



Standing up for Student Sex Workers Policy Proposal

Contact details

Your name (Proposer of the policy)	Tamsyn Hudson-Rose
The name of a person who supports the policy (Secunder of the policy)	James Warren

Student Impact

Have you consulted students about your proposal? Please explain how many students you have engaged with and how.	I have consulted with over 40 student sex workers, all of whom feel this motion meets their needs.
How does your proposal impact the students at the University of Plymouth, what difference will it make to students?	This policy will make sure that student sex workers can access information and support where necessary. This policy will also ensure that student sex workers know they are supported by their Union should they face disciplinary action by the university on the basis of their sex worker status. It also means student sex workers know that UPSU supports safer working conditions and freedom from abuse and harassment for sex workers.

Policy Proposal

The Union Notes (Facts) This section should include facts, not reflection or opinions. Please provide references where possible.

- Sex work refers to providing sexual services in exchange for money, this can include; escorting, lap dancing, stripping, pole dancing, pornography, web-camming, adult modelling, phone sex, and selling sex (on and off the street).
- Decriminalisation does not endorse or promote sex work but acknowledges decriminalisation as the safest model for sex workers.
- Currently prostitution (the exchange of sexual services for money) is not illegal, but associated activities (soliciting in a public place, kerb crawling, operating a brothel) are. This means that whilst sex work is not illegal in the UK, sex workers who work on the street can be picked up on soliciting or anti-social behavioural order charges, and sex workers who work together indoors for safety can be charged with brothel keeping.

4. Financial reasons, and any criminal record gain due to the criminalisation of sex work, are usually cited as the main reason for staying in sex work.[1]

5. The NUS National Executive Council passed a policy to support the decriminalisation of sex work and to campaign against any attempt to introduce the Nordic Model (which criminalises the purchase of sex) into the UK.

6. In August 2015, Amnesty International voted to adopt policy to protect human rights of sex workers.[2] The resolution recommended that they develop a policy that supports the full decriminalisation of all aspects of consensual sex work. The policy will also call on states to ensure that sex workers enjoy full and equal legal protection from exploitation, trafficking and violence. In holding this position, Amnesty International join organisations such as the World Health Organisation (WHO), UN AIDS, the UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Health, Anti-Slavery International, the Global Alliance Against Trafficking in Women, the International Labour Organisation, the Royal College of Nursing, and every current sex worker-led organisation in the world.

The Union Believes (Opinions/Beliefs) This section requires reflection on the facts stated in 'The Union Notes'

1. Sex work is work - Sex work is the exchange of money for labour.

2. People should be free to choose what they do with their time, their labour and their bodies.

3. Due to the financial pressure placed on students, it is highly likely that some will do sex work alongside their studies.[3]

4. The stigmatization of sex work makes it unlikely for sex workers to seek help and support if and when they need it. The lack of institutionalised and legal protection for sex workers has driven them to create their own safety mechanisms: "National Ugly Mugs" collects reports from sex workers about violent incidents or dangerous clients and makes the data available via a paid service, while forums such as Redbook (which the authorities have since shut down) promoted the collection of similar information so sex workers could protect themselves. [4]

5. The "Nordic model" or criminalisation of sex workers' clients has been shown to lead to further distrust of the police amongst sex workers and a willingness of sex workers to engage in more risky behaviour/safety procedures out of desperation.[5] The law increases difficulties in street work, jeopardises safety, increases violence, leads to sex workers' child custody being revoked and being evicted from housing arbitrarily. Additionally, criminalisation of sex work means that clients are reluctant to give identifying information, ensuring that any client violence is virtually anonymous and not prosecutable. [6]

6. Decriminalisation would ensure that sex workers feel able to report unsafe clients or violence at work without the worry of criminal repercussions, work together for safety, and that those who wish to leave the sex industry are not left with criminal records as a result of their job.[7]

7. Expulsion of or disciplining student sex workers for their involvement in sex work is counterproductive to their goals, safety and wellbeing.

8. "Outing" or letting others know about a student's status as a sex worker without their consent puts the student at great risk of harm, and is a form of harassment. "Whorephobia" is defined as the fear or hate of sex workers, and can include using slurs against sex workers, excluding sex workers from societies or events, purposefully silencing the voices of sex workers, aggressively arguing for criminalisation or for the Nordic model without inclusion of current sex workers themselves, and maliciously outing a sex worker with intent to cause discipline or harm.

The Union Resolves (Actions) Here you will describe the action you want to be taken, be specific.

~~1. To provide student sex workers with information about how to access support they may require.~~

1. To ensure that a copy of the document providing supporting information to student sex workers, is available on the UPSU website.

2. To support the full decriminalisation of sex work.

3. To mandate the relevant Sabbatical Officer to support and liaise with sex worker-led organisations, such as the English Collective of Prostitutes and Sex Worker's Advocacy and Resistance Movement, who work to improve the lives of sex workers across the UK.

4. To mandate the relevant Sabbatical Officer to support any student sex worker being threatened with disciplinary action based solely or in part due to their status as a sex worker.

5. To mandate the relevant Sabbatical Officer to support student sex workers that are being outed, targeted, faced with whorephobia or harassed in the university for their status as sex workers.

Appendices/supporting information Please include any supporting information relevant to your motion, this could include; consideration of how you would achieve any points in 'The Union Resolves', links to news articles or online publications

Sources:

[1] A Review of the Literature on Sex Workers and Social Exclusion
https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/303927/A_Review_of_the_Literature_on_sex_workers_and_social_exclusion.pdf

[2] Q&A on the Policy to Protect Human Rights of Sex Workers
<https://www.amnesty.org/en/qa-policy-to-protect-the-human-rights-of-sex-workers/>

[3] The Student Sex Work Project Research Summary

<http://www.swansea.ac.uk/media/Student%20Sex%20Work%20Report%202015.pdf>

[4] <https://uknswp.org/um/welcome/>

[5] Sweden's abolitionist discourse and law: Effects on the dynamics of Swedish sex work and on the lives of Sweden's sex workers

<http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/1748895814528926?hwshi%20b2=authn%3A1446058181%3A20151027%253Aada299c6-0730-4d4a-b9a035c896af403e%3A0%3A0%3A0%3AWrTAU%2F%2FAf5d50x7Uui2hvA%3D%3D&>

[6] "Sex work is not commercial sexual exploitation", briefing from SCOT-PE http://www.scot-pep.org.uk/sites/default/files/reports/sw_is_not_cse_summary1.pdf

[7] Report of the Prostitution Law Review Committee on the Operation of the Prostitution Reform Act 2003 <http://www.justice.govt.nz/policy/commercial-property-andregulatory/prostitution/prostitution-law-review-committee/publications/plrc-report/reportof-the-prostitution-law-review-committee-on-the-operation-of-the-prostitution-reform-act2003>

Further Information:

ECP Fact Sheet and Mythbusting <http://prostitutescollective.net/2015/02/06/fact-fiction/>

Amnesty International: Draft Policy on State Obligations to Respect, Protect, and Fulfil the Human Rights of Sex Workers

<https://amnestysgprdasset.blob.core.windows.net/media/10243/draft-sw-policy-forexternal-publication.pdf>

Vice: The Amnesty Sex Work Argument, Broken Down http://www.vice.com/en_uk/read/the-amnesty-sex-work-argument-broken-down-622

Decriminalising sex work in New Zealand: its history and impact

<https://www.opendemocracy.net/beyondslavery/fraser-crichton/decriminalising-sex-work-in-new-zealand-its-history-and-impact>

Full list of SCOT-PEP's briefing papers on various legal models <http://www.scot-pep.org.uk/about-scot-pep/briefing-papers>

State Violence, Sex Trade, and the Failure of Anti-Trafficking Policies, Emi Koyama

<http://eminism.org/store/pdf-zn/complexities2.pdf>

Sex Worker Open University - For Allies, "So you want to help sex workers?"

<http://www.sexworkeropenuniversity.com/uploads/3/6/9/3/3693334/alliesleaflet.pdf>

Playing the Whore: The Work of Sex Work, Melissa Gira Grant

Decriminalise sex work for safety's sake <http://www.pledgedecrim.com/>

Rachel Thorn (2016): The mothers secretly working as sex workers.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-38128523>

César Amaya Sandino (2012): The Prisma: Prostitution in the UK (I): 'Poverty, the driving force'. <http://prostitutescollective.net/2012/07/prostitution-in-the-uk-i-poverty-the-driving-force/>

ICRSE (2015): Underserved. Overpoliced. Invisibilised. LGBT sex workers do matter.

<http://www.nswp.org/sites/nswp.org/files/Underserved.%20Overpoliced.%20Invisibilised.%20LGBT%20Sex%20Workers%20Do%20Matter%2C%20ICRSE%20-%202015.pdf>

Ruth Jacobs (2014): Policing Prostitution - The Merseyside Hate Crime Model That Prioritises Protection of Sex Workers http://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/ruth-jacobs/prostitution-law-merseyside-model_b_4731381.html

The Student Sex Work Project, March 2015

<http://www.swansea.ac.uk/media/Student%20Sex%20Work%20Report%202015.pdf>

Statistics on Prostitution

http://www.toynbeehall.org.uk/data/files/Statistics_on_prostitution.pdf

Statistics on VAW in the UK: <https://thewomensresourcecentre.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/inequalitystats.pdf>

EXTRACT OF MEETING – 13TH FEBRUARY 2018

Standing up for Student Sex Workers (appendix 2)

Fez Endalaust, Chair of Union Council declared a conflict of interest with this proposal and passed over to Adrienne Solon- Deputy Chair of Union Council

It was noted that the meeting was not quorate so the Chair called for a vote on whether to allow a vote by email after the meeting, for those members not present.

For: unanimous

A vote will be conducted after the meeting, when minutes have been circulated to reach quoracy.

Tamsyn Hudson-Rose – Part-time Welfare Officer explained that this proposal originally was debated and approved by the Union Executive Committee in November 2015 so has now lapsed. This continues to be an important student issue and needs to be renewed.

Tamsyn gave an overview of the proposal, this included the following points;

- 17th December - International Day to End Violence Against Sex Workers

- In the UK the mortality rate for sex workers is 12 times higher than the national average
- On average one sex workers dies every six weeks
- Female sex workers are 18 times more likely to be murdered than women of similar demographic characteristics
- A 2004 home office study estimated that over half of all UK women involved in prostitution have been raped and/or seriously sexually assaulted and at least $\frac{3}{4}$ of women involved in prostitution have been physically assaulted.

Tamsyn noted that these figures show that sex workers are a vulnerable group that should be supported. In the context of why it's important for students, the SU does support policies that promote diversity, inclusion and safe spaces, as evidenced by many of the policies that have been passed previously. For example the motion that was passed last year pertaining to trans students.

Increasing tuition fees in addition to the higher cost of living is seeing more students turning to sex work to support themselves. A study by the university of Swansea found that one in twenty students has some involvement in the sex work industry and that one in five would consider it.

When the motion was initially proposed over 40 student sex workers were consulted and were in favour of the proposal in 2015. Tamsyn has consulted with around 60 student sex workers. Tamsyn noted that there are difficulties when representing student sex workers, as not all are openly shouting about their involvement in sex work due to the stigma which often surrounds this type of wo. Therefore, total figures may be more.

Tamsyn has consulted with as many student sex workers as possible and they agreed that there is a need for this policy which will benefit a specific group of students.

Tamsyn read through the resolves of the motion;

1. To provide student sex workers with information about how to access support they may require.
2. To support the full decriminalisation of sex work.
3. To support and liaise with sex worker-led organisations, such as the English Collective of Prostitutes and Sex Worker's Advocacy and Resistance Movement, who work to improve the lives of sex workers across the UK.
4. To support any student sex worker being threatened with disciplinary action based solely or in part due to their status as a sex worker.
5. To support student sex workers that are being outed, targeted, faced with whorephobia or harassed in the university for their status as sex workers.

Tamsyn noted that at previous Welfare Forums, a few student sex workers did mention that they had visited the UPSU Advice Centre and not been able to access the support document, as noted in the original motion. To mitigate against this happening again it was suggested that a Sabbatical Officer be mandated to ensure the proper implementation of the policy.

Julie Hahn – Advice and Representation Manager pointed out that the Advice Centre does have the document on hand to give out but no students identifying themselves as sex workers had accessed services.

Kat Pierce – Part-time Volunteering Officer suggested that a copy of the document be available to view/download from the UPSU website so that students can access it for themselves.

James Warren – VP Welfare, agreed that having the information online would be better than mandating a Sabbatical Officer to ensure that the policy is implemented. Potentially a situation may arise where it could be a personal conflict for officers and as such not carried forward.

Tamsyn agreed to amend the policy resolves point 1 to read;

To ensure that a copy of the document providing supporting information to student sex workers, is available on the UPSU website.

Lowri Jones – President asked who would be expected to liaise with the sex worker-led organisations, as outlined in resolves point 3. Alex Doyle suggested mandating a lead officer, to be decided amongst the team.

Tamsyn amended the proposal resolves 3, 4 and 5 to include; ‘To mandate the relevant Sabbatical Officer...’

Vicky Hunt – School of Psychology Rep asked if students are able to get representation from UPSU if they had an issue. It was noted that the Advice Centre can signpost students to specific support services, give advice and support on academic regulation and process as well as accompany students to meetings.

As there were no further questions, the Chair moved to the vote

For: 20

Against: 0

Abstention: 2

As agreed, voting quoracy will be sought by allowing members not present to vote via email outside of the meeting.

An additional three votes were received after the meeting

For: 23

Against: 0

Abstention: 2