



ENGLISH COLLECTIVE OF PROSTITUTES

Crossroads Women's Centre, 25 Wolsey Mews, Kentish Town, London NW5 2DX
Tel: 020 7482 2496 Email: ecp@prostitutescollective.net

Written submission to Women and Equalities Committee from the English Collective of Prostitutes, September 2019

The ECP is a self-help organisation of sex workers, working both on the street and in premises, with a national network throughout the UK. Since 1975, we have campaigned for the decriminalisation of prostitution, for sex workers' rights and safety, and for resources to enable people to get out of prostitution if they want to.

BASIC FACTS

Of the approximately 80,000¹ sex workers in the UK — at least 88% are women.² Prostitution has always been connected to women's poverty – that's why most clients are men and most sex workers are women.

Prostitution is increasing because poverty is increasing. 89% of austerity cuts have targeted women.³ Government policies of benefit sanctions and the introduction of universal credit⁴ have deliberately caused destitution and pushed more women, particularly mothers^{5 6}, into prostitution to feed themselves and their families.⁷ A quarter of young homeless women have engaged in sex work to fund accommodation or in the hope of getting a bed for the night.⁸ We gave evidence to the [Work and Pensions Inquiry into survival sex](#) and to the [UN Special Rapporteur on Extreme Poverty](#) who commented on "the harsh and arbitrary nature of some of the sanctions, as well as the devastating effects that resulted from being completely shut out of the benefits system for weeks or months at a time."⁹

1. What, if any, harms associated with buying and selling sex? Who is affected? How?

Most activities associated with prostitution are criminalised, therefore it is impossible to separate harms associated with prostitution from the prostitution laws that govern it, isolate sex workers and deny rights and support that are available to others.

Harms caused by the prostitution laws and criminalisation.

Under the prostitution laws thousands of sex workers a year, the vast majority women, are arrested, raided, prosecuted and even imprisoned for working on the street¹⁰ or together with others in premises.

In Redbridge, (one of the poorest areas of London), 639 women were given prostitute cautions for soliciting between 2013 and 2015.¹¹ In Stoke-on-Trent (where four in 10 children are officially poor¹²) a police crackdown resulted in 270 sex workers getting a "prostitute caution" or being charged with loitering and soliciting.¹³ Police commented that women are offered help to "change their lifestyles". This is offensive -- not being able to feed your children is not a "lifestyle"!

Thousands of civil orders are inflicted on sex workers. These can be brought on the uncorroborated word of a single police officer and hearsay evidence and require a lower standard of proof. Yet a breach is a criminal offence that can carry a prison sentence.¹⁴

Fines force women back into prostitution to get the money to pay the fine. When women are imprisoned, the impact is far-reaching — the lives of children are devastated for a start.¹⁵ Prostitute cautions and convictions show up with a criminal record check which can bar access to other jobs, effectively institutionalising women in prostitution, preventing them from leaving.

Harm caused by violence.

Sex workers face high levels of violence.^{16 17} Trans and migrant women are particularly targeted and are less likely to report violence to the police due to discrimination. It is much safer to work indoors¹⁸ with others but this is illegal¹⁹ – a conviction for brothel-keeping carries a maximum sentence of seven years in prison. Working on the street is much less safe but safer when in close proximity to others, but this increases the chance of arrest for soliciting and targeting by vigilantes.

Criminalisation exacerbates the harms sex workers suffer.²⁰ Research shows that where arrests of sex workers and clients were high, less women report violence.²¹

Police crackdowns prevent women from using even the most basic security measures to keep safe.²² When women do report violence they often face prosecution for prostitution related offences while little is done to catch their attackers.²³ Violent men are effectively being given impunity to attack again; no wonder that violence is at epidemic proportions.

Under Proceeds of Crime laws, police profit²⁴ from raids and arrests, corrupting priorities.²⁵

Trafficking

A campaign of misinformation²⁶ and fabricated statistics has exaggerated the extent of trafficking and been used as a justification for police crackdowns which have targeted migrant sex workers for arrest and deportation.²⁷ In fact research found that less than 6% of MIGRANT sex workers had been trafficked; many said they prefer working in the sex industry rather than the “unrewarding and sometimes exploitative conditions they meet in non-sexual jobs”.²⁸

We write [here](#) about how trafficking is enabled by poverty and women’s determination to escape it and by the hostile immigration environment that make it impossible for women to cross international borders unaided.

Harm of police violence and abuse.

Police wield enormous power over sex workers because of the threat of arrest and exposure. They are not the saviours the anti-prostitution lobby portrays them to be and they often abuse their powers. Sex workers have been shown to be one group of “vulnerable” women targeted by police rapists and abusers.²⁹ Sex workers speak of daily humiliation, bullying and threats:

“The police wait outside my house to catch me when I leave... they jeer at me, and make sexually explicit jokes. I’m strip-searched and they sometimes leave the door open so the male officers can see in.”³⁰

ECP woman given 26-year ASBO.

Criminalisation causes harm to health

Sex workers take good care of their health but research³¹ has found that police using possession of condoms as evidence of prostitution³² and criminalisation generally makes it harder for women to insist on condoms with clients and access health care.³³

Harm caused by discrimination.

Discriminatory implementation of the laws

Migrant and women of colour are disproportionately targeted under the prostitution laws. Our dossier³⁴ documents widespread police racism against immigrant and women of colour in our network.

One other example is that in 2012 when sex workers' flats in Mayfair were raided; immigrant women's flats were closed whilst other workers just got a warning. A complaint to the police documented how Romanian and Thai women suffered racist bullying and abuse and were threatened with deportation.³⁵

Situation of mothers

The majority of sex workers are mothers. This should be a central concern for law and policy makers. Our research³⁶ compared sex work with other jobs traditionally done by women and found that mothers were disparaged and taken advantage of by employers^{37 38} – paid less³⁹ with little consideration or acknowledgement for their caring responsibilities. Sex work provides flexibility and a higher wage. Yet without worker status sex working mums are denied benefits like child tax credits. Horrifyingly some mothers who turned to sex work to make ends meet have had their children removed from their care by the state.⁴⁰

2. How does buying and selling sex affect attitudes towards women more widely?

Speculation about whether prostitution increases the objectification of women and the impact this may have cannot take priority over the actual and preventable harms caused by arrests, prosecutions and even imprisonment of women under the prostitution laws.

Those that target prostitution as uniquely degrading seem oblivious to the degradation and humiliation of women having to skip meals, beg or submit to a violent partner to keep a roof over their heads. Are we only degraded when we have our top off?

The claim that “prostitution is inherently violent because, by definition, it involves unwanted sex”⁴¹ is insulting and demeaning to sex workers. It denies that sex workers, like other people, can distinguish between the sex we consent to (for money or not) and that which violates our will and our bodies. Like other workers, sex workers' consent is conditional: if we don't get paid, it's forced labour/rape.

Campaigns by an “unlikely alliance of feminist politicians and religious fundamentalists”⁴² to abolish prostitution have increased police powers and exacerbated discrimination and exploitation.⁴³

Harm caused to neighbourhoods by prostitution

Some Labour women MPs have raised with us in good faith their concern that decriminalisation would lead to an increase in women working on the street and that this would exacerbate constituents' concerns about nuisance and disturbance.

Prostitution has increased as poverty among women has increased. Like with homelessness, this can't be addressed without tackling the root causes. Criminalisation, including of clients, doesn't help women to leave prostitution it just makes it more dangerous to work.⁴⁴

Sex workers are often also residents and constituents, and the harm caused to them by disparaging, discriminatory and disrespectful local campaigns, some of which have led to verbal and physical attacks, must be opposed.⁴⁵

We worked with a church group in Walsall in the 90s which successfully brought together sex workers and other local people to resolve problems. They started with the principle that sex workers must not be blamed for all the problems of run down inner city area deprived of resources by government and they opposed vested interests from property developers and other agents of gentrification which were fuelling local conflict.

We don't promote or glamorise prostitution and would like to see a world where all abusive, exploitative, degrading work was abolished, but the way to do that without harming women is to tackle poverty. To criminalise an industry without giving its workers viable financial alternatives is to exacerbate the dangers some politicians claim they want to prevent.

“We have to wonder why, at this moment in time, when women are in the worst position we have been in for many a day, somebody would come and try to interfere with a few of us at least, and many of us probably, using another way of feeding ourselves and feeding our families.”⁴⁶

3. What local initiatives are you aware of that address these harms? Are they effective? Why?

What we know best is the work we do: providing rights information, fighting for safety and against police abuse and criminalisation. What we know doesn't work are crackdowns on sex workers, including those that claim to be targeting clients.

One example is Ipswich which in the aftermath of the tragic murders of five young women in 2006, the authorities took two approaches. First, in response to widespread concern from the community, women got resources, especially whilst the murderer was still at large – housing, money (estimated at £7000 to £10,000 per woman) to pay off debt, childcare expenses, dental work, etc. But this was quickly replaced by a policy of zero tolerance of prostitution which claimed to banish sex workers from the city. Instead women told us that they moved to outlying industrial areas and were deprived of the protection and support they had previously received from NHS outreach workers.⁴⁷

4. What, if any, are the challenges for those facing harm in accessing services (for example, healthcare; support services; advice; exit services)? What needs to change?

If the service is judgemental and/or not independent of the police and criminal justice system, then sex workers won't use it.

Many projects started with funding from the Home Office with the aim of to “reduce nuisance and disorder”.⁴⁸ This lack of independence was demonstrated when many projects took funding to implement Engagement and Support Orders⁴⁹ which required them to “breach” women if they did not comply – consequently destroy women's trust in the services.

Looking at the experience of France, promises of exiting resources under the Nordic model cannot be trusted -- in Paris only 57 women have been admitted to the programme and migrants are specifically excluded.⁵⁰

5. What relevance does the Public Sector Equality Duty have for the way that public authorities address prostitution in their area?

Sex worker's illegal status means women have little recourse, and are unlikely to be able to use this legislation against the police abuse, racism and other discrimination documented above.

6. How does the law currently treat paying for sex? How could law and policy be improved to address harm?

Criminalising clients does nothing to address the harm of prostitution and in practice forces women to work in isolation and greater danger. Kerb-crawling legislation undermines safety as women are forced to rush negotiations with men scared of being arrested.⁵¹

The offence of “Paying for sexual services of a prostitute subjected to force”⁵² is a strict liability offence, which was criticised at the time, including by Liberty and Women Against Rape⁵³ -- a client can get convicted whether or not he knew the sex worker was forced and regardless of what efforts he made to find out.^{54 55} Our experience is that men of colour are disproportionately being arrested under this offence.

7. How effective are different international approaches at addressing any harms associated with buying and selling sex?

Decriminalisation – New Zealand

Decriminalisation increases sex workers' safety and well-being. After New Zealand decriminalised sex work in 2003: over 90% of sex workers said they had additional employment, legal, health and safety rights;⁵⁶ 70% said they were more likely to report violence to the police;⁵⁷ 68% felt able to refuse clients (compared to 47% before⁵⁸ – this is a key marker of exploitation.

Criminalising clients undermines sex workers' safety.

Sweden criminalised clients in 1999. Sex workers face increased stigma, are more at risk of violence, and are less able to call on the protection of the police and the authorities. Despite claims that the law has led to a decline in prostitution, there is no actual evidence of this.⁵⁹

After Ireland's sex purchase law was introduced, reported violent crime against sex workers rose by almost 50%.⁶⁰ In France, a two-year evaluation of the law found 42% of sex workers were more exposed to violence and 38% have found it increasingly hard to insist on condom use.⁶¹ In Norway, sex workers have faced evictions, prosecutions and increased stigma – with migrant workers particularly targeted.⁶²

DEMANDS

Decriminalise sex work using the New Zealand Prostitution Reform Act (2003) as a model. Specifically we urge the Committee to back the 2016 Home Affairs Committee recommendation to decriminalise sex workers on the street and working together in premises.⁶³

Other necessary measures include (full demands [here](#)⁶⁴.)

- **Repeal civil orders that are used to arrest, exclude and evict sex workers.**
 - **Expunge historical convictions for prostitution offences.**
 - **Instruct police, the Crown Prosecution Service and courts to prioritise safety** by vigorously investigating and prosecuting violence.
 - **Ensure free, accessible, independent, non-discriminatory health services.**
 - **Provide economic and other support for those who want to leave prostitution..**
 - **Reverse austerity cuts including sanctions, Universal Credit, bedroom tax, etc.**
 - **Support for mothers and a care income.**
 - **Ensure that sex workers and sex workers' organisations are centrally involved** in the process of changing the law.
 - **Recognise and measure the contribution sex workers make** to the survival of families, communities and the economy.
-

Appendix: Testimonials from women in the ECP network in response to the Inquiry questions

Jenny, Manchester

I don't think there is any harm in buying or selling sex. The harm comes from the laws that they have. Having a record is a harm. These people not giving you time to figure out the type of people approaching you when you are working on the street because of the risk of being arrested. It's the working girls that are putting themselves at risk purely to avoid any confrontation with the police, rushing into transactions when they can't make sure they're safe.

People's view of the so-called prostitute is that selling sex is the lowest of the low - the dregs of society. We haven't got brains or families or feelings. We should just be pushed to the side. It affects every part of your life -- you can lose you housing, children, be imprisoned.

You report a crime when you are a known prostitute and it's "did that really happen or is it more that the customer didn't pay you?" Their attitude and other people's attitude about what you're doing impacts everything.

There's major difficulties for women who want to exit prostitution. If they've got convictions that goes against them in anything they're doing. The services don't address any of it. They can come up with ideas and courses for you to go on, but they cannot take away the charges for the work you've been doing. You

can't get jobs or housing. It doesn't matter what qualifications you've got, there are jobs that are definitely not available to you because of what you've done. These services can put you in some kind of a half-way house but it's total discrimination. You can't get housing without proof of earnings or benefits, but you can't get benefits without an address. It's a vicious circle. So you're held back and forced to stay in prostitution because of these restrictions.

Graziela – migrant sex worker from Romania, London

I left Romania to escape domestic violence and to save my life. Of course people leave their home country for all kinds of reasons. For some of us we face destitution or starvation or war. For others we want a better life. We come to get an education or health care. Or we come to escape the discrimination and abuse we face as rape victims or as a single mother. Every reason is valid.

How we travel is influenced by how much power we have. So if we are fleeing starvation we have to go with anyone that will help us. But what is sure is that if we don't have papers, if we don't have language, if we can't rely on the police to protect us or even worse they are the ones that abuse us, if we face racism when we get there . . . then we are more likely to be forced into the hands of the traffickers or smugglers. If we can travel independently then we have more power to refuse and escape that violence and abuse.

Criminalisation makes it impossible for sex workers to fight back against these injustices. The harms we face caused by criminalisation include:

- Silencing of our voices by labelling us as victims of trafficking instead of workers with agency.
- This labelling enables raids (so-called welfare visits), arrests, and prosecutions.
- When we are picked up in police raids, our passports and IDs have been confiscated and we are told we can only have them back if we produce a one-way ticket back home.
- When we apply for asylum, sex workers have been disbelieved, rejected claims, and deportation.
- Brexit further degrades our rights by making it more difficult for us to work and live in the UK.

What we have done as migrants in the English Collective of Prostitutes is campaign against racism from the police and the authorities. This is crucial as discrimination and attacks increase in the wake of the Brexit decision. Many migrant sex workers are mothers supporting families or even the whole community back home. So we also press for benefits and other resources.

We also campaign against trafficking being used as an excuse to raid, arrest and deport migrant sex workers. In 2012 and 2013 there were mass raids against sex workers in London, but no victims of trafficking were found. I've been in a flat when the police have done a 'welfare visits' and it is exactly like a raid. The police search the flat and inspect our papers, while pretending they are concerned about our welfare. The evidence they find is then used to prosecute or deport sex workers.

Street based sex workers have been experiencing the police regularly come round with **REMOVAL NOTICES** claiming that sex workers are not exercising their "treaty rights" – that is aren't earning money or they can't prove how they are supporting themselves. This is outrageous considering how many families are being supported by sex workers.

We want decriminalisation so that we are not arrested for prostitution and cannot be deported for working in the sex industry.

Louise, Doncaster

I live and work in an area which has many problems. The community has been run down and neglected by the council. A lot of people have had their money cut by benefit sanctions. The council channels money away from our area into more salubrious zones.

I'd like to speak out about this locally, but I'm scared. The police don't protect us. If you're working in an area where the police demand freebies you're not going to speak out easily. And I think the police are too close to the people who control some of the prostitution here who are directly profiting from the prostitution and drug trade.

The biggest problem I face is the laws. If we didn't have to worry about the laws we could deal with the police and the pimps.

Some women have been dragged under the control of pimps. But criminalising everyone doesn't help that. We are migrant women and non-migrant women working together here. We try to stick together. When I was being harassed in my home I went to the specialised police unit – the one that says it deals with sex workers – and they did nothing. I see that the girls from Romania get it even worse.

What difference would decriminalisation make to us? We are boxed in by poverty. The woman who lives next door to me is working a straight job and so is her husband and after they paid their rent they had just over £100 to last them four weeks. They were so skint the daughter didn't have the money for the petrol to take her to the hospital.

Criminalising clients is a terrible idea. It is offensive to suggest that when hundreds and thousands of people around the country are living on the edge and women are expected to fill the gaps and make up when there is nothing.

I tried to apply for universal credit. What monster thought of a benefits system that leaves people without money for weeks? How long does it take for your life to unravel – a lot less time than five weeks. You get behind on your rent, you get behind on your heating, you start cutting down on food, you can't afford petrol if you're lucky or unlucky enough to have a car. You start borrowing first of all from family and then from the gangster types that start prowling around. None of this seems to matter to some so-called feminists when they propose to take away our only source of income by criminalising clients.

Susie - EU migrant, Middlesbrough

Within the next week if my situation doesn't change I am going to have to go back on the streets. So all I'm thinking about at the moment is that prostitution is the only way for me to get out of this really harmful situation I'm in.

I worked for years, from 2012, in Birmingham on the streets. It was very hard and harsh. I was attacked three times and nearly every other woman that I knew was also attacked. The police did little or nothing. The only time we saw them was when they were doing an action against clients.

It was a familiar story. There would be some horrible story in the local paper about the nuisance of prostitution and the police would come into the area saying they were arresting clients. [They did](#) sometimes comment that they were trying to help us exit prostitution but that came to nothing. No one paid attention to what we actually need to get out.

The police were very heavy, rude, often racist against girls like me. They told us to go home. They told one of the girls that they would send her home without her child. I'm from Portugal. I came to the UK because there is no money in Portugal. My son is back home with my mum and nearly all the money I made went back to support them. It's a big responsibility. People can't manage without the money we send. I ended up supporting other family members too. When people have got nothing in the fridge to eat you can't turn them down.

In the last six months my life has gone down the drain. I had got out of prostitution. I got help to apply for benefits and was just about managing. Then I was moved over to universal credit. I got less money but I still was managing. Then I got a letter in the post saying that I was no longer entitled to universal credit because I was an EU citizen and I had to apply for settled status. It's been one crisis after another since. I tried to apply for settled status myself and it was so complicated I just got refused. I got a woman from the CAB to help me and she took a record of all my documents sent them off to the authorities who said they never received them. I was back and forth with them for two weeks.

Meanwhile I have no money to live on. I went to the universal credit but they said they couldn't do anything until my application for status was agreed. I was really stuck. I run out of money completely my electricity and gas got cut off my landlord started threatening to evict me because I can't pay my rent. And it's been 3 1/2 months now. It's a disaster I wake up every morning wondering how I'm going to get through the day.

Everywhere I go I'm begging for food or a little money just to stay alive. No one can live like this. So of course I'm starting selling sex again. Where I live now sometimes you only get a fiver. Girls are so desperate they're taking it out on each other. This is what we have been reduced to. Fighting our friends for a fiver. I am ashamed but what else can we do?

So I think my message is – don't talk to me about the harms of prostitution when under the circumstances prostitution is the only way for me to get any dignity and to survive.

Jane, mother of a child with disabilities

I am a mother with three children. I was married to my husband for over 10 years. He was violent to me over this time. In 2017 I told him to go. But I was left with three children on my own. One of them is autistic. Few people understand how much work and how difficult it is to raise a child with disabilities. I love my son but the work of caring for him is 24 seven, relentless, exhausting, physically and mentally. I get no support for the work that I do.

After my husband left I was living on benefits. I couldn't get to the end of the week on the money I got. I started stripping in a local club, doing webcam work and occasionally doing out calls with an agency and parties. It's a terrible dilemma. If I work I have to pay for childcare. Because my son is autistic childcare is expensive. If I let my ex take the children when I work I don't have to pay but he is abusive and calls me a whore. He says I'm worthless but I can't cut myself off from him because of the kids.

¹ Third Report from The Home Affairs Select Committee Session 2016-17 HC 26: Prostitution.

<https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201617/cmselect/cmhaff/26/26.pdf>

² Brooks-Gordon, B., Mai, N., Perry, G., Sanders, T. (2015). Calculating the Number of Sex Workers and Contribution to Non-Observed Economy in the UK for the Office for National Statistics.

³ The Guardian, 9 March 2017. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/mar/09/women-bearing-86-of-austerity-burden-labour-research-reveals>

⁴ The Guardian, 22 May 2019. <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2019/may/22/universal-credit-hardship-linked-to-prostitution>

⁵ Most sex workers are mothers working to support families. 74% of off-street sex workers cited the need to pay household expenses and support their children. Home Office. (2004). Paying the Price: A Consultation Paper on Prostitution.

⁶ Single mothers (along with people with disabilities) have been disproportionately targeted by the austerity cuts. The Guardian, 4 January 2019. <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2019/jan/04/benefit-cap-single-mothers-make-up-85percent-of-those-affected-data-shows>

⁷ Doncaster reports a 60 per cent increase in prostitution with charities saying: "Women are being forced to sell sex for £5 because of benefit sanctions." Sheffield reports a 166% increase, while charity workers in Hull report: "... women who are literally starving and they are out there to feed themselves. People are turning to prostitution to pay for gas and electricity because they are being left without money under current regulations."

https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/EPoverty/UnitedKingdom/2018/NGOS/English_CollectiveofProstitutes.pdf

⁸ Crisis. (2012).

⁹ Statement on Visit to the United Kingdom, by Professor Philip Alston, United Nations Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights London, 16 November 2018. https://www.ohchr.org/documents/issues/poverty/eom_gb_16nov2018.pdf

¹⁰ Approximately 50% of street-based sex workers have been through the criminal justice system. Hough, J. & Rice, B. (2008) A Review of Services for Street-based Sex Working Women in Lambeth.

¹¹ Public Spaces Protection Orders were extended to the whole borough with the power to issue on the spot fines of £100 to women for prostitution related activities and ban women from certain areas. Ilford Recorder, 30 June 2016.

<http://www.ilfordrecorder.co.uk/news/crime-court/redbridge-top-for-prostitutioncautions-in-london-1-4597623>

¹² The Guardian, 15 May 2019. <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2019/may/15/child-poverty-above-50-per-cent-in-10-uk-constituencies>

¹³ Stoke-on-Trent Live, 15 August 2019. <https://www.stokesentinel.co.uk/news/stoke-on-trent-news/270-sex-workers-200-kerb-3210291>

¹⁴ The Guardian, 25 May 2005. <https://www.theguardian.com/uk/2005/may/25/ukcrime.prisonsandprobation2>

¹⁵ The Independent, 17 September 2012. <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/crime/mothers-prison-imprisonment-separates-around-17000-children-from-their-mothers-every-year-8145193.html>

¹⁶ A global systemic review reported that 45-75% of sex workers experienced workplace violence over a lifetime. Deering K, N., Amin, A., Shoveller, J., Nesbitt, A., Garcia-Moreno, C., Duff, P., Argento, E., Shannon, K. (2014). A Systemic Review of the Correlates of Violence Against Sex Workers. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3987574/>

-
- ¹⁷ At least 180 prostitute women have been killed in the UK since 1990. The Independent, 17 December 2017. <https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/international-day-to-end-violence-against-sex-workers-right-to-be-free-from-violence-a8115241.html>
- ¹⁸ A 2014 study found that 77% of violent incidents were experienced by street-based sex workers, 11% by inside solo sex workers and 6% by sex workers in brothels, parlours or saunas. Connolly, L. (2014) Violence against sex workers. Analysis of National Ugly Mugs.
- ¹⁹ The law makes it illegal for women to work together with a friend in premises, so sex workers are forced to choose between possible arrest and keeping themselves safe or avoiding a criminal record and putting themselves in danger. <https://makeallwomensafe.org/>
- ²⁰ A systematic review of all sex work research conducted in 33 countries from 1990 to 2018, found that criminalisation of sex work is linked to 'extensive harms' among sex workers. Sex workers are three times more likely to experience sexual or physical violence where the trade is criminalised. Platt L, Grenfell P, Meiksin R, Elmes J, Sherman SG, Sanders T, Mwangi P, Crago AL. (2018). Associations between sex work laws and sex workers' health: a systematic review and meta-analysis of quantitative and qualitative studies. <https://www.lshtm.ac.uk/newsevents/news/2018/criminalisation-and-repressive-policing-sex-work-linked-increased-risk>
- ²¹ A 2014 survey found that only 5% of sex workers who were victims of a crime reported it. This compared to 46% of victims in areas where police adopted a harm reduction approach. Data provided by National Ugly Mugs (UKNSWP). (2012-2015).
- ²² For example: asking a friend to record licence plates, working in well-light areas with CCTV, sharing information about aggressive men, taking time to screen clients, by for example, ensuring that there are no hidden passengers, or settling the terms of the transaction before getting into a car.
- ²³ The Guardian, 3 August 2017. <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2017/aug/03/police-sex-workers-brothel-thieves-london-keir-starmer#img-1>
- ²⁴ Police get a percentage (18% in 2013) of all assets and cash seized during raids. Home Office. (2013). FOI Release: Criminal confiscation receipts for brothels, pimping, prostitution and pornography. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/criminal-confiscation-receipts-for-brothels-pimping-prostitution-and-pornography/criminal-confiscation-receipts-for-brothels-pimping-prostitution-and-pornography>
- ²⁵ Between 2002 and 2013 "... more than £12 million has been confiscated by the police relating to brothels, prostitution, pornography, and pimps. Of this, the police were awarded £2.26 million and the Crown Prosecution Service £1.78 million." Broadly. 6 April 2016. https://broadly.vice.com/en_us/article/nz888d/sex-workers-reveal-what-cops-took-from-them-during-police-raids
- ²⁶ The Guardian, 20 October 2009. <https://www.theguardian.com/uk/2009/oct/20/trafficking-numbers-women-exaggerated>
- ²⁷ Feministing. 11 December 2013. <http://feministing.com/2013/12/11/guest-post-the-soho-raids-were-not-about-trafficking/>
- ²⁸ Mai, N. (2011). Migrant Workers in the UK Sex Industry: ESRC Full Research Report. <https://archive.londonmet.ac.uk/iset/research-units/iset/projects/esrc-migrant-workers.html?8810F8AC-060C-A7FC-7F15-A583EB86BCE8#report>
- ²⁹ Research in 2017 found that "hundreds of police officers were being accused of sexually abusing victims and suspects in what a senior inspector called "the most serious corruption issue facing the service"..." Officers had targeted vulnerable women described in one case as "including prostitutes and heroin addicts". The Guardian, 5 October 2017. <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2017/oct/05/police-sexual-abuse-officers-watchdog>
- ³⁰ English Collective of Prostitutes. (2013). Not guilty of breaching an Anti-Social Behaviour Order. <http://prostitutescollective.net/2013/07/we-won-not-guilty-of-breaching-an-anti-social-behaviour-order/>
- ³¹ A systematic review of all sex work research conducted in 33 countries from 1990 to 2018, found that criminalisation of sex work is linked to 'extensive harms' among sex workers. Platt L, Grenfell P, Meiksin R, Elmes J, Sherman SG, Sanders T, Mwangi P, Crago AL. (2018). Associations between sex work laws and sex workers' health: a systematic review and meta-analysis of quantitative and qualitative studies. <https://www.lshtm.ac.uk/newsevents/news/2018/criminalisation-and-repressive-policing-sex-work-linked-increased-risk>
- ³² The Lancet. (2015). Human Rights Violations Against Sex Workers: Burden and Effect on HIV. [https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736\(14\)60800-X/fulltext?rss=yes](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(14)60800-X/fulltext?rss=yes)
- ³³ Jeal, N. & Salisbury, C. (2007). Health Needs and Service use of Parlour-based Prostitutes Compared with Street-based Prostitutes: a cross-sectional survey. <https://obgyn.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/j.1471-0528.2007.01379.x>
- ³⁴ English Collective of Prostitutes. (2019). Sex Workers are Getting Screwed by Brexit. <http://prostitutescollective.net/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Brexit-is-screwing-sex-workers.pdf>
- ³⁵ Legal Action for Women letter to Metropolitan Police Commissioner, Bernard Hogan-Howe, 18 September 2012. <http://prostitutescollective.net/2012/09/legal-action-women-letter-police/>
- ³⁶ English Collective of Prostitutes. (2019). What's a Nice Girl Like You Doing in a Job Like This? <http://prostitutescollective.net/2019/02/report-whats-a-nice-girl-like-you-doing-in-a-job-like-this-comparing-sex-work-with-other-jobs-traditionally-done-by-women/>
- ³⁷ One in nine mothers (11%) report being dismissed, made redundant, or treated so poorly they felt they had to leave their job. Equality and Human Rights Commission. (2018). Pregnancy and maternity discrimination research findings. 30,000 women a year are forced out of their jobs when they get pregnant. Independent, 2 February 2005. <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/up-to-30000-women-forced-out-of-work-because-of-pregnancy-5385061.html>

-
- ³⁸ Single mothers were more likely to be trapped in precarious work. Gingerbread. (2018). One in four: A profile of single parents in the UK.
- ³⁹ Young mothers – those who give birth before the age of 33 – are paid 15% less than their childless peers. Independent, 8 March 2016. <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/business/news/gender-inequality-young-mothers-paid-15-less-than-childless-colleagues-tuc-finds-a6918956.html>
- ⁴⁰ Neale, A., Lopez, N. (2017). Suffer the Little Children and their Mothers – a dossier on the unjust separation of children from their mothers. <http://legalactionforwomen.net/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/LAW-Dossier-18Jan17-final.pdf>
- ⁴¹ iai News, 5 June 2017. <https://iai.tv/articles/is-feminism-failing-sex-workers-aid-835>
- ⁴² The Guardian, 20 October 2019. <https://www.theguardian.com/uk/2009/oct/20/trafficking-numbers-women-exaggerated>
- ⁴³ The campaign focused on provision in the 2010 PCA to make it an offence to have sex with a prostitute forced or coerced (an offence covered by existing rape law) resulted in increased police powers to arrest women on the street and close premises where women were working in relative safety. <http://prostitutescollective.net/2009/06/briefing-on-the-policing-and-crime-bill-2009-4/>
- ⁴⁴ English Collective of Prostitutes. (2018). No Nordic Model. Briefing: Criminalising Clients Undermines Sex Workers' Safety. <http://prostitutescollective.net/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/No-Nordic-Model.pdf>
- ⁴⁵ Physical and verbal abuse of women working in the Leeds Managed Zone increased after a BBC3 programme which was criticised for being sensationalised and unethical. <https://www.thewhoresofyore.com/basis-blog/the-bbcs-exploitation-of-leeds-sex-workers>
- ⁴⁶ English Collective of Prostitutes. (2019). What's a Nice Girl Like You Doing in a Job Like This? Selma James' speech, p2. <http://prostitutescollective.net/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/Nice-Girl-report.pdf>
- ⁴⁷ Ipswich Star, 16 March 2017. <https://www.ipswichstar.co.uk/news/sex-workers-return-to-the-streets-of-ipswich-while-off-street-prostitution-is-also-thriving-1-4933722>
- ⁴⁸ Many of the current sex work projects came from the 1999 "Crime and Disorder Associated with Prostitution Initiative" which funded 11 pilot projects to address street-based prostitution. Less than a third provided outreach and 'drop in' facilities for women with the aim of "enabling them to exit".
- ⁴⁹ Introduced in the 2010 Policing and Crime Act.
- ⁵⁰ OpenDemocracy, 27 May 2019. <https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/beyond-trafficking-and-slavery/searching-for-the-entrance-to-frances-prostitution-exit-programme/>
- ⁵¹ Attacks on sex workers doubled in Scotland after kerb-crawling laws were introduced. The Scotsman, 16 April 2008. <https://www.scotsman.com/news-2-15012/attacks-on-prostitutes-soar-after-vice-driven-underground-by-law-1-1164904>
- ⁵² Sexual Offences Act 2003, Section 53A: Paying for sexual services of a prostitute subjected to force. <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2003/42/section/53A>
- ⁵³ As Women Against Rape commented at the time "Clause 14 reduces what amounts to rape to a lesser offence, while at the same time denying those accused of a defence. If the woman is being coerced by a client he should be prosecuted for rape – it is discriminatory to charge him with a lesser offence just because she is a prostitute." <http://prostitutescollective.net/2009/10/women-against-rape-statement-against-policing-and-crime-bill/>
- ⁵⁴ Kingston, S. The Police, Sex Work, and Section 14 of the Policing and Crime Act 2009. https://eprints.lancs.ac.uk/id/eprint/71180/2/s14_article_final_.pdf
- ⁵⁵ Liberty had concerns over strict liability especially 'in situations where there is no way of knowing whether a person is "controlled for gain"' (Liberty 2009).
- ⁵⁶ Ministry of Justice. (2008). Report of the Prostitution Law Review Committee on the Prostitution Reform Act 2003. <http://prostitutescollective.net/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/report-of-the-nz-prostitution-law-committee-2008.pdf>
- ⁵⁷ *Ibid.*
- ⁵⁸ "There has been a remarkable shift in the balance of power between workers and brothel operators in the last 10 years. Sex workers are more able to refuse a client without management interference. Research carried out prior to decriminalization reported that 47 per cent of brothel workers had refused to see a client in the previous 12 months, yet research done after decriminalization has reported that 68 per cent of brothel workers had done this (Abel, 2010). Sex workers are utilizing their rights and have more freedom to govern their own sex work." Abel, G. (2014). A Decade of Decriminalization: Sex Work 'Down Under' but not Underground. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/280445933_A_decade_of_decriminalization_Sex_work_'down_under'_but_not_underground
- ⁵⁹ Research by The Nordic Institute for Women's Studies and Gender Research that found a decrease in men saying they buy sexual services from 14% (1996) to 8% (2008), is unreliable because buying sex was not criminal in 1996 so there were fewer reasons for men to lie. The Swedish National Board of Health and Welfare found it was "difficult to discern any clear trend" up or down (2007). Evidence of an increase in Thai massage parlours in Stockholm is ignored (RPS Rapport, 2012). Plus: Levy, J. (2015). Criminalising the Purchase of Sex: Lessons from Sweden. <https://www.amazon.co.uk/Criminalising-Purchase-Sex-Lessons-Sweden/dp/0415739322>
- ⁶⁰ The Irish Times, 4 September 2017. <https://www.irishtimes.com/news/crime-and-law/dramatic-rise-in-attacks-on-sex-workers-since-law-change-1.3208370>
- ⁶¹ Medecins du Monde. (2018). What do sex workers think about the French Prostitution Act? http://www.sexworkeurope.org/sites/default/files/userfiles/files/EN_synthesis_SW_final_2.pdf

⁶² Amnesty International. (2016). The Human Cost of ‘Crushing’ the Market: Criminalization of Sex Work in Norway.

<https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/eur36/4034/2016/en/>

⁶³ Specifically, it recommended: “. . . the Home Office change existing legislation so that soliciting is no longer an offence and so that brothel-keeping provisions allow sex workers to share premises” and that legislation should be drafted to provide for the “deletion of previous convictions and cautions for prostitution from the record of sex workers.” Third Report from The Home Affairs Select Committee Session 2016-17 HC 26: Prostitution.

<https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201617/cmselect/cmhaff/26/26.pdf>

⁶⁴ English Collective of Prostitutes. (2015). Decriminalisation of Prostitution: The Evidence, p12.

<http://prostitutescollective.net/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/Online-Symposium-Report.pdf>