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# Sex Workers and Education Briefing

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UCU has a policy on supporting self-organised sex workers in their call for decriminalisation of sex workers through collective working and improved safety for sex workers. This follows a motion passed at Congress in 2017 which read as follows:

## **Education, sex worker safety and collective organising – Halesowen College**

### *Congress notes:*

- 1 *as many as 1 in 20 students are involved in work in the sex industry*
- 2 *recent NUS findings that students work in this area for primarily financial reasons*
- 3 *the high proportion of LGBT and disabled students represented in sex work*
- 4 *the impact of FE cuts and rising tuition fees in blocking exit from the sex industry.*

### *Congress believes:*

- a. *that sex workers, like all oppressed groups, have the right to organise collectively*
- b. *that criminalisation of sex work prevents collective working and increases risk to sex worker safety.*

### *Congress resolves:*

- i. *to work with the NUS and any other relevant group to highlight the impact cuts and fees have in trapping workers in the sex industry, and campaign for free access to education*
- ii. *to support self-organised sex workers in their call for decriminalisation of sex work to allow collective working and improved safety for sex workers.*

The English Collective of Prostitutes (ECP) is a network of sex workers and ex-sex workers from all different backgrounds, nationalities, gender, ages and sexuality. The main priority for ECP is the safety of sex workers who work on the streets. ECP campaign for the decriminalisation of prostitution, for sex workers rights and safety, for resources to enable people to get out of prostitution and take on legal cases. They also campaign against the austerity cuts, poverty and for better housing provision.

The NUS 2016 Student Sex Worker Survey references the financial hardships experienced by students, highlights the demographic of students more likely to take up sex work and also provides a series of recommendations. You can access this here: <https://www.nusconnect.org.uk/articles/5-things-we-learned-from-the-student-sex-work-survey-e1d9>

Since university grants were scrapped and replaced by student loans, 10% of students turn to prostitution to subsist. ECP would like to see support services for student sex workers with practical safety tips and no threat of expulsion if they are found to be undertaking sex work. Student sex work will only diminish if students were not trapped into poverty due to the loan system. The NUS has also been campaigning alongside ECP on this issue and has called for a clear policy on student sex workers in universities and colleges.

For more information about the campaign, go to: [www.prostitutescollective.net](http://www.prostitutescollective.net)