

I wish to make you aware of NUS-USI's strong opposition to clause of Lord Morrow's Human Trafficking and Exploitation (further Provisions and Support for Victims) Bill. The Justice Committee is examining the Bill in the coming weeks, and NUS-USI believes that clause six of part one of the Bill, which is titled 'Paying for sexual services of a person', could have very dangerous ramifications for sex workers.

This clause could drive sex work further underground, and could endanger the safety of women working, in addition to potentially making it more difficult to leave the industry if they choose to. It could prevent sex workers from speaking out and we believe that this clause seriously undermines the bill.

The bill as it stands conflates human trafficking with sex work. NUS-USI believes that human trafficking is such a serious issue that any bill created to address it, should focus on human trafficking alone, and no other issue.

We want to take this opportunity to acknowledge the significant effort that Lord Morrow has put into the bill, but we hope that he will understand its current flaws and consider amending it or tabling a new one to reflect the need to address human trafficking alone within such a bill.

Many have expressed significant reservations about the Bill, including Detective Chief Supt Philip Marshall of the PSNI. The Justice Minister, David Ford, does not support the clause. We would strongly encourage you to act in the committee stage of the bill to help remove this clause, and we would be very interested to hear your views on this issue. If possible, we would like to arrange a meeting with you/ your party on this issue, and we would be extremely grateful if you could contact us to arrange a meeting.

I look forward to hearing from you,

Many thanks,

Aisling Gallagher
NUS-USI Women's Officer