

To Whom It May Concern,

We are writing to express our complete and unreserved opposition to the clause proposed by Fiona Mactaggart MP to the Modern Slavery Bill which aims to “make the purchase of sex illegal”.

Edinburgh University Students’ Association (EUSA) Women’s Liberation Group is a space for all self-defining women to come together and organise around the issues which affect them. Recently, the group has been active in campaigning in support of sex workers’ rights both locally and nationally.

As part of this work, earlier this year the Group took a motion to EUSA’s Student Council on standing in solidarity with sex workers. This motion passed meaning that EUSA now has policy on supporting sex workers – particularly those who are students – and opposing any attempts to criminalise sex work.

As a students’ association, we recognise that for some of our members sex work is a means of supporting themselves financially in an increasingly difficult economic climate, with rising tuition fees and living costs rendering higher education inaccessible to many people. While we would obviously prefer that no-one was forced to work to fund their education, this is the reality, and within this context we believe that sex work is as legitimate as any other form of employment. Therefore it is vital that sex workers be allowed to work safely and without harassment.

The evidence is clear: criminalising clients does not stop sex work from taking place, nor does it prevent the criminalisation of sex workers. It simply drives sex work further underground, making it more dangerous for workers and increasing the stigma they face.

Attached is a briefing from the English Collective of Prostitutes for more information.

We support the proposed amendment which would remove the offence of loitering and soliciting for those working on the street, and would encourage you to extend this approach of decriminalisation to cover all forms of sex work, including those which take place from a premises.

Signed,

Edinburgh University Students’ Association Women’s Liberation Group
Cat Moody, Edinburgh University Students’ Association Equal Opportunities and Liberation Officer

