

Student Sex Workers Rights at UEA

Proposer: Jo Swo (Welfare, Community and Diversity Officer)

Seconder: Abbie Mulcairn (Women's Officer)

Union notes:

1. UEASU already has policy on sex work and decriminalisation which is still relevant.
2. The Student Sex Work Project ¹, conducted by Swansea University, found that:
 - a) nearly two thirds of students that took part (6,750) were motivated by sex work to earn money to fund a lifestyle, 45% of those wanted to avoid debt;
 - b) 59% thought that they would enjoy the work;
 - c) 54% were "curious";
 - d) 45% wanted to work in the industry;
 - e) 44% were motivated by sexual pleasure.
3. Sex work refers to escorting, lap dancing, stripping, pole dancing, pornography, webcamming, adult modelling, phone sex, and selling sex (on and off the street)².
4. Selling sex is not illegal in the UK – but it is criminalised ³. Almost everything that sex workers do to stay safe is illegal ⁴

Union believes:

1. We need a policy that focuses on student sex workers here at UEA.
2. Sex work is work. Sex work is the exchange of money for labour, like any other job. It is different because it is currently criminalised and stigmatised.
3. With the rise in living costs, the increase in tuition fees, and the slashing of benefits for disabled people, it is highly likely that some students do sex work alongside their studies.
4. It is the duty of the Student Union and University to protect their students from sexual violence, which can happen within the sex worker trade, and no student should be subjugated to any type of violence.

Union resolves:

1. Mandate the Welfare, Community and Diversity Officer to conduct a Student Sex Worker Survey for students at UEA.

¹ <http://www.thestudentsexworkproject.co.uk/>

² From here on, references are made to 'sex work' in this motion refer to full service sex work – escorting, prostitution, etc. Other strands of sex work are stigmatised, but not criminalised in the way that full service sex work is criminalised.

³ Similar laws operate in Scotland, Wales & England. 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. The main laws around sex work in the UK are: the Vagrancy Act of 1824; the Sexual Offences Act of 1956 and the Street Offences Act of 1959 (England and Wales); the Burgh Police (Scotland) Act of 1892 and the Sexual Offences (Scotland) Act of 1976, Sexual Offences Act 2003, Policing and Crime Act 2009, Crime and Disorder Act 1998, Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2002, Proceeds of Crime Act 2002.

⁴ See <http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2012/jan/06/prostitutescriminalised> & <http://sabotaetimes.com/people/sheila-farmer-and-the-brothelthat-never-was/>.

2. Mandate the Student Union to use the data collected in the above mentioned survey and all available resources to lobby the University to:
 - a) Publicly promise that no student is punished/suspended/expelled from University due to sex work
 - b) Release a statement in favour of decriminalising sex work
3. Mandate all UEA delegates to vote in favour of sex workers' rights/decriminalisation at all NUS Conferences.
4. Mandate the Welfare, Community and Diversity Officer to create a campaign focusing on the rights of student sex workers at UEA and liaise with the LGBT+ Officers and Women's Officer.
5. For the Student Union to provide all possible resources and support to join national and local demonstrations around sex work.