



Problem Solving and  
Crime Prevention

TILLEY AWARDS 2023  
APPLICATION  
FORM

KINDLY SPONSORED BY:





## Information for entrants

**Please ensure that you have read the guidance before completing this form.**

*By making an application to the awards, entrants are agreeing to abide by the conditions laid out in the guidance.*

**This application consists of four sections, as detailed below:**

- ➊ Section A: Application information
- ➋ Section B: Summary of application
- ➌ Section C: Description of project
- ➍ Section D: Endorsement by a senior representative

Please complete the form in full, within the stated word limit. Failure to complete in full will result in your entry being rejected from the competition.

Completed word doc forms application forms should be emailed to:

[Tilley\\_Awards@southyorks.pnn.police.uk](mailto:Tilley_Awards@southyorks.pnn.police.uk)

All entries must be received by **12pm on Monday 8<sup>th</sup> May 2023**. No entries will be accepted after this time/date. Any queries on the application process should be directed to Helen Eshelby at the email address above.

## SECTION A - Application information

### 1. Title of Project: Operation Boxster

### 2. Key issue/theme that the project addresses: Safeguarding and policing of on-street sex workers – Metropolitan Police Service – North Area

### 3. About you the author:

*Please ensure you include all the requested information fully and accurately. We will use these contact details to inform you if your project has been shortlisted by **Monday 17<sup>th</sup> July 2023**.*

**Full Name: Ian Davey**

**Role: Sergeant**

**Length of service: 28 years**

**Time in current role: 2 years**

**Would you consider yourself to be frontline, supervisor, middle management, senior management or executive? Supervisor**

**Are you a student officer/police now: No**

**Submitting organisation: Metropolitan Police Service**

**Email address: Ian.Davey@met.police.uk**



Telephone number: 07867508286

#### 4. Secondary project contact details:

Full name: Captain Annmarie Gifford  
Email address: [annmarie.gifford@salvationarmy.org.uk](mailto:annmarie.gifford@salvationarmy.org.uk)  
Telephone number: 07711537471

#### 5. Endorsing representative contact details:

Full name: Superintendent Simon Beardwell  
Email address: [Simon.Beardwell@met.police.uk](mailto:Simon.Beardwell@met.police.uk)

#### 6. List of agencies involved in the project and underline the lead organisation:

*Please ensure you list **all** agencies involved in your project. Upon submitting your application, you agree that you have listed and informed all agencies involved of your submission.*

The Salvation Army – Faith House  
CLASH / SHOC  
Enable Drug Treatment Team  
Street Lights UK

Please mark this box with an X to indicate that all organisations involved in the project have been notified of this entry.

#### 7. Have you submitted this project in previous Tilley Award competitions?

- Yes
- No

#### 8. If yes, please state which year:

*Please ensure that the previous form is attached together with a detailed summary of changes and justification for resubmission.*

#### 9. Did you take advantage of the advice offered to applicants prior to entry?

- Yes
- No

#### 10. If yes, did you find the advice beneficial?

*Please provide a comment so we can continue to improve the awards process.*



## SECTION B - Application summary

**11. In no more than 400 words please use this space to describe your project under the stated headings (see guidance for more information). The information in italics is provided to assist you in completing the form and should be deleted from your actual submission.**

*Summaries help the judges to gain a quick overview of the project before they read the main report. It is helpful to read the full report with a sense of context. Summaries for the shortlisted applications will be included in documentation used for the National Problem Solving Conference, and will be added to the Knowledge Hub. The summary should therefore be treated as an important, stand-alone document that provides a succinct description of the project. Although sections of the main report are likely to form the basis of the summary, these do need to be summarised rather than simply used in full length. Ensure Section B is no longer than 400 words and flows through the SARA model using the headings provided. The summary should not contain diagrams or charts. It should fit onto one side of A4.*

### Scanning:


Historically an area in North London has experienced on-street sex working. Police receive regular complaints from the community of people engaged in sex acts and sex litter being left in public areas. Female residents complained of being approached by males seeking sex. Previous police attempts to reduce the volume of sex workers have been enforcement led but had no noticeable effect in numbers. A lack of interactions by police with sex workers meant there was poor intelligence gathering on the exploiters of the sex workers and missed safeguarding opportunities.

### Analysis:

The reason that police enforcement proved ineffectual was explored. Sporadic activity and incomplete data meant that the scale and the motivation to be a sex worker was not fully understood. Two demographics of workers were identified; individuals with a drug dependency and foreign nationals. Both have complex needs and required specialised support from outreach teams. These teams had disengaged from police due to national guidelines of safeguarding of sex workers not being adhered to and police actions disrupting their work. This created a disjointed policing response which undermined the efforts to engage and divert sex workers.

### Response:

In July 2021 a team was created to focus on safeguarding and changing sex worker behaviours. Allocated time for outreach was agreed with no police activity to assist in their work. Regular monthly meeting between police and outreach teams were arranged to improve communication and address mutual concerns. Work was completed with community groups to explain the issues of



policing sex workers and manage expectations. Tactics targeting males seeking sex workers were developed and awareness seminars run to reduce re-offending by males. Intelligence gathering targeting exploiters was introduced and sex workers provided testimonials to provide insight to police about their experiences.

#### Assessment:

The operation has identified ninety six on-street sex workers. Together with outreach teams nine workers have successfully exited. All drug dependent workers have received drug interventions and an emergency housing pathway has been established with the local authority. One hundred and twenty clients have attended an awareness seminar with no one re-offending. Intelligence on human-trafficking and exploitation has been gathered and presented to specialist units for further work. Displacement of workers due to enforcement from a neighbouring Boroughs has been challenged and stopped. A twelve percent year on year reduction can be evidenced. The operation has been highlighted by academics and sex work leads as being evidence of best practise.

Word Count: 398

## SECTION C - Application description

*Describe the project in no more than 4,000 words under the stated headings. **Please make sure you use the guidance notes while completing this form.***

#### Scanning:

The Upper Edmonton and Northumberland Park Wards are areas in North London which have historically experienced on-street sex working. Both wards are classified by council data as high crime areas and are recognised as being in the top 5% of deprived areas in the UK. Within these areas there are two streets, (High Road N17 and Fore Street N18) that are used by sex workers between 1900-0400 hrs every night of the year.

This sex work has a significant impact on the local communities due to it being a highly visible. Individuals wait on street corners for clients and conduct sex acts in residential areas such as parks, car-parks and alleyways. Residents in the area attended community meetings with Neighbourhood Teams complaining of the lack of police action and the environmental effects that sex work has in the area such as used condoms and wet wipes.

“@metpoliceuk - More needs to done with the prostitute issue on Langhedge lane. 10 women waiting on the corner. Us residents are fed up (Twitter complaint June 2021).

The police would receive regular complaints from Councillors, MP's and businesses. The residents would see the same sex workers night after night on the same street corners. Female residents stated that they had been repeatedly approached by males looking for sex which caused them to be scared to go out at night on their own.

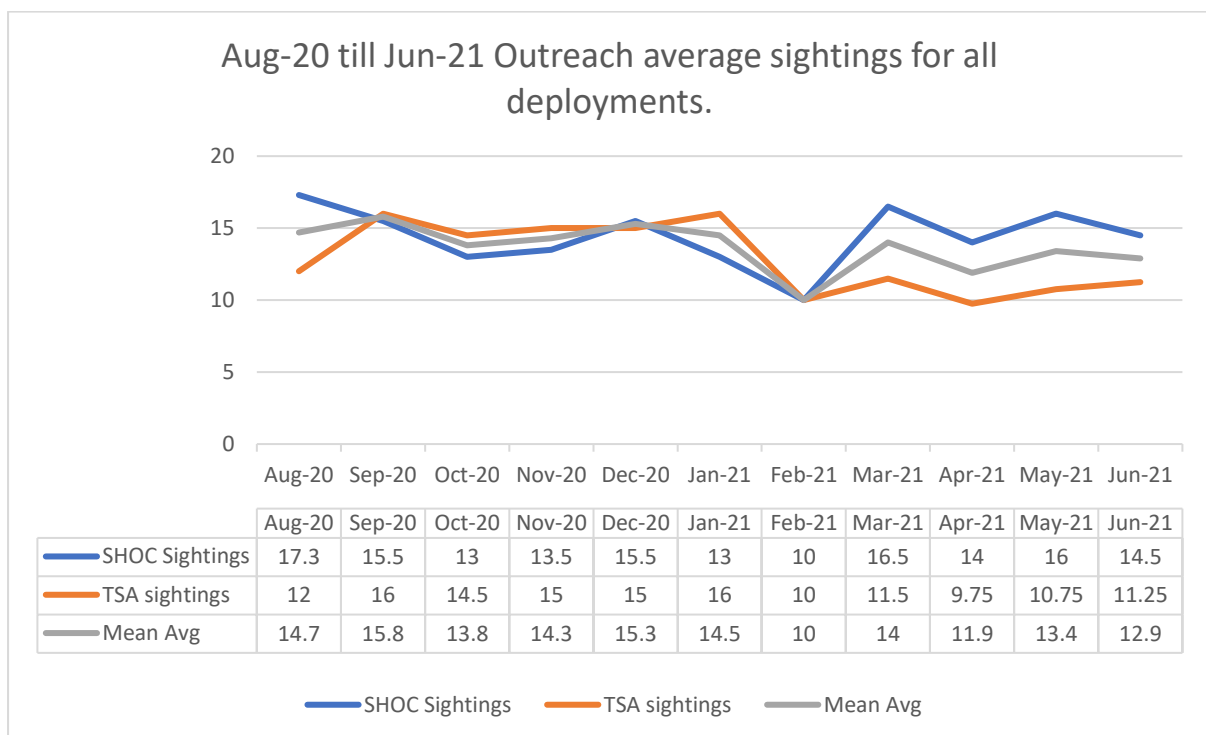


In recent history the area has experienced two murders of sex workers; the latest being in 2020 where three sex workers were targeted by a male who murdered one sex worker and committed rape, attempted murder and kidnap against the two other sex workers.

The enforcement of sex workers meant that there was very little intelligence provided by the sex workers and it was strongly suspected that crimes against them were not being reported due a sense of distrust and fear of the police.


Between June 2020 –December 2020 the North Area Senior Leadership Team deployed an enforcement team tasked with the policing on-street sex workers. Fifty five individuals were identified from the one hundred and fifty five sex working street cautions issued between June 2020 and December 2020. It showed two distinct categories of street sex worker. They were foreign nationals coming to the country and being involved in sex work and Class A drug dependent subjects using sex work to feed a drug addiction. No data was recorded on daily sightings of sex workers by police during this time.

In order to see the daily scale of the problem, data was obtained from The Salvation Army and SHOC/CLASH, two different outreach services. The figures showed the individuals accessing street outreach services. Although not an accurate number of actual working sex workers per night it gave us an approximation of potential numbers.



Policies and attitudes towards policing sex workers has dramatically changed. Directions from The College of Policing are that sex workers represent a vulnerable community that should not be criminalised .This change in policing style had not been implemented on North Area.

*“The police focus will be on reducing vulnerability and criminality. We will seek to maximise safety and increase trust and confidence. This will encourage those in the sex industry to report crimes and abuse.*



*This approach will shift the focus onto safeguarding those being harmed in the sex industry. Intelligence and information should be shared between forces and relevant partners to maximise safety and target those who exploit or cause harm.” Extract from College of Policing guidelines on working with sex workers.*

In July 2021 another dedicated team was established. It was led by an experienced sergeant with a proven record in problem solving and twenty years’ experience in policing sex worker issues. Prior to deploying, the team undertook a table-top problem solving exercise. This involved the examination of historic police data from previous enforcements, viewing of the different national policies and guidelines of both the police and partner agencies, seeking literature written by outreach services and different academic papers written about tackling street sex work.

### Analysis:

The starting point on trying to understand the issues around the local street sex working profile map was examining the effectiveness of police interactions with the sex workers and analysing past interactions with clients and suspected exploiters. Three simple questions were asked; what was the purpose of the interaction? What did the interaction achieve? Did the interaction fit with the ethos of the national policing guidelines? This work highlighted that past policing solely relied on enforcement models and that important safeguarding opportunities had been overlooked.

Police data showed a bias towards enforcement activities. Arrest figures were used as showing successful outcomes. During the June 2020 and December 2020 deployment twenty six arrests were made for soliciting offences. This was presented as a positive police intervention with figures of a 96% conviction rate quoted to stakeholders and residents.

The actual impact of these arrests when viewed in terms of court results showed the sex workers arrested were either issued a fine of between £100 - £200; or even the fine paid as time served in police custody. Often it was the same sex workers who were repeatedly arrested. This created a “revolving door effect,” which is when a sex worker is arrested, prosecuted and fined but is then required to return to the street to pay for the fine

A pricing exercise was conducted on the average cost in staffing and hours. One arrest for soliciting would involve the issuing of two street cautions, the actual arrest, time spent on paperwork and the cost of custody space to house the subject on remand until morning court.

This equated to 16 hours staffing time per arrest procedure at a cost approximately £550 (Including custody staff). A further cost of housing the subject till court would average £400 per night. The total estimated staffing hours was 400 hrs at cost of £25,000. The arrests had no visible impact on sex worker numbers on the street.

A consequence of the targeting of sex workers for arrest was the alienation of the outreach teams working in the area. The targeting of sex workers caused an environment of fear of the police and interrupted the regular planned scheduled outreach street interventions. Headlines such as “Clampdowns on sex workers” and “Zero Tolerance on prostitution” were used by police to describe actions to stakeholders. Operations included work with immigration enforcement departments and led to street sweeps which voided months of outreach interventions and referrals. Outreach teams withdrew from communication with the police, feeling frustrated that police did not value their experience or input.



The lack of a co-ordinated plan to deal with male clients meant there was very little positive action to target the demand for sex workers. In the two years previous to July 2021 three operations were run targeting these males. The operations required specialist officers and staffing levels of over twenty five officers per night to successfully deploy. Difficulties with the Crown Prosecution Service around the presentation of evidence at court meant they would only allow out of court disposals and would not support charging the arrested males. With an estimated minimum of between 30-50 males every night seeking sexual services in the area these thirty six arrests represent a tiny fraction of the actual number of males seeking sexual services. The tactic was unsustainable, not cost effective and had no discernible impact on the volume of sex workers.

By creating a crime script we mapped out the behaviours, locational needs and different motivations of individuals performing street sex work.

#### Motivation. Money

- Exploitation by a third person.
- Driven by addiction .
- Poverty.

#### Location choice:

- Visible on foot / vehicle traffic. -Locational need
- In established area where clients seek sex -Locational need
- Areas where clients can be taken nearby. -Locational need
- A venue with a night time economy. -Locational need
- A corner / area not occupied by other demographic of sex worker / group of sex workers. -Locational need

#### Presentation:

- Easy vehicle parking / stopping points - Locational need
- Clothing and actions showing individual is seeking clients – Behaviour / Act

#### Initial Contact:

- Verbal exchange confirming available for services “Business?” – Behaviour /Act
- Risk assessing the client. – Behaviour /Act
- Price negotiation for different services - Behaviour / Act
- Agreement on location of act. - Behaviour /Act

#### Travelling / location of services:

- Walk / car to location of act. - Behaviour /Act
- Privacy for act. – Locational need
- Close location to maximise volume of customers. – Locational need

#### Act:

- Confirmation of services requested. - Behaviour /Act
- Payment for act. - Behaviour /Act
- Use / Application of condoms – wet wipes - Behaviour /Act

#### Post Act:



- Removal and disposal of condoms – wipes
- Client leaving
- Return to position for next client.
- Behaviour /Act
- Behaviour /Act
- Behaviour /Act

This mapped out how we how the police or outreach teams could alter the core script and positively impact the problem. The use of the problem solving triangle was then used to examine each behaviour and locational need. An example of this is the problem of sex litter left in an area of a sex act.

Person effected by act (Victim) – Business / Residents. – Providing council clean-up number – Reporting to police.

Subject causing issue (offender) – Client / sex worker. – Police / Outreach providing message that complaint has been raised and area is subject to increased police scrutiny.

Location – Community areas / parks /alleyways (Environment) – Outreach teams providing sex workers nappy sacks to remove sex litter after act.

This simple solution led to some sex workers actually collecting all the used condoms in the area they used and sweeping and bleaching the area prior to them working.

From this problem solving work, six aims and objectives for Operation Boxster were created.

- Reduce on-street sex workers within the border areas of Enfield and Haringey utilising outreach and targeted enforcement against behaviours which cause community complaints.
- Minimise displacement of sex work to other areas of London.
- Identify the different vulnerabilities of sex workers and work with outreach and help provide bespoke support and exit opportunities.
- Identify human trafficking and modern slavery linked to sex work and other violent crime.
- To decrease the impact that sex workers cause the local community.
- To identify, arrest and educate males engaging in Kerb Crawling to reduce demand.

## Response:

The response phase of this project started in July 2021 with the creation of a dedicated team of officers working a bespoke shift pattern. The guidelines of working with sex workers greatly impacted how we approached the problem solving process and placed limitations on how these reductions could be made. Our analysis showed that the main motivations for engaging in sex work is money – whether to fund a drug habit, or as part of exploitation of the sex worker by a third party, or situational poverty. The legal penalties for sex work currently do not outweigh the benefit to workers being a fine only offence. Target hardening of the environment was prohibitively costly and easy circumvented by moving to the next street corner / alleyway.

We changed the focus of enforcement away from the sex workers to their clients. The males purchasing sex are responsible for the demand, pose the most significant risk to the street workers, and cause distress to female residents. We devised tactics utilising recently introduced Body Worn Cameras which enable officers to collect overwhelming evidence of sex workers and clients engaged in sexual transactions. Officers are able to confirm the male’s details on the street and arrange for an interview at a police station at a later date. This tactic has removed the costly and time consuming custody process with a pre-arranged interview with solicitors, appropriate adults and interpreters if required. This has led to officers spending significantly more time on the foot-print.

The case disposal of these males depended if they were suitable for a conditional caution. Males with no previous convictions for violence against women or girls; or do not have previous cautions or



convictions for soliciting offences are placed on an awareness course run by an outreach charity Street Lights UK. The offender is offered a one day seminar which explains the dangers of using sex workers both legally and to their own sexual health. The male has to contribute £250-00 to the cost of the course which is paid directly to the charity. This money is then used by the charity to fund their outreach work. Any male who denied the offence or is not eligible for a caution is charged and sent to court.

The past poor treatment of outreach teams by policing operations meant bridges needed to be built and trust re-earned. It is accepted that outreach teams possess specialist skills and experience in sign-posting sex workers to exiting opportunities and this was not the role or responsibility of the police service. A multi-agency meeting took place using the data collected and a frank exchange on how past police practises had caused displacement and actually increased the risks to sex workers. A structured delivery of outreach teams and services was created with set times and days of week when police would withdraw from the area to allow them to build relationships with sex workers in an environment without fear of arrest.


These teams are able to offer:

- Support through a harm reduction and safety first model.
- Trained professionals who offer non-judgemental pastoral care.
- All agencies have a safeguarding matrix that ensures that concerns are identified and strategies put in place.
- Monthly meetings with officers from Op Boxster in which fast time safeguarding needs are relayed to outreach teams.
- All agencies know how to make National Ugly Mug reports on dangerous clients and now trust the Police that any reports of crime reported to Op Boxster will be investigated
- NHS Sexual Health Service that partners with 'Find and Treat' to provide local, trusted and immediate sexual health screening, alongside clinic drop-ins.

Salvation Army Outreach includes:

- Professionals attending from drug and alcohol, rough sleeping and sexual health services. They
- Supporting individuals to appointments concerning sexual health, housing and drug and alcohol.
- An Emergency Housing Pathway developed between outreach teams and the local council for those who are homeless.
- Attendance and advocacy at Professional/MARAC/MARAM/ High Risk Panels concerning vulnerable individuals met on outreach. A qualified Independent Sexual Violence Advisor funded by the local council after lobbying from police and outreach teams.

The demand from residents and council representatives was for a sustained response from the police. An enhanced police response was devised with repeat complainants being visited and spoken to personally by the team. A follow up text service detailing the team's patrols and results of work carried out was then sent to interested parties. A presentation was created and delivered to resident groups explaining the limitations of current legislation and the volume of police activity and work being conducted. This led to improved public confidence and an understanding of the work being undertaken.



Complaints against individual sex workers were acted on and the individual was warned how their behaviours were causing community tensions. This message was then reinforced by outreach teams in an attempt to change the behaviours which were complained about. If these warnings were ignored then the considered use of Community Protection Notices were used against the sex worker. Some restrictions were placed on the sex worker which were localised and focused on the original complaint. It was important that any restrictions applied did not affect the ability of the sex worker to engage with the outreach teams. Applying large punitive banning areas were proven to cause displacement to other areas.

### Assessment:


By working with the outreach teams we have now established a strong methodology when trying to change sex workers behaviours and encourages diversion at all stages of police interactions. This co-operation has helped outreach teams introduce an emergency housing pathway with the local authority which has been able to house homeless sex workers in crisis. This offers immediate support for drug dependency, benefit issues, immigration status and sexual health screening. Thirteen individuals have been housed in this way with all of them accessing drug support. The “safe space” created by removing policing during street outreach sessions has led to all Class A dependent sex workers accessing drug support. On three occasions sex workers have disclosed they were subject to potential trafficking and exploitation to either outreach workers or police officers. The unit has been able to collect the individual and place them in a place of safety, provide immediate safeguarding and complete the required national referrals.

A continuous dialogue with residents and complainants led to targeted enforcement with the focus of changing behaviours rather than criminalisation. This can be evidenced by when we received numerous complaints concerning sex workers working on a street corner outside a primary school next to a bus terminus. The local MP and local residents both complained about their next presence next to a school and the sex litter left behind near to school grounds. After numerous warnings by police and outreach teams, enforcement had to be implemented. Six sex workers were issued Community Warning Notices which led to arrests for breaching the notices and resulted in court sanctions. The sex workers left the immediate area and relocated to a less contentious corner to work. This enforcement removed the only discreet area which clients in vehicles could pick up a sex worker without leaving their car. This had the fortuitous effect of reducing the amount of vehicle pick-ups of sex workers in the area.

**“Having lived at Rivers Apartments since it was built in 2015, I saw first-hand the really positive impact Op. Boxster had on the area. The work of all the officers was genuinely appreciated by the local residents and the use of direct texting with the team really did help to build a positive relationship between the police and the community. – Cannon Road Residents Association.”**

The consistent presence of officers known to the sex workers has developed a trust and belief any crimes committed against them will be properly investigated by police. This trust has led to disclosures which have led to arrests for robbery, impersonating a police officer, drug supply and possession of offensive weapons. Several sex workers have willingly provided officers testimonials about their life on the street and the impact that the team were having on their safety.

**“Don’t think I haven’t noticed the difference in the policing down there. I’m not just saying this. You guys are genuine, really genuine. It’s one of the reasons I am here and I will do anything I can**



**to help. You guys are different. You're still police, you know what I mean, still the feds - the old enemy. But there is a whole different approach with you guys which is very refreshing, you will be able to break down a few of the girls out there. " – Extract from testimonial of Class A dependent sex worker**

Ninety six individuals have been identified in the last eighteen months as being active sex workers with sixty percent having a drug dependency. Due to the joint work with outreach teams, nine sex workers have exited sex work in the last eighteen months. This is compared to one sex worker exiting in the previous five years (Data from The Salvation Army.) £2,500 funding has been obtained through the local authority to train and deploy an Independent Violence Support Advisor specifically for sex workers. This service will provide sex workers an advocate when navigating the criminal justice system and assists police investigations when trying to communicate with individuals who live a chaotic lifestyle.

The changing of enforcement tactics directed at clients has resulted in 152 arrests made for soliciting a sex worker. 118 of these males have attended the "You Choose" awareness course run by Street lights UK raising over £25,000 to support their work. To date there is a 100% non-reoffending rate on the males that have attended the course. This has had a significant impact on the volume of clients in the area.

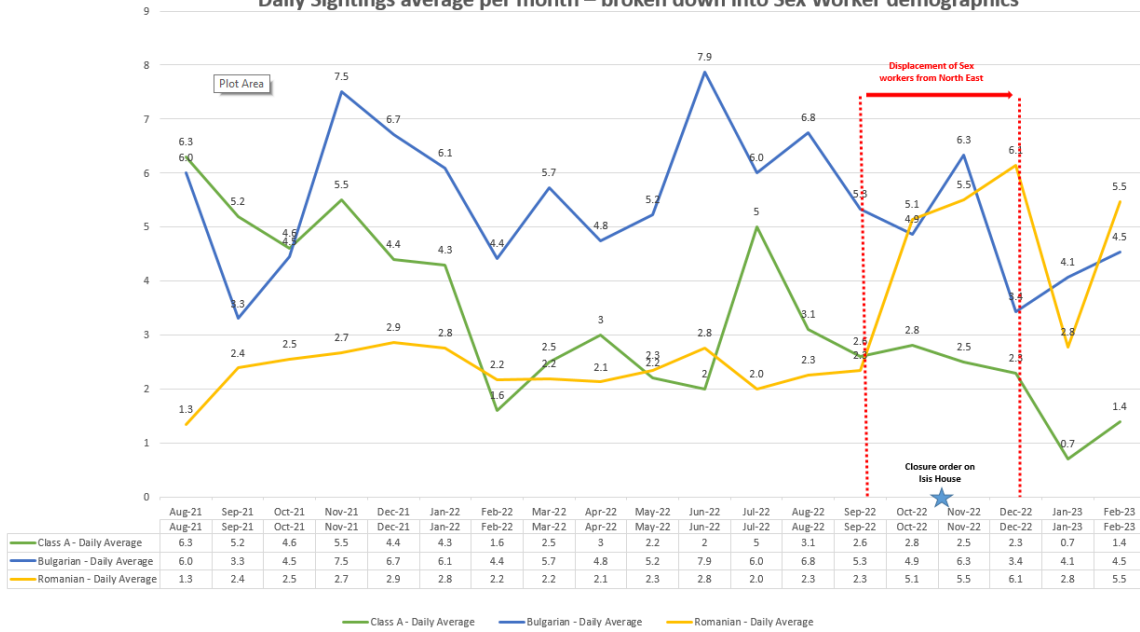
**"I am making less money as the number of customers has dropped. I feel the most comfortable talking to you officers as I know you well, and I can recognise the car when I see it. I feel a lot safer on the streets as I know you are always there if I need you" – Eastern European Sex worker testimonial.**

Several high harm offenders have been identified by officers soliciting sex workers. These have included two serving police officers who were arrested; one of whom has been dismissed with the other awaiting a decision on criminal and discipline matters.

In July 2022 North Area experienced a significant displacement of Romanian sex workers after a neighbouring borough implemented an enforcement led operation. This involved the issuing of Community Protection Notices which banned them from conducting street sex work completely within the borders of this borough. This tactic meant that twelve Romanian sex workers moved onto North Area. We were able to challenge this enforcement and show the displacement and risks that this neighbouring borough caused to both the sex workers and our ongoing work. Several of the sex workers who were displaced had complex drug and mental health issues and some were discovered by our unit as being victims of trafficking. We were able to evidence the volume of the displacement and for the first time and present evidence based arguments on the effects of enforcement tactics against sex workers. Officers from the Central Professional Improvement Command who has overall responsibility for the policing of sex workers in London were able to challenge and stop the Borough's operation.

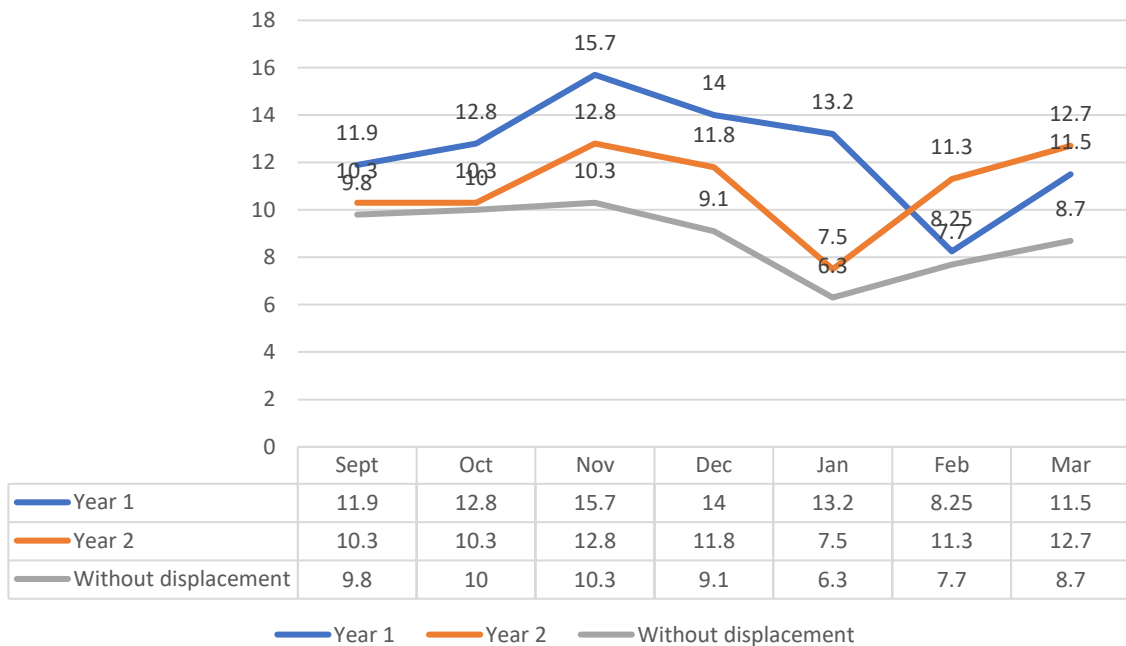


Daily Sightings average per month – broken down into Sex Worker demographics



By using average daily total sex worker sightings per month, we are able to show a 12% year on year decrease in sex workers numbers since the new approach was introduced. (This figure would have been a 29% decrease without the displacement from the neighbouring boroughs enforcement operation.) The largest decrease has been in Class A dependent sex workers. In the first six months of the deployment they averaged five sightings per deployment compared to just two per deployment in the last six months – a reduction of 60%.

Year on year comparison of total Daily average - Sept 21-Mar23 / Sept 22 - March 23





For the first time the important work of discovering evidence of people trafficking and the exploitation of sex workers on North Area has been achieved. This intelligence has proven organised crime networks involvement and has been presented to specialist units who have accepted responsibility for developing operations and enforcement tactics. This work is ongoing and not suitable for publication in this document. To date three different operations have been accepted by these units due to the quality of intelligence and data provided to them.

Over the last eighteen months Operation Boxster has utilised problem solving tactics to tackle an entrenched street sex market. With the help of our partners we have completely changed the Metropolitan Police Service working practises around policing street sex workers. The work has been presented at international and internal seminars for examination. We have collected data to evidence reductions in sex work and increased the safety and trust in both the community and sex workers. The operation originally focused on sex working being an antisocial crime and has developed in to important safeguarding operation which assists the most vulnerable and targets high risk criminality.

**“I am the operational lead for Sex Work and provide tactical and policy advice to Supt Paul Stubbs, Lead Responsible Officer (LRO) for Sex Work. We were provided with a comprehensive overview of Op Boxster before we conducted a drive round to help put this important initiative into context. I have no hesitation in highlighting Op Boxster as being MPS best practice in relation to the policing of 'on-street' sex work – Inspector Davis – Continuous Policing and Improvement Command.**

**Word Count: 3976**

## **SECTION D - Endorsement by senior representative**

### **13. Please insert a letter or email from an endorsing representative.**

*The endorsing letter or email needs to confirm the senior representative has authorised the submission of your application. A hard copy is not required.*

I have reviewed this application submitted and can confirm this is an accurate representation of the work conducted by the joint work of Operation Boxster (MPS) and the outreach service on North Area over an eighteen month period.

The principles of safeguarding and diversion displayed by the unit have been recognised as an example of best practice and effective policing in dealing with this complex and difficult social issue.

I fully endorse this application for submission to be reviewed as an example of excellent problem solving.

Superintendent Simon Beardwell – North Area – Neighbourhood Team.

Edmonton Police Station, 462 Fore Street, Enfield , N9 0PW

[Simon.Beardwell@met.police.uk](mailto:Simon.Beardwell@met.police.uk)

