

English Collective of Prostitutes The "Girls' Union"



We are women who work or have worked in different areas of the sex industry – both on the streets and indoors. Since 1975, we have been campaigning for decriminalisation and safety of sex workers.

After the murder of five women in Ipswich, we launched the Safety First Coalition, which includes anti-poverty campaigners, church people & residents of red-light areas, the Royal College of Nursing, Women Against Rape, members of the medical & legal professions, prison reformers, sex worker & drugs rehabilitation projects.

We've helped women win against charges of soliciting, closure orders, ASBOs, brothel-keeping & controlling – the last two most often used against women whose primary role is to ensure safety.

We won the first private prosecution for rape in England and Wales, putting a serial rapist who targeted sex workers, behind bars. In 1982 we occupied a King's Cross Church for 12 days to protest against police illegality and racism against street workers.

We spearheaded the campaign against the Policing and Crime Bill which is now law. It will force prostitution further underground, making it more dangerous for all women and all sex workers. Police

now have greater powers to arrest us for soliciting, force us into "rehabilitation", throw us out of premises, steal our earnings and property, and to criminalise clients. We are co-ordinating resistance to this law. Please help us by telling us what is happening where you are. Are more women working, are the police arresting more, are there more attacks? Have you come across any women being trafficked or are the police using "trafficking" to raid and deport?

We also oppose the new Welfare Reform law which abolishes Income Support – the only benefit mothers and victims of domestic violence have been able to rely on. Most sex workers are mothers trying to do our best for our children. Mothers should be supported not attacked.

We fight against criminal records, and for housing, higher benefits and wages so that any of us can leave prostitution whenever we want.

If you need or support our work please help by donating: by cheque or through our website.