

Partner: Asian Women's Resource Centre (AWRC)

Project: Ending Harmful Practices

My father is a very morally strict person. When I came to London I started working as a cleaner, but I lost my full-time job and I end up with only 10 hours a week and a very low income. I was evicted from the room I was renting and the manager from the only cleaning job I was left with offered me help. I could live at her place and she introduced me to prostitution.

I worked in houses for prostitutes for a couple of years and then I started to work by myself and lived on my own. One day, someone started to leave a bag with trash and intimate pictures of me taken from the website where I offered my services as prostitute. The pictures of me looked similar to a postal card, hiding my eyes and showing everything else. At the back of the pictures there was always a very neat hand writing with an erotic and sexual narrative.

The trash was left outside my building main door every two weeks. It was horrible and humiliating. I could not bear looking at it because you could see dirty condoms, left overs of drugs users, empty alcohol bottles, etc.

I endured this situation for over a year as I was too afraid to report this to the police because of the stigma of working as a prostitute. My father always said to me that he would rather see me dead than finding out something like that was true. I thought many times of killing myself. I could even plan how to do it because I couldn't bear the idea of my father confirming that I was a prostitute.

My landlord asked me to leave because he recognised me in the pictures and found out about my job. I moved, but the harassment continued the same way and with the same frequency. I was desperate.

I went to a sexual health clinic and a worker from LAWRS explained to me that I was a victim of harassment and stalking and she encouraged me to report the crime to the police. The police found out that the person leaving the trash was one of my clients and the case was taken to court. He was convicted to community service, rehabilitation activity and supervision by the probation service. Additionally, a restraining order prohibiting him to contact me directly or indirectly.

My caseworker at LAWRS helped me to go through all the process and finally feel safe; she also helped me to believe it was not my fault what was happening to me and supported me to deal with my father threats after he knew I was a prostitute. My counsellor at LAWRS is also helping me to get the voices out of my head that say I should die. I am now studying English and trying to plan my life and my future.