

Women In The Sex Industry

Safety tips shared by women who have experience of the industry:

TRUST YOUR GUTS – if you feel uncertain about a situation, there is probably a good reason. Listen to your instincts and take action, whether that means saying no to a potential client or running away. Remember you can leave at any time; they are paying for your time not specific services.

COMMUNICATE YOUR BOUNDARIES – Remember you have the right to consent and decline. You are in control of the situation. Be clear from the start about prices, and what you are and aren't prepared to do.

DRESS FOR SAFETY – think about what you wear that could be used to harm you such as a scarf, belt, dangly earrings, necklaces, cross body bags. Take practical shoes in a bag in case you need to get away in a hurry.

SAFETY FIRST – Ensure you have a mobile phone on you and don't accept drinks from clients unless passed directly to you by the bartender. Keep money in a secret pocket in your bag. Have a separate purse when you take the next client's money, so you are not adding it to an already laden purse in view of him. Remember to count the money at the start of the booking to ensure the agreed amount has been given. Remember to keep your bag with you at all times.

RAISE THE ALARM – Take a panic alarm with you and have a few hidden around the space you are in. Throw the alarm in the client direction to distract them and to give you time to escape.

USE A SCREENING STRATEGY – Speak on the phone to a potential client before you actually meet them as this will help you to discern the type of person you will be meeting. Use the NUM number/email screening service to decide whether it is safe to meet them. Keep a record of people you don't want to see or talk to again.

BUDDY UP – Inform a friend or relative of where you are working and the times you will be there. Possibly use an app such as Find My Friends. If you're unable to do so, let a friend know where you are. Leave all this information in an open notebook in your home where it can be found. Agree on a code word that you can use to discreetly alert them of danger.

ESCAPE ROUTE – keep your route clear and make yourself aware of the fire exits and nearest escapes are while in hotels or the client's home.

OUTCALLS – consider that hotels might be safer than going to a client's home. Inform the hotel reception which room you are visiting, if comfortable doing so, for your general safety, but you do not have to tell them the reason for the visit. Avoid getting in the car with more than one person and sit in the back if possible.

INCALLS – If taking in-calls, please consider buying an intercom/video doorbell.

CONSUME WITH CARE – It is safer to avoid being under the influence of drugs or alcohol to enable you to stay more alert when with a client.

DETAILS – If working on the street, try to pay attention to number plates and how the car door lock system works.

REGISTER WITH NATIONAL UGLY MUGS.

What if there is an incident?

National Ugly Mugs (NUM) is a free service that allows you to anonymously report incidents and receive warnings about dangerous individuals. NUM can support you with report-making and helps keep others in the sex industry safe. Sign up at www.uknswp.org/um.

If you are in danger, escape, shout for help, do not worry about making a scene. In an emergency, always call 999.

HOLLIE GUARD APP – Protect yourself from violence and accidents, record evidence and alert emergency contacts of your whereabouts quickly and easily.

PROTECTING YOUR PRIVACY:

Privacy plays a big part in your overall safety in the sex industry. For example, separate identities are a common and effective way to protect your privacy. Below are some effective practices to protect your privacy:

- o Have a separate work name
- o Have a separate work phone or any other devices that you use for work only
- o Have separate work and personal emails
- o Have separate social media accounts
- o Always use separate photo images from your personal profiles on social media. Images, numbers, social accounts and names can be searched by anyone on the web.
- o Research any app/website/advertising platforms that you use, how they work and the data protection policies. Keep up to date with these technology changes.
- o Crop or pixelate your images to hide identifiable information or features in your advertising.

Our Vista team is here to talk and help with safety planning as well as for advocacy and emotional support. If you would like to arrange a call or a meet up, please call us.

Tel: 07869 258165 (Mon–Thurs 9–5)

We also run a weekly confidential safe space for women – Haven. Call us for details. We are here for you.

SEXUAL HEALTH:

You are worth keeping healthy

Sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) or sexually transmitted infections (STIs) can have a range of signs and symptoms, including no symptoms. That's why they may go unnoticed until complications occur, or a partner is diagnosed.

SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS WHICH MIGHT INDICATE AN STI INCLUDE:

· Sores or bumps on the genitals or in the oral or rectal area, Painful or burning urination, Unusual or odd-smelling vaginal discharge, Unusual vaginal bleeding, Pain during sex, Sore, swollen lymph nodes, particularly in the groin, but sometimes more widespread, Lower abdominal pain, Fever, Rash over the trunk, hands or feet Signs and symptoms may appear a few days after exposure, or it may take years before you have any noticeable problems, depending on the organism.

Possible complications of not treating an STI early enough include:

· Pelvic pain, Pregnancy complications, Eye inflammation, Arthritis, Pelvic inflammatory disease, Infertility, Heart disease, and certain cancers such as HPV-associated cervical and rectal cancers.

OPTIONS FOR STI TESTING:

· You can choose to visit a Sexual Health Clinic. The TULIP Clinic (in St Mary's Hospital Sexual Health Clinic) Thursdays 1 pm - 2.30 pm.

A confidential, non-judgmental walk-in service for commercial sex workers and escorts. You can get additional checks and treatment such as: Hep B vaccinations, HPV vaccination, throat swabs/rectal swabs and cervical smears.

TULIP Clinics - Let's Talk about It (letstalkaboutit.nhs.uk)

Helpline - 0300 300 2016 (7 days/week 8 am - 8 pm)

OTHER SUPPORT SERVICES:

· Beyond the Gaze - Safety and Privacy resources - www.beyond-the-gaze.com

· Lifecentre - Counselling support for survivors of rape and sexual abuse - 01243 786349 <https://lifecentre.uk.com>

· Release - Legal resources for women in the sex industry - www.release.org.uk

· The Treetops Centre (SARC) - Emergency response and practical help for anyone who has been sexually assaulted - 0300 123 6616 <https://www.solent.nhs.uk/sarc/>

· **Portsmouth Abuse and Rape Counselling Service (PARCS)** – Women’s helpline

Mon 1pm–3pm, Wed & Fri 7pm–10pm 023 9266 9513

Free Helpline – 0300 222 5735

· **Clienteye app** – A free spam safety scheme for lone workers. It brings workers together to share spam info about potential Timewasters, Call or Text pests, Abusive communications, and No Shows.

THE LAW:

· Escorting and the selling of sexual services is not illegal in the U.K.

· The following activities are all illegal: Soliciting, keeping a brothel, earning money from another person’s prostitution, trafficking, having sex with someone who has been forced into prostitution, paying for sex with someone under the age of 18, having sex in a public place, and sexually assaulting and/or being violent against a person, including against someone selling sexual services.

You’re Worth Keeping Safe