

Dear Lord Morrow,

I have been a sex worker for 20 years and spent a large proportion of that time working in Ireland, so I am speaking from a base of vast experience. Over those years I have met very many other sex workers, who worked on the street, in flats and as escorts. They also came from a very wide socio-economic background.

In all of my years of working I have never once encountered a sex worker who was forcibly trafficked into the trade. In my experience the driving force behind some of the sex workers who would rather not be working is poverty and drug addiction and as a society it is these we should be looking at, not consenting adults having sex.

Having regard to clause six, the legislation is already in place to target and convict traffickers and it is already an offence to have sex with a coerced sex worker. When the United Nations have called for the decriminalisation of sex work around the world then I struggle to see why you would seek to contravene their expertise and research.

I'm aware that my colleagues at SCOT-PEP have provided you with an excellent essay with why the Swedish model is at best, problematic, but in summary -

* There is no evidence of a reduction in the number of clients.

*There is no evidence of a reduction in the number of sex workers.

*There IS evidence of an increase in danger to sex workers through more dangerous forms of work and less opportunity to screen clients.

*There IS evidence of higher rates of STI's/ HIV because outreach services find it so much more difficult to reach the most vulnerable to assist with condom provision and testing.

Lord Morrow, I call on you to remove clause six as a matter of urgency and introduce in it's place a new charge of aggravated trafficking , allowing those of us who choose to work in the sex industry to continue to do so in safety.

Further, I ask that I may be allowed to give evidence in person to the NIA.

Yours sincerely,

Laura Lee
International Union of Sex Workers