



Student Council 09/06/15

Motion Name: Supporting Student Sex Workers

Background:

1. Sex work refers to escorting, lap dancing, stripping, pole dancing, pornography, webcams, adult modelling, phone sex, and selling sex (on and off the street).

In March 2015 the Student Sex Work Project found that 4.8% of just under 7000 student respondents had been involved in sex work in some capacity.

2. About one in five respondents said that they had at some point considered working in the sex industry. 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 women students do sex work alongside their studies.

3. The most positive aspects of working in the industry were 'good money' and 'flexible working hours', with sexual pleasure third at 46.4%.

4. The most negative aspect of working in the industry was identified as secrecy, with unpredictable earnings and unpleasant customers coming second and third. Fear of violence came fourth with 36% saying it was the most negative aspect.

5. The project found that universities do not include sex work in any of their policies and staff are unaware and unsure about available support and what aspects of sex work are legal and illegal. The majority of university staff would like guidance available online.

6. Selling sex is not illegal in the UK, but it is criminalised. Sex work is the exchange of money for labour, like any other job. It is different because it is currently criminalised and stigmatised.

7. Decriminalisation would ensure that sex workers feel able to report unsafe clients or violence at work without the worry of criminal repercussions, that sex workers can 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.

Purpose:

If the motion is successful, what do you want to achieve? What's your vision for the future?

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the best student life

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1. People should be free to choose what they do with their time, labour and bodies. If they have fewer choices, our solution should be to expand their choices, not take options away through further criminalisation.
2. Student sex workers at the University of Bristol should feel more supported.
3. Less stigma and more awareness around sex work amongst students and the academic community is needed.

Action:

1. Bristol SU will lobby the University to take an explicit non-exclusionary stance towards students who work in the sex industry, with the University protecting student sex workers from falling victim to stigmatisation and discrimination in much the same way as they protect students from minority groups.
2. Bristol SU will work to protect sex workers from stigmatisation from the academic or student community, through lobbying and campaigns and will work with NUS and its Liberation campaigns, which have decriminalisation policy.
3. Bristol SU will lobby the University to provide online resources which include information about the law and support services available.
4. Bristol SU will lobby the University to provide training to personal tutors and other relevant staff on dealing with student disclosures of working in the sex industry. This training should focus on; the diversity of occupations within the sex industry, the legalities of sex work, stereotyping and stigma, the needs of student sex workers, Anti-discrimination protections and available student support, Appropriate protocols in case a student experienced sexual violence and assault.
5. Bristol SU will launch a research project to find out more about student sex workers' experiences at the University.
6. Bristol SU will work to identify and facilitate online tools to help student sex workers at Bristol communicate with each other e.g. online forums.

Proposed by: Alice Phillips

Your first and last name: Alice Phillips

Your student number: Equality, Liberation & Access Officer

Seconder first and last name: Sorana Vieru

Seconder student number: Postgraduate Education Officer

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