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Rt Hon. Tessa Jowell, MP
House of Commons
London
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CTS reference: M3817/9
Your reference: 01090720

12 MAR 2009

Thank you for your letter of 27 February.

Reducing the demand for prostitution is one of the key aims of the Government's Action Plan on Human Trafficking and the Government's Co-ordinated Prostitution Strategy. Earlier this year the Government launched a review to explore what specific measures could be taken in order to reduce demand for prostitution. The Review's findings were published on 19 November in "Tackling the Demand for Prostitution: A Review".

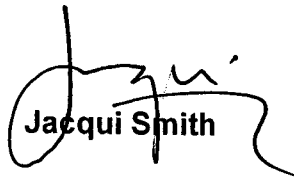
The Review concluded that there was evidence to support the development of a new offence to criminalise those who are found to be paying for sex with a person who is being controlled for someone else's gain. It is proposed that the new offence should be a strict liability offence, so that it will be irrelevant whether the sex buyer knew that the prostitute was controlled or not. It is also proposed that the maximum penalty should be a fine of £1000, so that it is in line with other offences which target demand for prostitution, such as kerb-crawling.

The Review also recommended measures that will allow the police to seek orders to close down premises where sexual exploitation has taken place, and the running of a marketing campaign with the aim of raising awareness amongst

sex-buyers of the realities of human trafficking. The Government has committed itself to implementing these recommendations as soon as possible.

We are also committed to introducing other measures arising from the Co-ordinated Prostitution Strategy, including the introduction of a referral order. This will be available to courts as an alternative to a fine and allow for the provision of support to those who wish to leave prostitution, rather than simply applying a punitive approach.

We will implement these proposed measures as soon as possible; and we will continue to encourage services and schemes that seek to divert individuals away from the criminal justice system and into routes out of prostitution.

Yes

Jacquie Smith