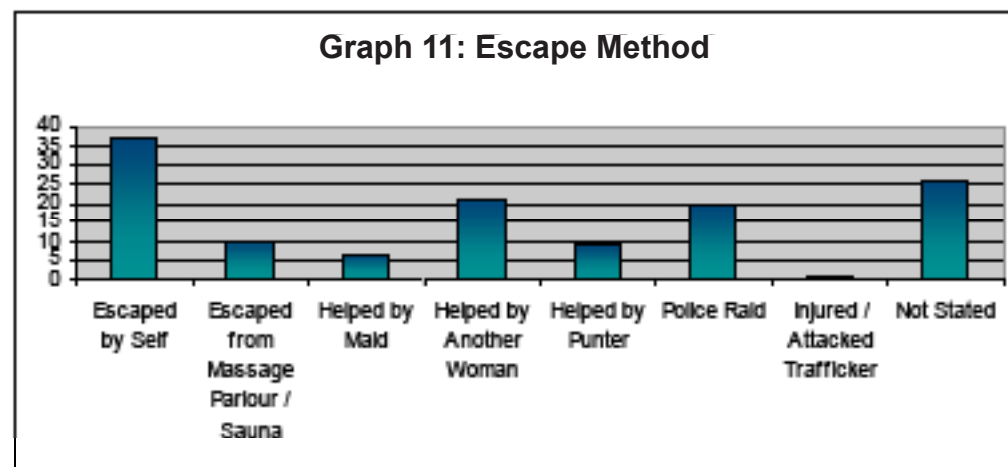
Many women attempted to migrate again shortly after their return because of a need to earn money, lack of opportunities, family problems and/or dissatisfaction with their living conditions at home. Indeed, the socio-economic conditions that initially sparked their migration often remained the same with limited possibilities for improvement. Difficulties faced in the reintegration process included stigma and shame associated with having been involved in the sex industry.

#### 5.4 Escape Method

Thirty-seven of the women whose data was collected for this research managed to escape from their traffickers by themselves (31%); 21 escaped with the assistance of another woman (18%). Six women reported being helped by the maid at the massage parlour or sauna where they were working (5%) and ten reported escaping directly from the massage parlour or sauna where they worked (8%)<sup>42</sup>.

M escaped from the people who trafficked her after six months by breaking out of the flat when the trafficker was out. She met a man on the street who offered her a place to stay for the night. She went back to his place where he tried to rape her and stole all her belongings. She fled from him and went to the street. She was found there by a woman who spoke her first language, who took her in and looked after her. This woman was working as a prostitute, and after a while suggested to M that she work with her. M did this until she was arrested in a raid and referred to the POPPY Project.

The majority of the women taking part in this study said they did not consider seeking support from the men purchasing sex from them. In fact, only nine reported managing to escape with the help of a punter (8%). The reasons given for not asking for help from a punter consisted of the following: being frightened of the 'customers' and not expecting them to help given the exploitative context, and the inability to ask for assistance due to their spoken English being limited.



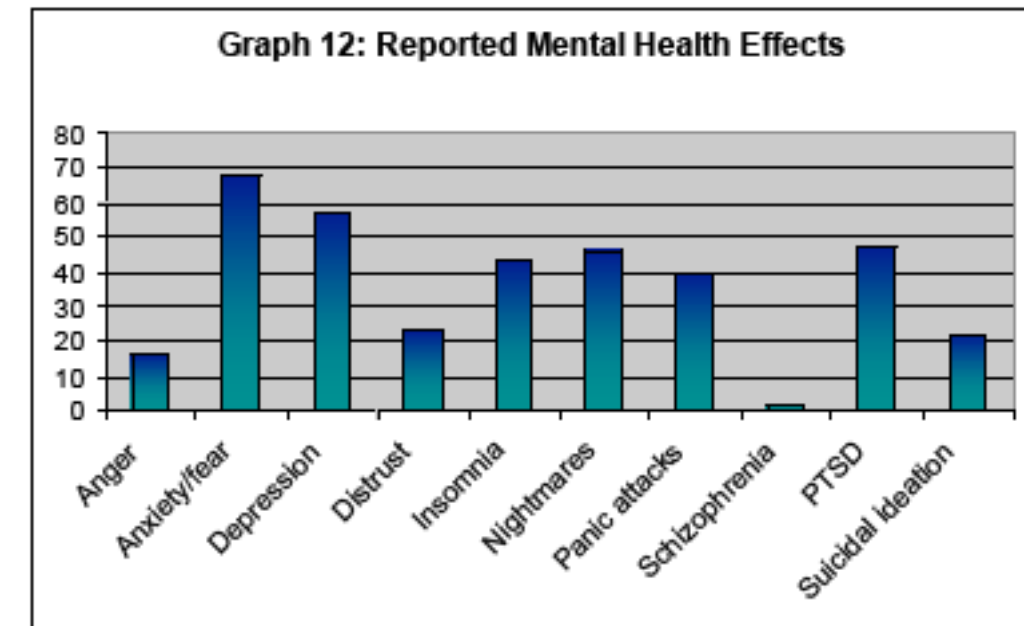
A further 20 women (17%) reported managing to escape the situation they were in following a police raid. This emphasizes the importance of maintaining an ongoing law enforcement operation to help rescue victims being preferable to annual or bi-annual operations.

#### 5.5 Access to health services and reported health effects

The women taking part in this research were only allowed patchy access to health services, if at all, during the time that they were forced to work in prostitution. Ninety-one (77%) women did not see a doctor, health clinic or sexual health outreach worker at all for the entire time that they were forced to work in the sex industry.

42. It is not known how many women continued to work in the sex industry after escaping their traffickers until such time as they were referred to the POPPY Project. The reasons why women in this situation might choose to work in the sex industry have been explored elsewhere, but for all the women we have worked with they have been based on a complete lack of other options to survive.

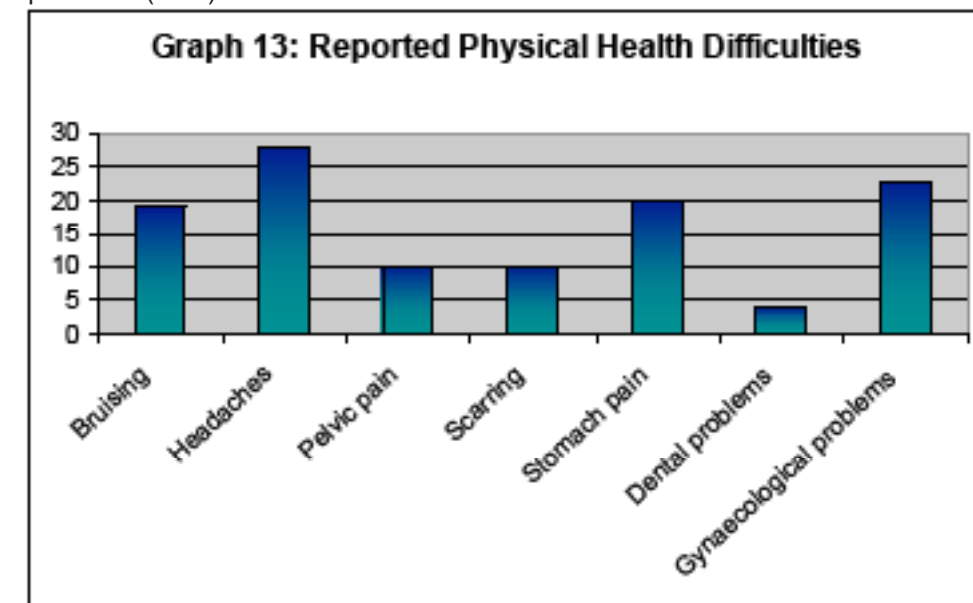
Of the 118 women interviewed, 80% (n=95) disclosed at least one symptom of mental distress. This very high figure must be placed in the context of how difficult it is to disclose mental health symptoms due to stigma, particularly when ethnicity and cultural differences are considered.



Seventy-five women (64%) reported experiencing anxiety/fear; 67 (57%) reported suffering from depression; while 48 women (41%) have had sufficiently severe symptoms of mental health distress after escaping their trafficking situation that they have been diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) by a doctor<sup>43</sup>.

P was sold by her ex-husband and trafficked into a club in Birmingham. When she escaped, she was using a mixture of substances to dull her feelings. They did not work and she was diagnosed with a Schizo-Affective Disorder, which combined with her depression and suicide ideation led to her being sectioned under the Mental Health Act.

In addition to ongoing severe mental health issues as women struggle to recover from the ways they have been treated, many women have physical symptoms or difficulties following their escape from trafficking. One hundred and seven women (91%) reported suffering from physical problems of some kind, including: headaches (26%), bruising (18%), stomach pain (19%), pelvic pain (9%) and gynaecological problems (21%).

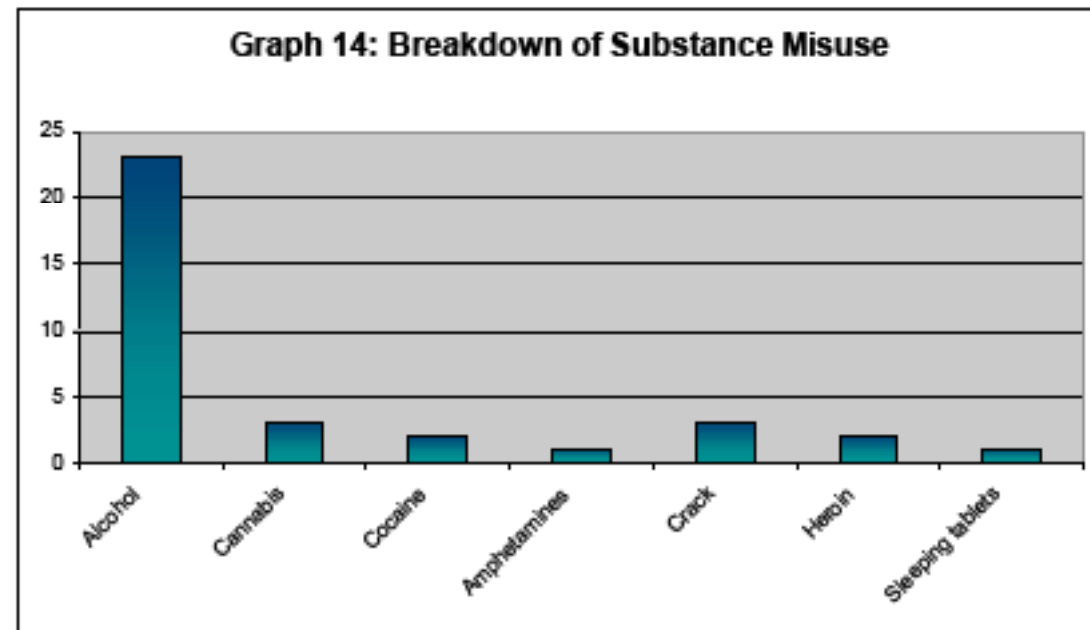


43. Stolen Smiles 56% of the women reported symptom levels high enough to warrant a diagnosis of post traumatic stress disorder. Stolen Smiles: a summary report on the physical and psychological health consequences of women and adolescents trafficked in Europe, (2006) Zimmerman et al, London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine. Again, these figures are similar to those of the 207 women interviewed for a recent study investigating the health needs of trafficked women. Of the women interviewed, 54% of women complained of suffering from nightmares (fourteen days after entering service provision) compared to 47% (n=57) of women in our sample.



Forty-one (35%) of the 118 women taking part in this research reported requiring treatment associated with having had sexual intercourse too frequently and without protections. This has included antibiotic courses for cervical abnormalities or gynaecological problems (27%); pelvic pain or pelvic inflammatory disease (24%); unexplained bleeding (12%) or treatment for sexually transmitted diseases (37%) contracted whilst in prostitution. These include HIV, hepatitis B, hepatitis C, syphilis, Chlamydia, genital herpes and genital warts.

Twenty-eight women (24%) sought support for substance misuse problems once out of the trafficking experience. Women have used alcohol (66%); cocaine (6%) and marijuana (9%) to help cope with their experiences, and for 19 women (18%) this began while in the trafficking situation. Substance misuse does not appear to be a common strategy used to control women based on what women have told us. It seems reasonable to assume that this is because it is not required as women trafficked into prostitution are already sufficiently 'under control'. Additionally, the introduction of substances to women already effectively controlled may well be seen as too expensive by traffickers.



## 5.6 Violence and control

Experiences of sexual violence in addition to being forced to sell sex were described by women regardless of the situation they were trafficked into. Of the 118 cases researched, 72 (61%) explicitly reported being raped on at least one occasion in the UK.

The first thing N's traffickers did after kidnapping her was to rape her. They continued to rape her while she was in prostitution, but N describes the first rape differently from the others because she says if she doesn't, she will have to admit to herself that her bodily integrity was violated up to forty times a day for six months.

Whilst in the trafficking situation 25 women (21%) became pregnant, of which 11 were forced to abort their pregnancies (9%). This figure is far lower than a European study of the effects of trafficking upon victims' health which found that 17% of women and girls had had at least one termination during the time they were trafficked; others reported being kicked whilst pregnant<sup>44</sup>.

44. Zimmerman, C., et al (2006).

Women disclosed being controlled in other ways, such as being escorted (38%) and having their movements controlled (69%)<sup>45</sup>, including being locked in properties and being put under surveillance by other women; having their passport or immigration paperwork removed (66%); and being told they had to work to pay off 'debts' (7%)<sup>46</sup>. Eighty-one women in this study disclosed experiencing physical violence<sup>47</sup> whilst in the trafficking situation (69%)<sup>48</sup>.

Women also frequently received verbal abuse (81%) and/or threats to themselves and were threatened with reprisals against their families (38%). Sometimes threats to families have been backed up by women knowing that their trafficker has taken photographs of their children. Some women's families have been visited when they escape their traffickers, on one occasion resulting in her sister being assaulted by a group of men. In other cases, women's families were contacted and told they were working in prostitution<sup>49</sup>.

POPPY has worked with women who witnessed other trafficked women being tortured and/or stabbed by traffickers/pimps (30%); women who had their food intake rigidly controlled by traffickers (19%), and women who had either no access to money or who were told they had to earn a particular amount of money by her traffickers (10%). Seven women were threatened with the use of voodoo (6%)<sup>50</sup>; while 14 had to endure loud music being played day and night so they were constantly deprived of sleep (12%).

One woman explained that her trafficker took photographs of all the women he prostituted on his mobile phone, which he told them could be sent to all the pimps and traffickers he knew should they leave. This was particularly intimidating because it meant she knew people would be looking for her the moment she escaped. Another woman had a child she conceived following repeated rapes by an associate of her trafficker removed by him after she had cared for it for one year. She has been unable to trace her child after escaping from him.

## 5.7 Grooming methods

Fifty women (42%) reported experiencing repeated sexual violence to 'groom' them into prostitution when they first arrived in the UK. In addition to this, 18 women disclosed high levels of physical violence (15%) and 22 received verbal threats (19%). Only one woman in this survey disclosed unwanted exposure to pornography as part of the trafficking process (0.8%). However, the correlation between pornography and trafficking is well documented<sup>51</sup>. In some cases, demand for pornography directly triggers the supply of trafficked women, "pornography producers place orders with traffickers for the number of women they need"<sup>52</sup>.

45. This evidence is supported in other countries, such as Ukraine, where it is reported 70% of prostituted women are monitored by guards, dogs and/or locked in rooms, see Hughes, D. (2001).

46. Debt bondage amounts that women were advised they had incurred were often substantial, ranging between £6000 and £40,000. For most women this 'debt' did not diminish rapidly, if at all, as they were charged rent for where they lived and worked (sometimes the same place); charged for food they ate; clothing and personal items bought; travel costs and so on. These charges were always disproportionately high compared to real costs. Women were also fined for 'breaking rules' such as spending money on themselves or using the telephone.

47. In 2006, pan-European research discovered that 76% of women were physically assaulted during their trafficking situation. Examples of physical abuse included having their heads slammed against floors or walls, being hit with bats or other heavy objects, being dragged across rooms by their hair and punched in the face. Zimmerman, C., et al (2006).

48. These experiences are consistent with established violent methods of control employed by traffickers and pimps around the world. In 2002, US researchers discovered that 80% of women who had been trafficked experienced serious physical harm including being slashed with razor blades, being tied to bedposts, having their nipples sliced or bitten, receiving cuts to their limbs and genitals, being burnt with cigarettes and their captors urinating or defecating on them. Raymond, J., et al (2002).

49. Other surveys have found similarly high levels of intimidation, "traffickers maintain control over women by creating an unpredictable and unsafe environment to keep women continually "on edge." Threats were received by 89% of women including death threats, beatings, increased debt, harm to family members, re-trafficking; in 82% of cases the threats were carried out Zimmerman, C. (2006).

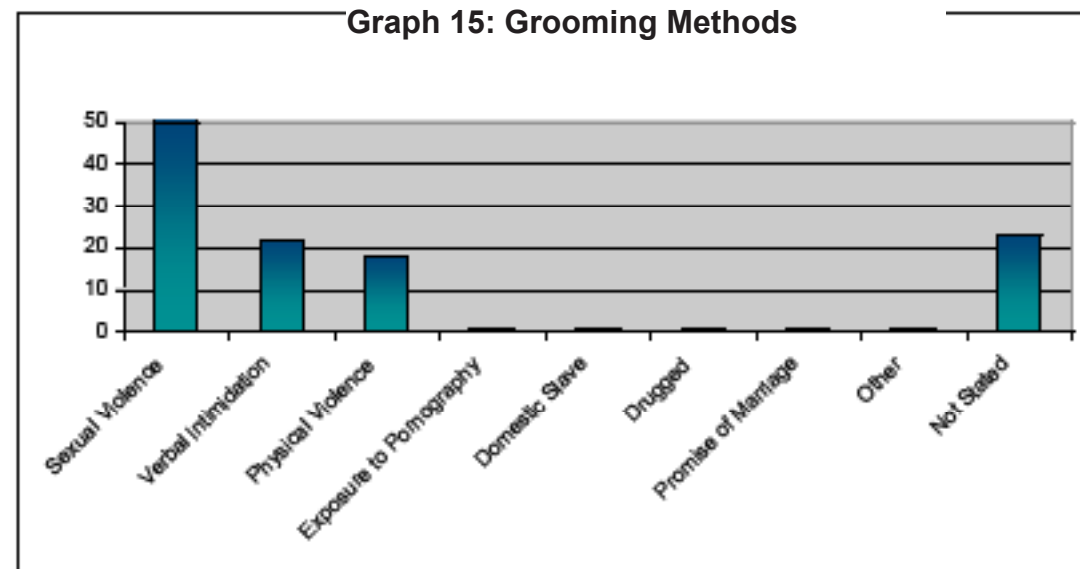
50. See Pearson, E., (2002), p 165 for a discussion of how ritualised voodoo oaths may be administered to women to engender fear and obedience. The following article highlights current trafficking rituals in Nigeria: <http://www.cbsnews.com/stories/2006/09/30/ap/world/mainD8KFBHA80.shtml>

51. The influence of pornography on trafficking for sexual exploitation is oblique, "it stimulates a demand for buying women and children in the flesh, in the same way it stimulates the viewer to act out on other women, girls and boys what has been consumed through the pornography." MacKinnon, C. (2005)

52. Hughes, D. & Denisova, T. (2001)

Pornography involving women who have been trafficked may be used by their exploiters to leverage acquiescence through the threat of exposure and subsequent familial shame. Furthermore, from the traffickers' perspective, the manufacture of pornographic material provides a concurrent source of income from a "product" which is likely to have a relatively short term of use, due to a catalogue of abuses. Consequently, of the few traffickers who have been uncovered by police raids, many are found with filming equipment to create and sell pornography<sup>53</sup>.

Women also reported witnessing violence towards other women (n=1), being drugged (n=1) and being held as a domestic slave (n=1).



53. Crouse, J., PhD, (2004).

## 6. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### 6.1 Prevention of trafficking in countries of origin

There are a number of common factors that make women vulnerable to trafficking and exploitation. Factors influencing a woman's decision to migrate include poverty, single parenthood, a history of interpersonal violence, and coming from a disrupted household. A woman's vulnerability will invariably involve a combination of factors, which may also be dependent on cultural differences in the country of origin.

#### Recommendation 1

**Prevention efforts in countries of origin should take into account factors which render women particularly vulnerable. These should be directed specifically at those women identified as being at risk in that particular country, as well as addressing the general conditions which prevail in source countries, such as poverty, unemployment and conflict. Targeted prevention should include education and training programmes, supported accommodation, information campaigns as well as poverty reduction and development measures.**

### 6.2 Disrupting recruitment patterns

Women are recruited by friends or acquaintances in addition to strangers, both male and female. A variety of methods are used to influence the victim's choice to accept an 'offer' that preys on the woman's vulnerability and desire to escape. The main reason women gave for accepting an offer from traffickers was economic necessity: migration as a means of survival.

#### Recommendation 2

**The methods traffickers use to recruit women and the seemingly trustworthiness of traffickers are both important considerations and can be used in the targeted information campaigns in countries of origin, as recommended above.**

### 6.3 Transportation method

Traffickers usually pay for women to travel to the UK and arrange the necessary documentation. This often renders women in a very vulnerable position when they first arrive in the UK with (sometimes considerable and exaggerated) debts they are told they must repay. Trafficking victims still face detention and prosecution for entering or attempting to leave the UK on false documents.

#### Recommendation 3

**Police, embassy and border control personnel should intensify current efforts to identify false or forged documents, especially for all women travelling from outside the EU. There is an urgent need for police and prosecuting authorities to further investigate holders of false or forged travel documents for signs that they may be a victim of trafficking.**

### 6.4 Trafficking routes

Two differing routes into the UK are apparent having conducted this research. The first is travel from the home country direct to the UK, which appears to be the case with the majority of Lithuanian and Nigerian women who are trafficked. The second is travel to the UK via neighbouring European countries, which is more common for women who are trafficked from central and southern European countries. Nevertheless, it is significant to recognise the traffickers frequently change the way that they transport women, presumably in order to avoid detection. Most notably, Lithuanian traffickers are now beginning to avoid direct flights to London, possibly because they know these flights attract more attention from immigration officers. It is also noteworthy that very few victims entered the UK via Ireland, although this is one of the two direct neighbouring countries. If and when police forces are enabled to co-operate efficiently and swiftly in this field, trafficking networks can be dealt with before they have the chance to exploit the victims.

#### Recommendation 4

Gathering intelligence into a central database on recruitment methods, travelling routes, means of transportation, services provided by traffickers and price paid is imperative in counter-trafficking operations. Such information can be instrumental in prosecuting traffickers and identifying victims, particularly when disaggregated in terms of gender, nationality, age and type of exploitation. The UK Human Trafficking Centre (UKHTC) has an important role to play in this regard.

### 6.5 Support and assistance

Women are subject to considerable force and coercion upon arriving in the UK and report being forced to work in prostitution for up to seven years before managing to escape, usually without assistance. The extreme violence and psychological stress women experienced in the UK has a major impact on women's physical and psychological health and requires specialist and long-term assistance from dedicated support agencies, with a history of supporting victims of violence against women.

#### Recommendation 5

All agencies providing services to victims of trafficking should sign up to an agreed 'minimum standard' aimed at protecting and empowering victims of trafficking. Key components of such an agreement would include: respect for victims' rights and long-term plans; appropriate and secure housing; psychological, medical, social and legal counselling and assistance services; and guarantee appropriate education and training opportunities. Increased costs incurred in supporting victims could be subsidised through the redistribution of assets confiscated in trafficking operations.

### 6.6 Demand reduction

Conditions in the UK that fuel the demand (whether for cheap labour, sexual exploitation or other services) need to be addressed through sustained and concerted action. Demand reduction measures are a key element in preventing and combating human trafficking but overall, demand reduction remains the least developed strategy within the UK's Action Plan on Tackling Human Trafficking and urgent efforts should be taken to address this.

#### Recommendation 6

The UK should establish a government fund using traffickers' confiscated assets that could be used to subsidise awareness raising and prevention programmes targeting: victims, potential victims, punters, as well as the general public in countries of origin, transit and destination.

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## APPENDIX B. METHODOLOGY

The data analysed in this study is collated from POPPY case files on women who have used the service since the project's inception in 2003. The sample group is based on 118 women supported by the POPPY Project (on either an acute or outreach basis) long enough to have developed a trusting relationship with their support worker<sup>54</sup>. The time parameters of the sample are from March 2003 to July 2007. These women represent 51% of POPPY's service user group for the same period<sup>55</sup>.

A structured questionnaire<sup>56</sup> (composed of open and closed-ended questions) was used by POPPY support workers to collect data from the women interviewed. The questionnaire included the following key areas:

- Pre-trafficking background including experience of physical and sexual violence
- Recruitment method and known factors leading to trafficking 'decision'
- Expectation of work in country of destination
- Mode of travel
- Methods of control, coercion and violence in the process of exploitation
- Access to health services and/or social services
- Escape method
- Known effects of trafficking

The data from the files was statistically analysed (using pre-designed response categories) using 'Access' software and stored confidentially. All of the women who participated in the survey were made aware that the information provided would be used to campaign for more appropriate and wide-reaching services for all trafficked women and to gain a clearer outline of the experiences of trafficked women prior to giving their informed consent.

### Limitations

Human trafficking remains a profoundly under-researched area, and because of the lack of case studies available, this research sample is unavoidably small. Nonetheless, the findings provide accurate and detailed information about the experiences of trafficked women in the UK.

54. Many of these experiences will not have been raised by women in any other setting and are disclosed only because they are in a place of safety where they are believed, and where the gendered nature of the violence they have experienced is acknowledged.

55. By the end of July 2007, POPPY had received 699 referrals, accommodated 152 women and provided outreach support to an additional 79 women.

56. See Appendix C.

## APPENDIX C. DATA COLLECTION FORM

### Notes on completing form:

- The aim of this form is to gather qualitative evidence about the types of experiences trafficked women have had prior to; during and after trafficking.
- The form is designed to be filled in by Senior Support Workers over time as women feel safe enough to discuss their experiences.
- Women should be informed that part of the POPPY Project's remit is to represent the experiences of those trafficked to other agencies, and that this information will be used to campaign for more appropriate and wide-reaching services for all trafficked women, and to gain a clearer outline of the experiences of trafficked women.
- Information will be stored confidentially, and never be used in a way which identifies the woman.

Age: \_\_\_\_\_

Nationality: \_\_\_\_\_

Ethnicity: \_\_\_\_\_

Date entered Eaves: \_\_\_\_\_

Languages spoken: \_\_\_\_\_

Date left Eaves: \_\_\_\_\_

Immigration status in the UK (at referral)? \_\_\_\_\_

### 1. Pre-trafficking background

Education Status (*University / High School / Primary School / Other / None*)

\_\_\_\_\_

Living environment (home town/village) (*Rural / Semi-urban / Urban / Capital City*)

\_\_\_\_\_

Living situation

\_\_\_\_\_

Economic status (*Affluent / Average / Poor / Very Poor*)

\_\_\_\_\_

Employment/past work experience

\_\_\_\_\_

Economic responsibilities (dependants incl. children)

\_\_\_\_\_

Mental health issues prior to trafficking

\_\_\_\_\_

Substance misuse issues prior to trafficking

\_\_\_\_\_

**2. Experiences of violence before trafficking**

---

---

---

**3. Recruitment method**

Recruitment Process – who recruited? *(friend/neighbour/spouse/partner/family member/stranger)*

---

Were others recruited at the same time?

---

Age when trafficked?

---

Re-trafficked? Y/N

---

**4. Expectation of work in country of destination**

What industry?

---

On what grounds – contract provided?

---

Salary promised? Payment to family?

---

If work was in the sex industry, what conditions were promised?

---

Involved in the sex industry before (in home country or other countries)?

---

**5. Travel**

How travel? *(Accompanied? Alone or in group? Route? Did you hold your own paperwork/passport?)*

---

How pay for travel?

---

Expected to pay this back?

---

Immigration paperwork arranged by

---

In own name?

---

**6. Known factors leading to trafficking/ 'decision'** *(e.g. poverty/unemployment, family breakdown, discrimination, civil unrest, violence, seeking opportunities etc)*

---

---

---

**7. Trafficking situation**

Remained with recruiter or sold on?

---

Who were the traffickers? *(Name/alias, gender, nationality, age, description, location, relationship to other traffickers)*

---

How groomed for prostitution? *(experience of physical and sexual violence, exposure to pornography)*

---

How long in trafficked situation?

---

Where working? *(type of premises and where in the UK)*

---

How many other women worked at premises? Nationalities? Any British women?

---

Working conditions?

---

Safe 'sex'? Was unsafe sex more expensive?

---

Who ran flat/parlour/sauna?

---

Trafficker/pimp part of a large, organised group or operating independently?

---

Who were the punters? How many per day?

---

Right to negotiate and/or refuse services?

---

Were punters ever violent?

---

Asked for help from punters? With what outcome?

---

In contact with police or immigration? During what circumstances?

---

Describe experiences of dealing with police and/or immigration? (*detained/charged, attitudes, access to solicitor, given information regarding options*)

---

#### **8. Methods of control in trafficking situation**

Control strategies (freedom of movement, sleep deprivation, food/drink withheld, accompaniment, denied contact with family and friends, locked up)

---

Physical violence:

---

Sexual violence:

---

Verbal threats/abuse (incl. threat to harm family or loved ones):

---

Use of drugs:

---

Witnessed other women being harmed?

---

Attempted to escape?

---

#### **9. Access to health services and/or social services**

Physical injuries?

---

Pregnancies/terminations?

---

Diagnosed with STDs/HIV/Aids?

---

Visited a clinic/hospital or doctor?

---

Received any treatment?

---

Visited by a nurse where you were working?

---

#### **10. How did women escape?**

---

---

---

#### **11. Known effects of trafficking**

Mental health effects:

---

Physical health effects:

---

Sexual health effects:

---

Substance misuse:

---



## **APPENDIX D. ABOUT EAVES HOUSING**

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Eaves is a London-based charity that provides high quality housing and support to vulnerable women. We also carry out research, advocacy and campaigning to prevent all forms of violence against women.

### **The POPPY Project Accommodation & Support**

The POPPY Project provides accommodation and support to women trafficked into the UK for the purposes of sexual exploitation. It is the only specialist service in the UK – and the only Government-funded service – for women trafficked into prostitution. It has 35 bed spaces and an outreach team which works with women still involved in the sex industry. It also offers resettlement support for women moving on from POPPY accommodation.

### **The POPPY Project Research & Development**

POPPY Research and Development is a centre of excellence for research, education and training on issues relating to trafficking of women for sexual exploitation and women wishing to exit prostitution. Its unique position of conducting research about trafficking, alongside providing support and accommodation for women who have been trafficked, results in detailed and informed analysis that helps to shape public policy around prostitution and trafficking.

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# eaVes

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