

Sex for sale

Discussion

1. Match the words on the left with the definitions on the right:

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| 1. a prostitute | a. someone paid to go out socially with other people |
| 2. a pimp | b. a house where men pay to have sex with prostitutes |
| 3. a red-light district | c. a person who agrees to have sex in return for money |
| 4. a brothel | d. part of a town where there are many prostitutes |
| 5. a kerb-crawler | e. a man who controls prostitutes and lives off their earnings |
| 6. an escort | f. a man who drives slowly along a road looking for a sexual liaison |

Is prostitution a problem where you live? Is there a red-light district in your town?

Read the information in the box and discuss the questions in pairs or small groups:

At present, in Britain, a woman who sells sex on her own in a single property is not breaking the law. However, it is illegal for a prostitute to work, or to ask for work, in a public place. If two or more women sell sex in a single property, it is technically a brothel, which is illegal.

- What is the law in your country?
- Do you think it is too strict, too lenient or about right? Why?
- How would you feel if you found out that a close friend or a member of your family was working as a prostitute?

Should we legalise brothels?

Read the two articles to see if these statements are correct:

1. The police officer would like to have stricter laws on prostitution.
2. The local councillor would like to relax the laws on prostitution.

"It's ridiculous to try and eliminate a practice which has been going on since the beginning of civilisation. There always has been, and always will be, a demand for prostitutes. You can't stop it by making it illegal. The problems we have are because prostitution is not regulated. The women involved are at risk of both physical and emotional abuse from the pimps who 'employ' them. Their working conditions are often poor and there are considerable health risks. Legalising it would give women more control over their lives - their health, their safety and their finances. From the police point of view, it would also mean less obvious prostitution on the streets and a reduction in related crime such as drug dealing. The current laws are completely impractical. It's time they were changed."

Helen Maddocks, senior police officer

"This is not a practical issue at all, it's a moral one and I'm dead against any change in the law. In fact, I think the laws should be tougher. I agree we should be concerned about the health and safety of the women, but the plain fact is, sex for money is wrong. Sex should not be for sale. The laws we have are not just for stating what is allowed and not allowed, but also to show us what is good and what is bad. Legalising prostitution creates the impression that it is a good thing. It's a sign of great moral weakness in our society. Prostitution may be the 'oldest profession', but that doesn't mean it should be encouraged to continue."

Janet Boyce, local government councillor

Spend two minutes thinking about these questions, then discuss them with a partner:

1. Which argument is closer to your own opinion? Underline the statements you agree with.
2. Are you surprised at the police officer's attitude? Why? / Why not?
3. Do you agree that prostitution is a 'sign of great moral weakness in our society'?

Language 1

Look at this extract from the text:

*This is not a practical issue at all,
it's a moral one.*

Discuss with a partner. Is prostitution:

a practical issue or a moral issue?

a complicated issue or a straightforward issue?

an important issue or a non-issue?

Which verb does not collocate with *issue*:

avoid	the issue
complicate	
address	
discuss	
do	
tackle	
resolve	

Which issues is your government addressing at the moment? Which issues is it avoiding? Which issues do you want your government to tackle?

Discussion

What would you say in reply to these people? Discuss with a partner.

I can earn £1000 a week as a prostitute. That's about four times as much as I would get doing a different job. So why should I stop?

I don't believe that sleeping with a prostitute is being unfaithful to my wife. It's only sex – nothing else. Marriage is about love.

Lots of girls are forced into prostitution. Often they are illegal immigrants. They can't go to the police because they are not in the country legally.

**"I believe that sex is one of the most beautiful, natural, wholesome things that money can buy."
Steve Martin, actor**

If someone wants to accept my money to have sex with me, what's the problem? It's their life and their body. It's my money and it's none of your business!

Prostitution is a problem caused by men. There aren't any prostitutes for women. It's men who create the problem and men who make the laws.

It's the only way dirty old men can get sex. Prostitution is for sad, sad people. The women are sad and the men are even sadder. I'd ban it!

Language 2

Divide these expressions with *law* into three groups:

1. What the government or the police do.
2. What offenders or criminals do.
3. What good citizens do.

- a. tighten the law
- b. break the law
- c. defy the law
- d. obey the law
- e. observe the law
- f. relax the law
- g. comply with the law
- h. enforce the law
- i. ignore the law
- j. abide by the law
- k. change the law
- l. disobey the law