

**From:** HillMaCMount@aol.com  
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**To:** Sexual Violence Unit  
**Subject:** Consultation paper - Hidden Crimes, Secret Pain

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
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Proposed Regional Strategy for addressing sexual violence in N. Ireland

Submission on behalf of  
Public Morals Committee  
Reformed Presbyterian Church of Ireland

We welcome the fact that action on this subject is planned. The statistics are appalling and probably represent only a fraction of the problem, so the need for a strategy is clear.

We also welcome the proposals for stricter sentencing as laid out at 3.55 - this also is overdue.

We regret several glib references to "workers in the sex industry" (eg 1.23), and feel that these gloss over many significant social evils involved.

We wish to respond to a number of the specific questions posed throughout the document.

Q1: *Definition of Sexual violence.* We have no objection to the definition of sexual violence suggested.

Q8: *What key messages should be promoted?* We strongly believe that the key messages which ought to be promoted in any discussion on sexual behaviour are **fidelity within life-long marriage** and **abstinence outside of marriage**, in accordance with the teaching of the Bible and the Christian Church throughout the centuries. Unfortunately the Government by its laws and policies has often blurred boundaries and promoted behaviour which is a direct contradiction of these principles.

Q9: *What groups should be involved in delivering relevant messages?* We believe that Churches have much that is relevant to say on the subject of sexual behaviour and should be involved. Any group wishing to have an influence on what is promoted or taught in schools should only be involved with the specific permission of School Governors and parents.

Q10: *What more could Government do to promote the importance of healthy relationships in our society?* The role of alcohol and its misuse in a very high proportion of cases of sexual violence is strongly brought out in the Consultation Paper. In light of this, we would suggest that it is self-evident that tighter restrictions on the Licensing Trade would make an important contribution to the reduction in the problem of sexual violence in our society: instead, for financial reasons, the Government appears to be continually seeking to increase access to alcohol and to make it ever more affordable. We would also refer back our answer to Q8 under this question.

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