

## **Appendix 2**

### **Nigel's Story**

I am a disabled man aged 47, who has never had a girlfriend.

In 2003, I was asked to speak at the LGBT Conference for the Metropolitan Police, on the subject of using sex workers.

The audience seemed interested in what I had to say and there was a good discussion afterwards. In particular, the response of the police was very good. They said they were not interested in trying to stop people who need to pay for sex. Indeed, when they do stop people seeking a prostitute in their car, they will often let a disabled person off - due to an understanding that for many disabled people (men in particular), the only way they can ever get sex is to pay for it.

I have experienced an unbearable level of sexual frustration since the age of 20 when I became disabled. The Glandular Fever virus which attacked the base of my brain subsequently paralysed my body from the neck down and, at the same time, increased my sex drive. I tried desperately to get a girlfriend for fifteen years but failed completely, I felt there was no option for me but to pay for sex. And that is still the case today.

Until I was 35, I was too scared to see a prostitute from fear of being arrested and I also felt a disapproving public attitude towards disabled men wanting sex. I still see sex workers now, and feel more frustrated than ever before. As I get older, I get more frustrated and depressed as there is no future for me, or other disabled men like me.

My current condition, brought about by the virus, is called ataxia, which means stiffness in both legs and all movement is extremely difficult, clumsy and exhausting. I use walking sticks for balance and support. I have constant back pain.

I have seen about ten prostitutes and never had sex with any of them. What happens is that I enjoy seeing them naked, get incredibly turned on in my mind, but cannot get a decent erection. This happens every time, especially when it comes to the moment to put the condom on. On the rare occasion when I do have a small erection, I always lose it at that point.

After my failure with prostitutes, I saw a sex surrogate at Martin Cole's Institute of Sex Research in Birmingham (now closed down because Martin retired). These sessions were much more relaxed: we talked for half an hour to get to know one another, then we got into bed and just

cuddled for twenty minutes. The first session gave me my first ever cuddle and I loved it. That was when I discovered that a woman's body is warm. During the cuddle we started kissing (prostitutes generally will not kiss - certainly not me!) and that was wonderful. It felt like I was with a real person for the first time in my life. But I still lost the erection when she tried putting the condom on. So, still no sex but I really enjoyed the closeness and the affection. This was my first good experience. But after two visits to this establishment, I ran out of money (it cost £105 a time) so I could not see her again.

A few years later I saw the ICASA Institute featured on a TV programme. They also use sex surrogates. I contacted them and they thought they could help me. In this case, the therapist was in the room with myself and the surrogate, and the therapist directed the session. I saw two different surrogates for four sessions. This was very good, with lots of cuddling and some kissing (they did kiss but were not as happy to do it as the first surrogate). When it came to putting the condom on, as always, I lost my erection. I enjoyed the experiences but again, after four sessions at £60 a time (very reasonable) I ran out of money so had to stop going.

I was invited to deliver a speech about my frustration at the 2002 Conference Reclaiming Sex. I met a some very experienced women who, as an act of kindness and immense generosity, said they would try and help me lose my virginity. I was invited round to their house and the fun began. It started with incredibly passionate kissing, which I loved but when it came to condom time, the same thing happened, I lost the erection. For the first time ever, one of the women suggested that she use a Femidom, a female condom which is inserted inside the vagina. I got the erection back and Hey Presto! I lost my virginity at last. It was heaven.

These women were wonderful to me, and made me feel like a man rather than a disabled man.

I am a shy person but it was easier for me to speak to a roomful of police than to try to seduce a woman! Most women discriminate against disabled men sexually. Women queue up to make a cup of coffee for a disabled man or open the door and give a big smile - but when it comes to sex, most women won't even look at a disabled man. As soon as a woman meets a disabled man, rather than think "maybe, maybe not", she sees him more of a potential patient rather than a potential boyfriend. They see him as someone in need of help rather than a capable man, the same as any other. Some disabled men do manage to sway the minds of women. but not me.

This kind of discrimination against disabled men is the only form of discrimination that the public find acceptable, as it can be disguised as personal choice. Plus, seduction is a social skill. When you are disabled and excluded from many social situations, and suffer endless rejection, you are not in a position to learn this type of skill.

Disabled people should be able to get a surrogate service on the state -

maybe not free, but means tested. In Holland they have SAR, with surrogates who see disabled clients on a regular basis, supported financially and otherwise by the government. They realise that it is essential to have a sex life to be a healthy individual. Doctors agree that disabled people (men in particular) are unable to get sex in the usual way because of discrimination.

In Britain, those disabled men who can afford to pay for sex often do not, because of the fear of arrest and condemnation.

An initiative needs to come from the government, only they can change the laws and therefore (in time) public attitudes towards paying for sex. A subsidised service of surrogacy for disabled people is the only way some disabled men and women will ever be able to enjoy the pleasures that a sex life provides.

I recently knew a disabled man who was 72, and has now passed on. He died a virgin - never had sex, never had a snog, never even a proper cuddle. What if this were you - would that be ok ???