To introduce myself:
I have associated with all kinds of sex workers in the UK and Ireland since 1972. I sold sex for the first time in 1980 at the age of 22. Since then I sold sex on the streets in London and Paris for several periods between 1982 and 1985. I also sold sex on the streets of Dublin between July 1987 and March 1993, since when I have been a strictly independent sex work activist at my own expense to avoid any temptation to compromise my neutrality.

I hated selling sex and was always desperate for a way out to realise my own potential. I write this from 40 years extensive knowledge, personal observation and experience

1. Whether criminal sanction in relation to prostitution should continue to fall more heavily on those who sell sex, rather than those who buy it.

I cannot understand why any form of criminal sanction should be considered applicable to the voluntary sale and purchase of sexual services in 2016. This is clearly a private matter in which the state should not seek to legislate. Criminal sanctions only drive the sale of sexual services away from society and formal authority into the realms of criminality and under the arbitration of organized crime, thereby criminalizing and endangering otherwise law abiding people.

However, in the event of legislation it seems clear to me that any sanction should fall equally on the buyer and seller of sexual services as individuals equally involved in the act deemed unlawful.

I have something a little more rational and creative to suggest.

There are, essentially, four categories of sex worker:

- **Elective** – where sex work is a positive personal choice based on benefit over cost regardless of the quality of the options.
- **Crisis** – where sex work is the best, or only, short to midterm solution to a specific crisis.
- **Survival** – where sex work is the most viable ongoing survival option.
- **Coerced** – where sex work occurs under deliberate duress from a third party.

**PROPOSALS FOR LEGISLATIVE REFORM**

In the light of all the above I would like to propose the following approaches which focus on increasing interdependent rights and responsibilities for sex workers, with the emphasis on facilitating independent sex workers, discouraging exploitation and eradicating coercion.
(I) Exemption Zones For On Street Workers

On street work is the only independent sex work realistically accessible for crisis sex workers and survival sex workers. To set up as an indoor independent escort requires investment and commitment that they are unlikely to possess.

The only real objections to on street sex work are public order issues which the introduction of such exemption zones, with a zero-tolerance policy to street crime within that zone and to solicitation outside of that zone could considerably address.

It would also be viable to require clients to purchase an anonymous ticket, not unlike a parking ticket, to qualify for exemption from sanction, in this way revenue could be collected without placing demands on survival sex workers.

Having looked into it in detail, I recommend the current Safe Zone in Leeds as an example.

(II) Exempt Licensed Sex Workers And Their Clients From Legal Sanction

Elective sex workers should be required to obtain a licence to operate. As they can expect to make a great deal of money this is a perfectly reasonable request that, if properly enforced in tandem with other relevant legislation, could be used to all but eradicate any element of coercion and trafficking.

The primary objection to this has always come from sex workers themselves on the grounds of stigma/privacy but advancing technology means a card chip can store a biometric image without need for it to be recorded anywhere else. So that, in effect you carry your own “fingerprints” and can destroy them at any time.

There is no benefit in imposing a similar formal commitments on street workers as, for many of them, it is a question of crisis resolution and the less lingering ties to the sex industry they must have sooner, and more fully, they will be able to leave the sex industry. I would also recommend a grace period of 3 months before requiring a licence of any sex worker for similar reasons.

In this way the more elective, and committed, a sex worker is the more likely she is to be licensed and regulated without interfering with the use of sex work for personal crisis resolution at all. The provision of licences would also mean that changes in existing legislation could be presented, almost uniformly, in the form of exemptions from prosecution for either licensed sex workers and specific services or on-street sex workers within exemption zones.

A similar restriction could be applied to any provider of services to sex workers such as landlords, security and drivers.
(iii) Allow Licensed Sex Workers to Share Premises for Safety, Economy and Company

Amend existing legislation to allow sex workers to share premises for safety, economy and company.

(iii) Remove Sanction Against Private Landlords

Remove any sanction against private landlords who rent residential property to sex workers at a reasonable market rent for the area and not to exploiting the sex worker. Ensure that suitable business premises may be rented to a sex worker in the same manner as to any other business. Zero tolerance of abuse of premises or tenants.

2. What the implications are for prostitution-related offences of the Crown Prosecution Service’s recognition of prostitution as violence against women?

I believe it is vital to make a firm distinction, once and for all, in civil and criminal law, between the provision of elective sexual services and “prostitution” under any form of duress, including indirect economic duress. In this way the existence of a prostitution related offence is dependent upon establishing duress.

Once that distinction is made in law, then, if prostitution is to be treated as violence against the person (making this gender specific is incorrect and unjust many young men sell sex against their will and even gender orientation under similar duress), then it becomes immediately apparent that the victim is guilty of no offence at all.

It becomes equally apparent that unless it can be established that they were fully aware of the duress and non-elective status of the victim (usually through formal complaint made by the victim perhaps?) the sex buyer is also unlikely to be guilty of any offence.

The clear perpetrator in any indictment for prostitution as violence against women is whoever is responsible for the duress that forces her to sell sex against her will.

Under such legislation the victim will be able to walk into a police station and make a formal complaint against any person who has prostituted them within the meaning of legislation bringing it into line with all forms of legislation against violence and abuse. The way is also left open for third party complaint and investigation as per standard procedures.
3. What impact the Modern Slavery Act 2015 has had to date on trafficking for purposes of prostitution, what further action is planned, and how effectively the impact is being measured.

I have no knowledge to contribute to this except to place on record the fact that confining impact measurement to NGOs with a variety of agenda and ulterior motives is as common as it is disastrous, and leads to results that bear no relationship to reality.

I would suggest that impact measurement be almost entirely confined to sex workers in a position to observe fact and the Police who seem far more objective and impartial.

4. Whether further measures are necessary, including legal reforms, to:

1. Assist those involved in prostitution to exit from it
2. Increase the extent to which exploiters are held to account
3. Discourage demand which drives commercial sexual exploitation

I believe that I have addressed points 2 and 3 to the best of my ability already so I shall confine myself to the 1st point:

ASSIST THOSE INVOLVED IN PROSTITUTION TO EXIT FROM IT

Criminalisation does not help people get out of prostitution and legalisation does not trap them in it. As a society we can choose whether to make it easier for people to escape prostitution or whether to make life harder for those trapped in it.

I have always believed that any person selling sex has a right to demand whatever resources it would take for them to leave prostitution into a situation that they can realistically thrive and grow in.

Now that prostitution is deemed to be violence against the person, unless you are a fully elective sex worker prepared to be licenced, taxed and subject to civil law, that right to exit on demand should be set in stone.

Because of the current status of all sex work as a contentious political issue torn between a variety of agenda. I believe assistance must come from within the impartiality of mainstream state run resources and services through the advocacy and support of a few prostitution specific facilitators.

Offering sex workers a real way out is an investment, not a handout, well in line with the policies of the current Government.
By surviving in prostitution, whatever problems placed them there, or developed since, and require addressing, a person proves an individual combination of:

- Self-Reliance
- Initiative
- Intelligence
- Tolerance
- Adaptability
- Problem Solving

All of these qualities make for a very good investment indeed.

Unfortunately existing resources and proposals for exit resources seem more inclined to undermine those strengths in favour of fostering lifelong dependency. Many people who desperately want to exit prostitution cannot engage with or relate to that mind-set at all and are left trapped indefinitely as a result.

Those who do engage tend to remain trapped in a cycle of dependency.

So why not invest in us?

Gaye Dalton