

York students turn to sex work to fund degrees

Most in industry 'underground' but escort agencies boast 'lots of new students'

By Neil Johnston and Fiona Parker
Tuesday 22 October 2013



Dozens of university students in York have turned to sex work as they struggle to fund their degrees, *Nouse* can reveal.

As many as 30 students in York are operating as escorts, and eight agencies in the area were able to provide student escorts. One agency said they had up to seven students available.

Nouse has found that all but two escort agencies contacted in the York area were able to offer students to clients. Several students in York and the surrounding area have also been advertising themselves independently as escorts, including some male students.

One student who has worked as an escort in the York area, made £300 to £600 a day, and would do one or two days a week. The student is still an escort and when asked for a phone interview was unable to because, her housemates were "at home and they didn't know."

YUSU Welfare Officer, George Offer said he found it "really concerning that our students are being commodified and offered as products."

A *Nouse* reporter posed as a student looking for an escort, asking specifically if there were students available.

In many cases *Nouse* was provided with detailed information including pictures, with the student's face blurred out.



photo credit: Deniooo

One agency said not to bother looking on the website as, “lots of the new ones are students”. He said that as a result their profiles weren’t yet online. Escorts being advertised could make £150 an hour and as much as £1000 a night.

Student escorts are going back and forth between York and Leeds, making it difficult to attach escorts to specific institutions.

Agencies did say they had student escorts when Nouse reporters asked about getting into the industry, and if there were any others studying at university who worked with them.

The agencies contacted said that other students working for them were able to cope with the workload on top of their degree.

‘A good way to pay for your degree’

From this dialogue *Nouse* was able to obtain more information about the specifics of sex work in York, including earnings and the split between the escort and their agency. These indicate that the availability of student escorts was genuine, and not just a marketing ploy.

“If you’re polite enough you could make £1500 a week for a few nights, or £500 or £600 a night. It’s a good way to pay for your degree,” an agency told the reporter.

One agency said that out of the £150 charge for an hour they would take £40 while another agency stated a similar arrangement. ‘You’ll come away with £110’, they said.

A charity who runs a helpline for those involved in sex-work confirmed to Nouse that they had received calls from students in the Yorkshire area.

A spokesperson for The English Collective of Prostitutes (ECOP) said they had received calls from the area from students, and also calls from partners of students worried they would need to go into “prostitution” to fund their studies.

They added that it was difficult to put a number on the situation as “people are very underground.”

A spokesperson for Rape Crisis also commented, “It stands to reason that there will be an issue in York”, in reference to student sex work.

The reporter posing as a student interested in becoming an escort raised their concerns about working alongside a degree, and asked if there were any other students, to which several agencies responded

“yes”.

Sex work opportunities ‘Increasingly attractive’

Several charities in the York area which provide support for sexual assault in the York area took three days to pick up the phone while campaigners from the National Sex Worker Project told Nouse that there wasn’t much support in York for escorts.

Although some of the sites advertise themselves as providing a companion, many simply state a range of sexual services online.

George Offer expressed his fears about students getting involved in sex work.

He said: “Personally, I believe that the sex work is exploitative, and it’s really concerning that our students are being commodified and offered as products.

With extortionate academic and accommodation fees, students need to find jobs which pay enough and fit round their degrees, so opportunities like this are going to become increasingly attractive.”

He added: “I strongly encourage any student working as an escort to use organisations like ECOP if they need support and want to get out, and I really want to remind everyone that the University has a financial support unit for students, accessed through the Student Support Hub, which can always help students when they’re desperate.”

If you have any issues you would like Nouse to look into, please contact investigations@nouse.co.uk



24 comments

Lucy

22 Oct '13 at 12:22 pm

What’s the story here? Some agencies in York and Leeds advertise students who have chosen to participate in sex work?

Reads a bit more like an advert if i’m honest, if I hadn’t considered sex work before I definitely am now.

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Mr Cynical

22 Oct '13 at 12:30 pm

I must say, the link between York students taking up this work for the reason that they need to fund their degrees is tenuous at best. From what I’ve read here it was from one phone call where ‘The English Collective of Prostitutes (ECOP) said they had received calls from the area from students, and also calls from partners of students worried they would need to go into “prostitution” to fund their studies.’

Firstly, the number of calls isn’t specified, so I’m guessing very few calls were actually made and secondly it’s “From the area”; so they’re not necessarily York students.

Also, this story doesn’t really mean anything without a context of how many students were involved in sex work before. It’s only really news if it’s a clear trend of a significant number of students taking up the work.

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McBain

22 Oct '13 at 1:22 pm

This all seems predicated on there being a problem with sex work or being an escort. If people want to sell their body then they can do what they want, especially if they're making up to a grand a night. With that in mind, I propose an alternative headline: "Students Seek Employment To Fund Degree". The horror.

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McBain

22 Oct '13 at 1:28 pm

Also a hearty "lol" at the old lie that "academic" (presumably tuition?) fees have any effect on your current financial situation. Accommodation & cost of living though, fair enough.

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Jeswin 'Fernando' Buttercheski

22 Oct '13 at 2:32 pm

Phwooooooaaar, id like to wrap my legs around that.

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Katie

22 Oct '13 at 2:35 pm

This is really bad, but I'm not too surprised that Yorks having its issues. Friends have gone to Manchester University and one herself has admitted to funding living and tuition costs by prostituting her body. I hate to think of how much more she'd have to work if she was affected by the rise in tuition fees. The worse thing is people thinking that this is 'normal' and 'fine' so long as the student wants to. I find that quite offensive and quite ridiculous tbh. If they were involved in it themselves they'd soon realise it's not fine or normal and that the girl involved is likely to develop emotional trauma if not physical in some circumstances. THINK!

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Jess

22 Oct '13 at 2:43 pm

Thats very true Katie. Some sense! People should accept its not fine and okay but is damaging. The truth is it wouldn't be as harmful if done a few times during the three years but prostituting becomes an addiction...and with that sort of money I can understand why. Really sad

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McBain

22 Oct '13 at 4:41 pm

Personal agency & sex positivity vs ewww no don't do that, it's bad for you, it's an addiction, you're likely to be traumatised.

I think the attitudes expressed in this thread & article towards sex work are offensive personally.

Also they also said male students are doing it. Also also tuition fees have nothing to do with it blah blah broken record.

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Jac

22 Oct '13 at 8:30 pm

York students are very privileged. Don't pretend to know about the world of the underground sex industry. Its kinda cringy tbh. Fair play on Katie and Jess for recognizing the dangers atleast.

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N.A

22 Oct '13 at 10:35 pm

How many times do you need to mention Nouse in one article?! Eight, apparently... Also, this would have been a far more interesting story if you'd actually managed to speak properly to a York student who's been doing this. As it stands, there is no proof that anyone from this uni is actually an escort, and the human interest angle, which is the most engaging for a story like this, is non-existent.

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Norma Jean Almodovar

23 Oct '13 at 6:53 am

Can you imagine how harmful it will be to those who profit off making student loans, loans which turn innocent students into victims of debt bondage... Wherein they will be indebted to the banks for the rest of their lives, trying to make payments on their loans while working at some menial labor job for minimum wage, most likely needing to work at least two jobs to pay the bills AND their student loan!!! Oh the horror of it all! Providing pleasure for a significant sum of money is so...harmful because we know that sex itself is inherently harmful to women.. Just ask those rad fems if you don't believe me...women run screaming when they see a naked man because those dickies of theirs are so AWFUL! Sex work is far less harmful than working as a law enforcement officer, a cab driver, joining the military where rape is running rampant... Why not allow grown women to decide for themselves what is or isn't harmful to them? Because you just can't keep your nose out of other peoples business?

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Langwith Bystander

23 Oct '13 at 2:22 pm

York students whoring themselves for commercial gain is nothing new. Does anyone remember how Matt Darling used to work for Tokyo?

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Tanti Baci

23 Oct '13 at 2:47 pm

hi

[▲ Report](#)

The Insider

23 Oct '13 at 4:30 pm

The Insider fondly remembers Matt 'Two-Dip' "Dingus" Darling's exploits in the Tokyo queue. If you had a pussy and/or a pulse, you normally got a special fast track to the bar, before an afterparty invite to meet his purple headed warrior

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Sceptic

24 Oct '13 at 1:58 pm

Does anyone else think the agencies may have been exaggerating or lying when telling the researchers about how many students they have working for them? If they think they're going to make a sale I'm sure they'd say they have a lot of student escorts so as to give the customer what he wants, because by doing that they can make £40 an hour.

As for saying to the potential escort they already have lots of students, I'm sure they would do anything to

get her on their books because that's another £40 every time she sees a client.

Whilst prostitution itself is legal, profiting from prostituting someone else isn't. Don't expect someone who breaks the law to be perfectly honest with you.

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SS 25 Oct '13 at 5:44 pm

To think these women will be mothers in the future, makes me sick!

This is happening in every single university, no moral, no class, no dignity.

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Norma Jean Almodovar 25 Oct '13 at 8:18 pm

SS- what do you have against providing pleasure to others? Women have been doing this for thousands and thousands of years. If you are a believer in the christian religion, the you should know how many prostitutes are in the lineage of Jesus...

Your comment that 'tuition expenses' aren't an excuse because they don't pay it until they graduate shows your utter ignorance - IT HAS TO BE REPAID... those getting a college education through student loans are being debt bonded FOR LIFE... what happens if ALL they can get when they graduate is a job as a cleaner? How long do you suppose it will take them to repay those loans?

It is about NOT wanting to enter the world of employment with an anvil around their necks. Get over it.. Grow up.

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SS 25 Oct '13 at 5:47 pm

Why don't these women just get a part time job and keep their dignity!

Being a cleaner gives you more dignity than being a prostitute.

And don't use the excuse about tuition fees, because you don't even pay it with your own money till you graduate.

This is all about funding your expensive life style at university.

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Average by-stander 1 Nov '13 at 2:10 am

Don't judge what other people choose to do with themselves, that is their prerogative. As a society, if they need help , we should try help them. If they are happy with what they do, we should be happy for them.

We all choose our paths in life, allow them to choose theirs!

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Working girl 8 Nov '13 at 7:50 pm

I am an escort based in York and started working when I was at university. I am curious to the agencies that you called as most escorts working here are independent. A lot of agencies that list girls working in

York are actually Leeds based and they drive the girls over. I have never felt ashamed, upset or stressed about my work. I am extremely happy in fact, I get decide when I want to work, how long for and who I see and who I don't and I make as much as most people make in a month in one day. I didn't go into this line of work due to worry of tuition fees I did it because I wanted to and most independent girls have not been forced to work in any way.

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SS 26 Nov '13 at 11:31 am

@Norma Jean Almodovar

Are you seriously stupid or are you just putting it on?

Just because women have been selling their bodies for thousands of years that does not make it ok! People have been killing each other for thousands of years, so that makes it ok?

You only supporting women selling their bodies because you are woman!, it shows what kind of a person you are. Get some dignity woman, it will make you a better person!

Stop your hysteria about student loans, you only pay a small amount, and thats when you earn over 21000 and no one is going to come and put you on the street because you can't pay it back!

You all want something for nothing, wake up, noting is free in this world!

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Norma Jean Almodovar 26 Nov '13 at 5:22 pm

SS- Are YOU seriously ignorant or are you just putting us on? Surely you understand that there are women out there who marry for money- gold diggers, they are called... and I bet you don't have a problem with that, do you?

I support women's right to make their own choices for their own bodies and their own lives, regardless of whether or not people like you think it is your right to tell everyone how to live.

What on earth is "you only pay a small amount"? When a student takes out a large student loan and they don't get a job which pays enough to live on AND repay the loan, they end up either in default (where the taxpayers pay back the money) or they have an albatross around their neck for the rest of their adult lives. Taking out a loan you know you may never be able to repay is 'wanting something for nothing...' but it is clear, you were never able to get an education beyond first grade, which is why you resent anyone making more money than you by providing pleasure to others. You seriously need to grow up and understand that you do not get to control the lives of other adults. Get over yourself.

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Norma Jean Almodovar 26 Nov '13 at 5:27 pm

Oh- and that you could equate murder (killing each other???? really????) with providing pleasure for a fee, shows you have some serious mental issues and you ought to visit a psychiatrist and get yourself medicated. You are clearly a danger to others if not yourself, if you can't differentiate between commercial sex and homicide.

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spiderman83 7 Jan '14 at 6:04 pm

Im a bloke and really want to do it for the money, but can't find the name of the agencies. all bollocks. any one interested?

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