



Live Fear Free Helpline

Providing confidential support and information on domestic abuse, sexual violence and violence against women in Wales

Llinell Gymorth Byw Heb Ofn

Darparu gwybodaeth a chefnogaeth cyfrinachol ynghylch trais domestig, trais rhywiol a thrais yn erbyn merched yng Nghymru

0808 80 10 800



## Home Affairs Select Committee Prostitution Inquiry

End of Inquiry: 18 February 2016	
<b>Name</b>	Karan Sanghera – Policy Officer
<b>Organisation (if applicable)</b>	Welsh Women's Aid
<b>Email / telephone number</b>	<a href="mailto:karansanghera@welshwomensaid.org.uk">karansanghera@welshwomensaid.org.uk</a> 02920541551
<b>Your address</b>	Welsh Women's Aid Pendragon House Caxton Place Pentwyn CF23 8XE

### About Welsh Women's Aid

1.1 Welsh Women's Aid is the national charity in Wales working to prevent domestic abuse and all forms of violence against women<sup>1</sup> and ensure high-quality services for survivors that are needs-led, gender-responsive and holistic.

1.2 Established in 1978, we are an umbrella organisation that represents and supports a national federation of 23 local independent charities delivering specialist domestic abuse and violence against women prevention services in Wales, as part of a UK network of provision. These specialist services constitute our core membership, and they provide lifesaving refuges, outreach, and community advocacy and support to survivors of violence and abuse - women, men, children, families - and deliver innovative preventative work in local communities. We also deliver direct services including the Welsh Government funded *Live Fear Free Helpline*; a National Training Service; refuge and advocacy services in Colwyn Bay and Wrexham; and the national *Children Matter* project which supports local services to help children and young

<sup>1</sup> Domestic abuse is the exercise of control by one person, over another, within an intimate or close family relationship; the abuse can be sexual, physical, financial, emotional or psychological. Violence against women is violence directed at women because they are women or that affects women disproportionately, and includes domestic abuse, rape and sexual violence, forced marriage, female genital mutilation, sexual exploitation including through trafficking and the sex-industry, so-called 'honour-based violence' and sexual harassment .



Live Fear  
Free Helpline

Providing confidential support  
and information on domestic  
abuse, sexual violence and  
violence against women in Wales

0808 80 10 800

Llinell Gymorth  
Byw Heb Ofn

Darparu gwybodaeth a chefnogaeth  
cyfrinachol ynghylch trais domestig,  
trais rhywiol a thrais yn erbyn merched  
yng Nghymru



people affected by abuse and to deliver preventative STAR group-work in every local authority in Wales.

1.3 We have been at the forefront of shaping coordinated community responses and practice in Wales, by campaigning for change and providing advice, consultancy, support and training to deliver policy and service improvements for survivors, families and communities. As a national federation, our policy work, consultancy, training and advocacy is all grounded in the experience of local specialist services and service users. Our success is founded on making sure the experiences and needs of survivors are central to all we do.

### **Welsh Women's Aid: Key Messages**

2.1 Welsh Women's Aid welcome the opportunity to respond to this Inquiry on prostitution and would place our response firmly in the position that prostitution is, and should be treated as, a form of violence against women and grounded in inequality and exploitation. Indeed, the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) already acknowledge this<sup>2</sup>.

2.2 Welsh Women's Aid support many of the views advocated in 'End Demand for Sexual Exploitation's' response to this inquiry.<sup>3</sup> Specifically, we support that:

- The UK Parliament should adopt the legal framework model of the 'Sex Buyer Law' by decriminalising those who sell sex (by removing the laws around soliciting and loitering) and place criminal sanctions on the buyers of sex. This will align the law with the Crown Prosecution Services' classification of prostitution being a form of violence against women, as women will no longer be held liable for the exploitation they face. In addition, this will also increase accountability of sex buyers for exploiting women engaged within the sex trade.
- The Modern Day Slavery Act 2015 has failed to offer protection to those who are trafficked into the sex trade. By adopting the model of the 'Sex Buyer Law', this will assist in reducing the demand for trafficking for the sex trade, by making the process more difficult for those who profit from the exploitation. This would also offer better protection for those who are being exploited, as the fear of prosecution will be removed from them and they will be more able to seek help and support to escape and report their abusers.
- Measures and funding methods should be adopted which allow those engaged with the sex trade access to safety, protection, healthcare and support, and routes to exit prostitution should they choose to do so. Provisions should be made for these services to be available in both England and Wales. The model of the 'Sex Buyer

<sup>2</sup> [http://www.cps.gov.uk/legal/p\\_to\\_r/prostitution\\_and\\_exploitation\\_of\\_prostitution/](http://www.cps.gov.uk/legal/p_to_r/prostitution_and_exploitation_of_prostitution/)

<sup>3</sup> <http://enddemand.uk/about/end-demand/>





Live Fear Free Helpline

Providing confidential support and information on domestic abuse, sexual violence and violence against women in Wales

Llinell Gymorth Byw Heb Ofn

Darparu gwybodaeth a chefnogaeth cyfrinachol ynghylch trais domestig, trais rhywiol a thrais yn erbyn merched yng Nghymru

0808 80 10 800



Law' would also help to facilitate exiting of prostitution, as having a criminal record for soliciting can be a significant barrier for many women.

2.3 This response is consistent with the UK Women's Aid Federations' position on prostitution which states:

*"Women's Aid federations in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland oppose the decision taken by Amnesty International to support the full decriminalisation of prostitution. We believe this policy effectively legitimises abuse perpetrated by pimps, traffickers and exploiters, and sends a message to men and boys that they are entitled to access and abuse women's bodies."*

And our position is also consistent with the UK End Violence Against Women Coalition (EVAW) position on prostitution which recognises:

*"Women's entry into, and experiences within, prostitution are inextricably linked to gender inequality, the gender pay gap and segregation of the labour market, which continue to disadvantage women; while it is men who form the huge majority of those who seek to pay for sex within prostitution. Our critique of prostitution is not moralistic, nor do we condemn or infantilise women who are involved within it, rather we argue this is a patriarchal institution through which women are exploited, marginalised, abused and stereotyped. Prostitution, and other structures in which women are objectified, reinforce and perpetuate stereotypes of women, especially where this intersects other aspects of social identity such as race/ethnicity, age and class. Prostitution as an institution reinforces and perpetuates the unequal status of ALL women. We do not therefore support criminalisation of women in prostitution".<sup>4</sup>*

### **Declaration of interests**

3.1 Welsh Women's Aid is a registered charity and has no conflicting interests to declare.

---

Welsh Women's Aid would again like to thank the Home Affairs Committee for the opportunity to comment on this important inquiry and we look forward to working together to support this issue in the future.

Any comments or questions regarding our response can be directed to:

**Karan Sanghera – Policy Officer**  
**02920 541 551**  
**[karansanghera@welshwomensaid.org.uk](mailto:karansanghera@welshwomensaid.org.uk)**

---

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.endviolenceagainstwomen.org.uk/evaw-s-position-on-prostitution>