

## Written evidence submitted by ClientEye

### About ClientEye

The ClientEye app is a global safety scheme for sex workers, designed by sex workers. It enables sex workers to make anonymous reports about dangerous clients, and abusive or threatening behaviour, to fellow sex workers. Integration with a smartphone means that if a user receives a phone call from a number linked to abusive behaviour, immediate on-screen alerts will be displayed.

ClientEye has 10,000+ monthly UK users, who file an average of 15,000 reports per month, which in turn lead to around 575,000+ safety notifications delivered to sex workers on a monthly basis. We work closely with police forces across the country, facilitating contact between officers and those who file reports, helping them to detect, deter and prosecute perpetrators.

ClientEye has significant concerns about two proposed amendments to the Crime and Policing Bill: New Clause 1: Commercial sexual exploitation by a third party (NC1), and New Clause 2: Commercial sexual exploitation (NC2). **We therefore want to ensure that members of the Committee are aware of the significant harm that these amendments would cause to sex workers in the UK, and urge them to oppose them.**

### NC1: Commercial sexual exploitation by a third party

As a tool developed by sex workers, for sex workers, we are firmly rooted within the sex worker community, and have significant concerns that this amendment conflates commercial sexual exploitation with sex work carried out by individuals acting under their own free will.

We are deeply concerned that the language and scope of this proposed amendment risks criminalising essential harm reduction and safety infrastructure like ClientEye. Criminalising those who “facilitate,” or “assist” sex workers in carrying out sex work would criminalise our service, despite our explicit purpose being the protection of sex workers, not the facilitation of commercial sexual activity.

Under the proposed NC1, section (1)(b)(iii), it would become an offence to digitally display or publish any advertisement related to the facilitation or assisting of sex work. This would mean that we would be unable to advertise our services to sex workers. If harm reduction platforms are forced to shut down or operate under fear of prosecution, the only outcome will be increased violence, isolation, and exploitation of the very people this bill claims to protect.

In addition to this, we know that the overwhelming majority of sex workers use adult services websites (ASWs) to advertise their own services and access support services – such as ClientEye. Criminalising these platforms would only serve to drive sex workers onto the streets, or into hidden and unregulated spaces, where they would suffer a greater degree of harm.

Sex workers must be able to screen clients, report violence anonymously, and receive real-time alerts. Any law that criminalises or chills these life-saving tools puts people in danger. Committee members should ensure that well-intentioned legislation to tackle exploitation does not extend to those carrying out sex work of their own volition, thereby endangering sex workers by dismantling their self-protection systems.

NC2: Commercial sexual exploitation

This amendment seeks to make it an offence to pay another person for sex. We know that all sex worker representative organisations strongly oppose this approach and see no need to add further evidence here, save to note that ClientEye urges members of the Committee to oppose this amendment, and take heed of the warnings that it will only lead to greater harm to those carrying out sex work.

ENDS