

SAFETY FIRST WALES – BRIEFING

INTRODUCTION

Safety First Wales (SFW) is a coalition of sex workers, health professionals, church representatives, anti-poverty, anti-violence, anti-racist and trans rights campaigners -- formed to decriminalise sex work in Wales and prioritise sex workers' safety, health, and well-being.

This briefing provides information and evidence primarily about the situation and context of sex work in Wales with some references to the rest of the UK. It includes testimony from sex workers who either a) attended the first meeting of SFW, b) participated in research conducted by Swansea University or c) are part of the network of the English Collective of Prostitutes in Wales.

There are approximately 72,800 sex workers in the UK.¹ In Wales it is estimated that there are at least 2471 sex workers. This includes 1195 sex workers working online, 912 working in brothels/massage parlours and up to 263 working on the street.² These figures are from 2014 so it is likely that the numbers are now substantially higher.

Sex work is identified in all 22 local authority areas of Wales and is most concentrated in Cardiff, Newport and Swansea.

Nationally, the majority of sex workers are women (85-90%)³, most of whom are mothers working to support families.⁴

The following information is divided into various categories based on what sex workers raised as their main concerns.

POVERTY AND HOMELESSNESS

Prostitution is increasing throughout the UK because poverty is increasing. Colossal rises in energy bills, food and other essential expenses are causing hunger, homelessness, rising debt and terrible suffering. For decades austerity cuts have targeted women.⁵ Benefit sanctions, already found to be a primary cause of the increase in street prostitution,⁶ are being expanded and made even more harsh.⁷ Cuts in disability benefits and services have pushed disabled women in particular into sex work.⁸

In Wales, even before the Covid-19 pandemic, almost a quarter of people were living in poverty with women disproportionately affected.⁹ Wales now has the worst child poverty rate of all the UK nations, with 31% of children living below the poverty line.¹⁰

Welsh MP Liz Saville Roberts, along with others, tabled questions to the government about the lack of financial support for sex workers during the Covid-19 pandemic¹¹ and asked for emergency payments for sex workers in crisis¹². The heartless government response was that people should apply for Universal Credit, ignoring evidence from a parliamentary committee that draconian benefit regulations were pushing women, particularly single mothers, into "survival

sex”.¹³ Measures in Wales to mitigate poverty like payments to children eligible for free school meals¹⁴ are welcome but don’t meet the need. Migrant women who have No Recourse to Public Funds are left destitute and vulnerable to exploitation and violence and this pushes women into sex work to survive.¹⁵

“If you’re sex working but you want to stop, your first Universal Credit payment takes five weeks. How can you survive for five weeks without money? There is no option, you have to do whatever it takes, I have to go back to sex work.”

“I know loads of girls who, because their housing situation isn’t great, they end up sex working in the parlours. I know one hadn’t been sex working for quite a few months while trying to get herself together - but she lost her flat and now she’s living in a parlour, she’s stuck in limbo.”

“We’ve been getting small cash payments to trans people through our mutual aid scheme and we have seen that trans sex workers used to be working to pay for transition costs but are now working for food, housing and to cover bills.” Trans Aid Cymru

“When I first started working in the parlours, absolutely I was doing it to better my daughter’s life.”

These quotes show how sex work in Wales is often underpinned by precarious financial and housing situations. They demonstrate why it is so important that sex work is recognised in a broader context of poverty and homelessness. Inadequate benefits provision, housing and employment opportunities can mean individuals are reliant on sex work to generate income and avoid destitution and homelessness for themselves and their families.

CRIMINALISATION AND POLICING

Under the prostitution laws¹⁶ hundreds of sex workers in the UK are threatened with arrest, raided, prosecuted, and even imprisoned each year for working on the street¹⁷ or for working with others in premises, with migrant, trans and women of colour being disproportionately targeted.¹⁸ For migrant women with insecure immigration status the effect of criminalisation is compounded by fear of deportation.

Sex workers in Wales report diverse experiences and perceptions of policing, as well as the harmful consequences of being subjected to prostitution laws. The legacies of police operations, such as Operation Pentameter in 2006, and more recent targeting of sex workers in Swansea and Newport, trigger fear and distrust of the police and undermine the possibility of the police offering protection and support to sex workers.

It is clear within the National Police Chiefs’ Council (NPCC) Policing Sex Work Guidance¹⁹, that raiding and arresting sex workers for prostitution related offences is contradictory to good policing practice. The guidance clearly states that the safety of people engaged in sex work must be paramount.²⁰ Yet sex workers remain the subject of extensive police attention in certain areas of Wales. For instance, in Swansea the police have enforced soliciting offences against street-based sex workers who do not engage with support services²¹ whilst Newport council criminalised sex workers with the reintroduction of Public Space Protection Orders for ‘sexual

exploitation'. This led, in April 2022, to 50 people being arrested, and 40 charged, during an operation relating to street sex work.²² Recent reports of "racism, misogyny and bigotry"²³ in Gwent police has also undermined public trust.

Sex workers have described how fines and criminal records trap them in prostitution. Trans sex workers in Wales spoke about police surveillance and being investigated for trying to help others. Sex workers described the impact of the laws:

"Criminalisation doesn't work. Decriminalisation is safer for everyone, otherwise it goes underground. It's still going to be there, no-one is going to quit. If we don't have a way of making money we're still going to do it. They're not stopping anything, they're just making it more dangerous".

"The police have been harassing me since I was a teenager. When I was young and wasn't working, me and a friend were hanging around and a client pulled up in a car. He offered money and I knew that my friend did that sometimes so I waved over to her. The police tried to arrest me for pimping."

*"[The Police] smash through the door, they'll chuck everything everywhere, they're f*****g horrible. They'll literally push you flying they don't give a f**k, they see the girls as a poxy piece of meat who shouldn't be there".²⁴*

"We were raided and arrested over three years ago, and we're still under investigation, but we haven't actually gone to court, nothing has happened, we haven't been charged. They've got my computer and phone. Whatever they take, I've just had to escort more to go and get everything back they've stolen from me".

"I had a criminal record check and it has a section called 'miscellaneous', which was a half-page all about my sex work. I appealed to have it taken off and they refused. It makes me look terrible; I was absolutely heart broken. If I apply for a job that will be on the back of it".

These quotes reveal the different forms that sex workers' interactions with the police can take. They draw attention to the violence that can be experienced by sex workers at the hands of the police. Little research had been done on this until a 2022 study of 197 sex workers in East London which found that 42% of street workers had suffered violence from the police.²⁵

Additionally, these quotes demonstrate how the identification of individuals as sex workers by the police can prevent them from accessing jobs in other areas of the labour market, leading to a further reliance on sex work to generate income.

Current legislation and law related to sex work and prostitution simply do not work and calls to increase the criminalisation of sex work by criminalising sex workers clients must be opposed because it undermines safety. In countries where this kind of law, known as the Nordic Model, has been implemented, sex workers' face increased stigma, are more at risk of violence²⁶ are less able to call on the protection of the police and the authorities²⁷, have faced evictions²⁸, and are more likely to have their children taken into care. Despite claims that the law has led to a decline in prostitution, there is no actual evidence of this.²⁹

The decriminalisation of sex work is rooted in the principles of promoting safety, reducing harm and enhancing the well-being of those engaged in sex work. Decriminalisation, is supported not

only by sex workers themselves, but also by prestigious organisations such as the [Royal College of Nursing](#), [Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants](#), [Freedom United](#), [Women Against Rape](#) in the UK and internationally [Amnesty International](#), [the World Health Organization](#), [Human Rights Watch](#), [UNAIDS](#), [International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association](#), [Global Alliance Against Traffic in Women](#).

VIOLENCE

Sex workers face high levels of violence^{30,31} and criminalisation exacerbates the harms sex workers suffer.³² A report from Swansea University's Centre for Criminology and Criminal Justice shows shocking levels of violence³³ experienced by street-based sex workers in Cardiff.

It is much safer for sex workers to work indoors³⁴ and with others but, under brothel keeping laws, it is illegal.³⁵ Research shows that where arrests of sex workers and clients were high, fewer women report violence.³⁶ When women do report violence, they often face prosecution for sex work while little is done to catch their attackers.³⁷

When police prioritise prosecution over protection violent men are given impunity to attack again. [Women Against Rape](#) point to the fact that rape has been effectively decriminalised. Prosecutions for reported rape are the lowest ever – 1.4%!³⁸ Sex workers face added discrimination with only 25% of those suffering attacks reporting this to the police.³⁹ This was confirmed by a national advisor on violence against women to the Welsh government who described how sex workers are reluctant to report rape and other violence to the police as they think that nothing will be done.⁴⁰

“When you go to the police for help with violence and they know you are working they aren't interested.”

“A boy did come at me and had me up against the wall. I managed to get out the room whilst he was getting dressed, I didn't bother to phone the police ... I would not want the police involved at any time.”⁴¹

MOTHERS' EXPERIENCE OF SOCIAL SERVICES

Sex workers are frequently labelled bad mothers with the assumption that they are a risk to themselves and their children. This is exacerbated by the criminalisation of sex work which prevents sex working mums being public and getting credit and recognition for the hard work of raising children (in often difficult circumstances) and this vital contribution to society. Sex working mums are also more likely to have their children taken by social services and the family courts causing lifelong grief and trauma.⁴²

More than one in 100 children in Wales are “looked after” by the state and the numbers are increasing at an even higher rate than England.⁴³ Poverty is a factor along with discrimination by the family courts: in north Wales, 77% of all care applications resulted in a care order between 2010 and 2016 compared, for example, to 39% in west London.⁴⁴ Research found that children of “Black Caribbean heritage are more likely than white British children to be in care, regardless

of deprivation level” pointing to racism in the child welfare system. Children put in institutionalised care are more likely to suffer abuse than those that remain with their family.⁴⁵

[Support Not Separation](#), a coalition to end the unwarranted separation of children from their mothers or other primary carers, is campaigning to change the definition of ‘neglect’ in the Children Act to prohibit children being taken from their mothers because of poverty. This follows a law change in California which states that children should not be separated from their families “based on conditions of financial difficulty, including, but not limited to, a lack of food, clothing, shelter or childcare...”

Proposals in Wales to remove profit from the provision of children’s services⁴⁶ must be applauded because privatisation has led to fostering and adoption becoming a profitable business.⁴⁷

“All the different agencies think sex workers can’t be good parents and because I’ve been a sex worker I can’t be trusted. It’s a get out clause for anything.”

“Most of the women that work on the street have got to the stage where they’ve lost their children. Their children have been either adopted at birth or subsequently taken from them by social services. They don’t get any help, there’s no help once your kids are taken, you don’t get any counselling, it’s like a bereavement.”

“I thought that, they’re meant to do all you can to keep mother and child together, but they don’t do that at all, in fact on the parent’s side they do nothing, absolutely nothing.”

One of the mums in Safety First Wales also spoke to the media about her experience of discrimination:

“My dad took me to the appointment and told me how smart I looked,” ... “But when I got the typed version of the assessment written up, I was horrified because in the first few lines, the assessor said I was dressed provocatively. I was astounded. He knew I was a sex worker and I think it is one of the reasons he noted I dressed provocatively”.⁴⁸

TRAFFICKING

Trafficking laws⁴⁹ are used as a justification for police crackdowns on migrant sex workers for arrest and deportation⁵⁰ and have distorted the public perception of how much prostitution is directly the result of trafficking. In fact, research found that less than 6% of MIGRANT sex workers had been trafficked; many said they preferred working in the sex industry rather than the “unrewarding and sometimes exploitative conditions they meet in non-sexual jobs”⁵¹.

Trafficking is enabled by poverty and women’s determination to escape it as well as the hostile immigration environment⁵² that makes it impossible for most migrants, including asylum seekers and victims of gender-based violence, to cross international borders unaided. Traffickers escape prosecution not because of a lack of applicable laws, but as with domestic violence and rape, because protecting women is not the priority.

Evidence published by *The Lancet*⁶³, credible research institutions and practitioners indicates that there is no causal relationship between the criminalisation of sex work and a reduction in trafficking or sexual exploitation.^{54, 55}

“Romanian girls, if they were to work together from a place and the police had spotted it and they wanted a nose they could fly through that door... Police don’t go in there for the sex work because they know it would take them ages to build a case against prostitution whereas they can just slam them with immigration there and then.”

“There is this big drive around vulnerability, [the police] are doing it allegedly under the guise of trafficking; the potential that in private flats there are women who are not being checked out by anybody, they don’t have any access to health, they think there’s organised crime...” [Health worker].

HEALTH

Sex workers take good care of their health, but research⁵⁶ has found criminalised sex workers were twice as likely to contract HIV or another sexually transmitted infection, and one-and-a-half times as likely to report having condom-less sex with a client. Decriminalisation could reduce new HIV transmissions by up to 46% globally over a decade.⁵⁷

Stigma, discrimination, and the criminalisation of sex work are major barriers for sex workers accessing appropriate health care. Sex workers often hide their involvement in sex work due to fear of being judged and discriminated against. When they do disclose their occupation, they often experience disapproval, shaming and questioning about their work in a sexualising and degrading manner. Sex workers also face structural barriers to accessing health care such as long waits, restrictive hours, unwelcoming spaces, fear of arrest, legal status requirements, inconvenient location, lack of transportation, inability to pay and lack of confidentiality.⁵⁸

When asked, sex workers in Wales described that they wanted “*consistency*”, more flexible appointments and health workers, and “*a community feel; being able to come to a service and talk and chat as yourself and openly and not being judged.*”

“One woman complained of aggressive behaviour from health professionals, including being called a ‘junkie’ by staff and accused of ‘drug seeking behaviour’, when trying to get help to manage pain.” (Letter to Cardiff & Vale University Health Board re L Oct 2020)

Women survivors of childhood rape and sexual assault are treated as “*problem patients*” and there is little or no “*trauma-informed care*”. As a result of a lack of care, women have had police called on them. (Letter to Cardiff and Vale University Health Board re L September 2020)

POLICY PRIORITIES

The focus on policing as a way to reduce sex work has distorted priorities so that money goes to law enforcement rather than the provision of benefits, housing and other resources for women

to enable and empower women to leave and refuse prostitution. University of Swansea research found that: “[...] *it is a focus on experiences of victims of sexual exploitation, domestic abuse and modern slavery that are used to inform the development of sex work service provision, whilst disregarding the requests of sex workers for decriminalisation, self-determination, labour rights and safety.*”⁵⁹

Barriers to accessing resources are heightened by lack of identification documents particularly for trans and migrant sex workers. It affects every area of people’s lives including access to housing, benefits and health care.

PROPOSALS FOR CHANGE

Some of these actions to improve sex workers safety, health and well-being could be immediately implemented by the Senedd and others come under non-devolved powers. In that case, we ask that the Senedd issue a statement outlining its position and its intention to raise these issues with Westminster.

- **Support demands nationally for the decriminalisation of sex work.** Evidence from New Zealand where decriminalisation was introduced in 2003 shows: no rise in prostitution; women more able to report violence without fear of arrest; attacks cleared up more quickly; sex workers more able to leave prostitution as convictions are cleared from their records; drug users treated as patients not criminals.
- **Oppose the criminalisation of sex workers’ clients** (so called ‘Nordic model’) as this undermines sex workers’ safety.
- **Implement an amnesty from arrest** to protect sex workers who report witnessing or experiencing violence. A sex worker-led campaign won such an amnesty in California.⁶⁰ In cities across the US (Baltimore, Los Angeles, Manhattan, Philadelphia, San Francisco) District Attorneys are refusing to prosecute sex workers in recognition of the harm caused by criminalisation.
- **Amend National Police Chiefs’ Council guidelines** to specify that arrests and raids should only occur where police can show reasonable grounds to suspect that sex workers are being subject to force and coercion. This would help ensure that sex workers aren’t criminalised “simply for being sex workers” or engaging in practices that increase their own safety.
- **Implement a 'firewall' to separate police investigations into violence and labour inspections from Immigration Enforcement**, to ensure migrant sex workers can report violence regardless of their immigration status.
- **Instruct the police, prosecuting authorities and courts to prioritise safety** by vigorously investigating and prosecuting rape, coercion, stalking and other violence.
- **Oppose clauses in the Online Safety Bill** which put a responsibility onto tech companies to censor sex workers’ adverts as any crackdown on online advertising has been shown to increase the risks for sex workers⁶¹ and make it harder for people to work independently.

- **Target resources at sex workers to enable them to leave prostitution if they choose.** Specifically, priority for social housing, debt relief, health services, improved domestic violence services and instructing benefit decision makers to not impose sanctions.⁶²
- **Extend the provision of a “care income”⁶³ to mothers** - similar to the payments⁶⁴ of £1600 a month given to young people leaving care - in recognition of the fact that most sex workers are working to support families. Hawaii passed a law in January to pay a basic income of \$2000 a month to sex workers aiming to exit prostitution.⁶⁵
- **Take action to stop sex working mothers losing custody of their children** -- no child should be taken from their mother/primary carer because the family is poor, homeless or unable to afford food, clothing or childcare.
- **Scrap the No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF) condition** which disproportionately affects women and leaves them destitute and at risk of exploitation and violence.

As an immediate first step, the 2016 parliamentary Home Affairs Committee recommendation could be implemented to decriminalise sex workers on the street and working together in premises and expunge criminal records.

Safety First Wales
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¹ 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.

² Sex Work Research Wales 2010-2014 Summary of Findings. <https://cronfa.swan.ac.uk/Record/cronfa26759>

³ Scambler, 2007

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/303927/A_Review_of_the_Literature_on_sex_workers_and_social_exclusion.pdf Note: This study does not accurately count trans sex workers or respect how people identify. We’d hope that any subsequent research collects data with the recommended two-tier question approach, recording both gender identity and whether an individual identifies with the gender they were assigned at birth.

⁴ Home Office. (2004). Paying the Price: A Consultation Paper on Prostitution.

⁵ <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/mar/09/women-bearing-86-of-austerity-burden-labour-research-reveals>

⁶ 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

⁷ https://www.mirror.co.uk/news/politics/dwp-drawing-up-new-benefit-28067418?_ga=2.192459306.1237007383.1664209520-1925084098.1662542891

⁸ <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2019/jun/05/austerity-forcing-disabled-women-into-sex-work>

⁹ Joseph Rowntree Foundation. Poverty in Wales 2020. <https://www.jrf.org.uk/report/poverty-wales-2020>

¹⁰ <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-wales-57157436>

¹¹ <https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-05-06/44004>

¹² <https://prostitutescollective.net/statement-coronavirus-and-sex-workers-demands/>

¹³ <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-50170297>

¹⁴ <https://www.walesonline.co.uk/news/education/school-uniform-grant-raised-100-24684300>

¹⁵ 1 million adults and 143,000 children are subject to the No Recourse to Public Funds condition. Women are disproportionately affected -- 85% of people applying to have the NRPF condition lifted were women, nearly all of whom were single mothers. <https://wbg.org.uk/blog/no-recourse-to-public-funds-why-this-policy-of-hostility-disproportionally-affects-migrant-women-in-uk/>

¹⁶ Working on the street is criminalised under soliciting laws and brothel-keeping law makes it illegal for two or more sex workers to work together. <https://prostitutescollective.net/know-your-rights/>

¹⁷ 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.

¹⁸ English Collective of Prostitutes. (2019). Sex Workers are Getting Screwed by Brexit. <https://prostitutescollective.net/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/Sex-Workers-are-Getting-Screwed-by-Brexit.pdf>

¹⁹ The National Police Chiefs’ Council (NPCC). (2015). National Policing Sex Work Guidance. Available at: <https://www.app.college.police.uk/app-content/major-investigation-and-public-protection/prostitution>

²⁰ [Police] “should ensure that [they] do not start from a position that treats sex workers as criminals simply for being sex workers... The focus of law enforcement activity should be to improve safety and to target those who exploit or cause harm” and specifies that: “brothel closures and ‘raids’ create a mistrust of all external agencies including outreach services. It is difficult to rebuild trust and ultimately reduces the amount of intelligence submitted to the police and puts sex workers at greater risk.” *Ibid.*

²¹ ‘Police criticised for warning Swansea sex workers they could be prosecuted in clampdown’, 16th April 2019, <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/police-swanea-sex-workers-prosecution-criticism-wales-a8872956.html>

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- ²² <https://www.southwalesargus.co.uk/news/20065925.50-arrests-soliciting-pill-newport/>
- ²³ <https://www.southwalesargus.co.uk/news/23121215.gwent-police-misogyny-racism-corruption-claims/>
- ²⁴ Hanks, S. (2022). The safeguarding delusion: sex work and policing in Wales. *Justice, Power and Resistance*, 5(1-2) <https://doi.org/10.1332/VYJF2519>
- ²⁵ Elmes J, Stuart R, Grenfell P, *et al.* Effect of police enforcement and extreme social inequalities on violence and mental health among women who sell sex: findings from a cohort study in London, UK. <https://sti.bmj.com/content/sextrans/98/5/323.full.pdf>
- ²⁶ <https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/beyond-trafficking-and-slavery/long-read-how-nordic-model-france-changed-everything-sex-workers/>
- ²⁷ Levy, J., & Jakobsson, P. (2014). Sweden’s abolitionist discourse and law: Effects on the dynamics of Swedish sex work and on the lives of Sweden’s sex workers. *Criminology & Criminal Justice*, 14(5), 593–607. <https://documentation.lastradainternational.org/Isidocs/3049-Levy%20Sweden.pdf>
- ²⁸ 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/>
- ²⁹ 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>
- ³⁰ 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/>
- ³¹ 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>
- ³² 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>
- ³³ <https://www.walesonline.co.uk/news/wales-news/cardiff-sex-workers-victims-shocking-2043459>
- ³⁴ 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. Connelly, L. (2014) Violence against sex workers. Analysis of National Ugly Mugs.

³⁵ 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://prostitutescollective.net/petition/>

³⁶ A 2014 survey found that where arrests were high 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).

³⁷ <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2017/aug/03/police-sex-workers-brothel-thieves-london-keir-starmer#img-1>

³⁸ <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-48095118>

³⁹ Connelly, C. (2014). Violence Against Sex Workers: Analysis of National Ugly Mugs (NUM) Reports. https://s3.eu-west3.amazonaws.com/observatoirebdd/2014_Violence_against_sex_workers_UK_Executive_Summary_CONNELL_Y_NUM_ENG.pdf

⁴⁰ <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-wales-south-west-wales-43227579>

⁴¹ Hanks, S. (2022) The safeguarding delusion: sex work and policing in Wales. *Justice, Power and Resistance*, 5(1-2) <https://doi.org/10.1332/VYJF2519>

⁴² Briefing: Sex Work, Mothering and Mental Health, Professor Teela Sanders and Dr Rosie Campbell OBE, March 2020. LINK?

⁴³ From 1994 to the current day the rate of increase of children in care in Wales is 153% compared to 58% in England. REF?

⁴⁴ Figures from Ministry of Justice quoted in “The Welsh towns where 1 in 44 children are cared for by the state”, Emily Dugan, The Sunday Times, April 25 2021. <https://supportnotseparation.blog/2021/04/30/the-welsh-towns-where-1-in-44-children-are-cared-for-by-the-state/>

⁴⁵ “Final Report of the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse, 2022. LINK?

⁴⁶ <https://www.communitycare.co.uk/2022/08/22/welsh-government-consulting-eliminating-profit-making-provision-children-in-care/>

⁴⁷ An average weekly placement for a child in care costs £4000, rising to £7-8000 for children with disabilities. Foster parents get £450 a week, more for children with disabilities while mothers get £21. REF?

⁴⁸ <https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/5050/sex-work-social-services-mothers-children/>

⁴⁹ The Modern Slavery Act 2015 ("the 2015 Act") <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2015/30/contents/enacted>

⁵⁰ <https://feministing.com/guest-post-the-soho-raids-were-not-about-trafficking/>

⁵¹ Mai, N. (2011). Migrant Workers in the UK Sex Industry: ESRC Full Research Report. <https://prostitutescollective.net/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/Migrant-Workers-in-the-UK-Sex-Industry-Project-Final-Policy-Relevant-Report.pdf>

⁵² <https://www.redpepper.org.uk/criminalising-sex-work-wont-help-trafficked-women/>

⁵³ [https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736\(15\)61460-X/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(15)61460-X/fulltext)

⁵⁴ The UNAIDS Advisory group on HIV and Sex Work also notes that criminalising clients has not been shown to be effective in reducing trafficking⁵⁴. UNAIDS, Guidance note on HIV and sex work, Annex 2: Shifting the strategic focus from reduction of demand for sex work to reduction of demand for unprotected paid sex, p 12, 2012

⁵⁵ The Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe has stated that in Sweden there is no empirical evidence to date that the criminalisation of clients has reduced human trafficking for sexual exploitation in the country . OCSE, Analysing The Business Model Of Trafficking In Human Beings To Better Prevent The Crime, p 70, 2010 available at <https://www.osce.org/cthb/69028?download=true>

⁵⁶ 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.lshmt.ac.uk/newsevents/news/2018/criminalisation-and-repressive-policing-sex-work-linked-increased-risk>

⁵⁷ The Lancet. (2015). Keeping Sex Workers Safe.

⁵⁸ https://www.bmj.com/bmj/section-pdf/902641?path=/bmj/351/8020/Clinical_Review.full.pdf

⁵⁹ Hanks, S. (2022). The safeguarding delusion: sex work and policing in Wales. Justice, Power and Resistance, 5(1-2) <https://doi.org/10.1332/VYJF2519>

⁶⁰ <https://uspros.net/2018/01/26/victory-amnesty-from-arrest-for-sex-workers-reporting-crime/>

⁶¹ <https://prostitutescollective.net/briefing-online-safety-bill/>

⁶² In New Zealand, the State discriminates in favour of sex workers who want to leave sex work and need to claim benefits. Other workers who leave their job are not paid job-seekers allowance for a number of weeks. Sex workers do not have this stand down period when going on a benefit. (Ministry of Justice, 2008).

⁶³ In the UK, the English Collective of Prostitutes, Support Not Separation, the Global Women’s Strike and a number of other women’s organisations, as well as the Green New Deal for Europe, are campaigning for a [care income](#) to address social and environmental justice. They point to the fact that 80% of women are mothers and that overwhelmingly mothers are the primary carers and are impoverished as a result. An income that addresses mothers’ poverty and recognises their vital contribution to society would go a long way to tackling the economic conditions that drive women, especially mothers, into prostitution.

⁶⁴ <https://gov.wales/basic-income-care-leavers-wales-pilot-announced>

⁶⁵ [SB3347 \(hawaii.gov\)](#)