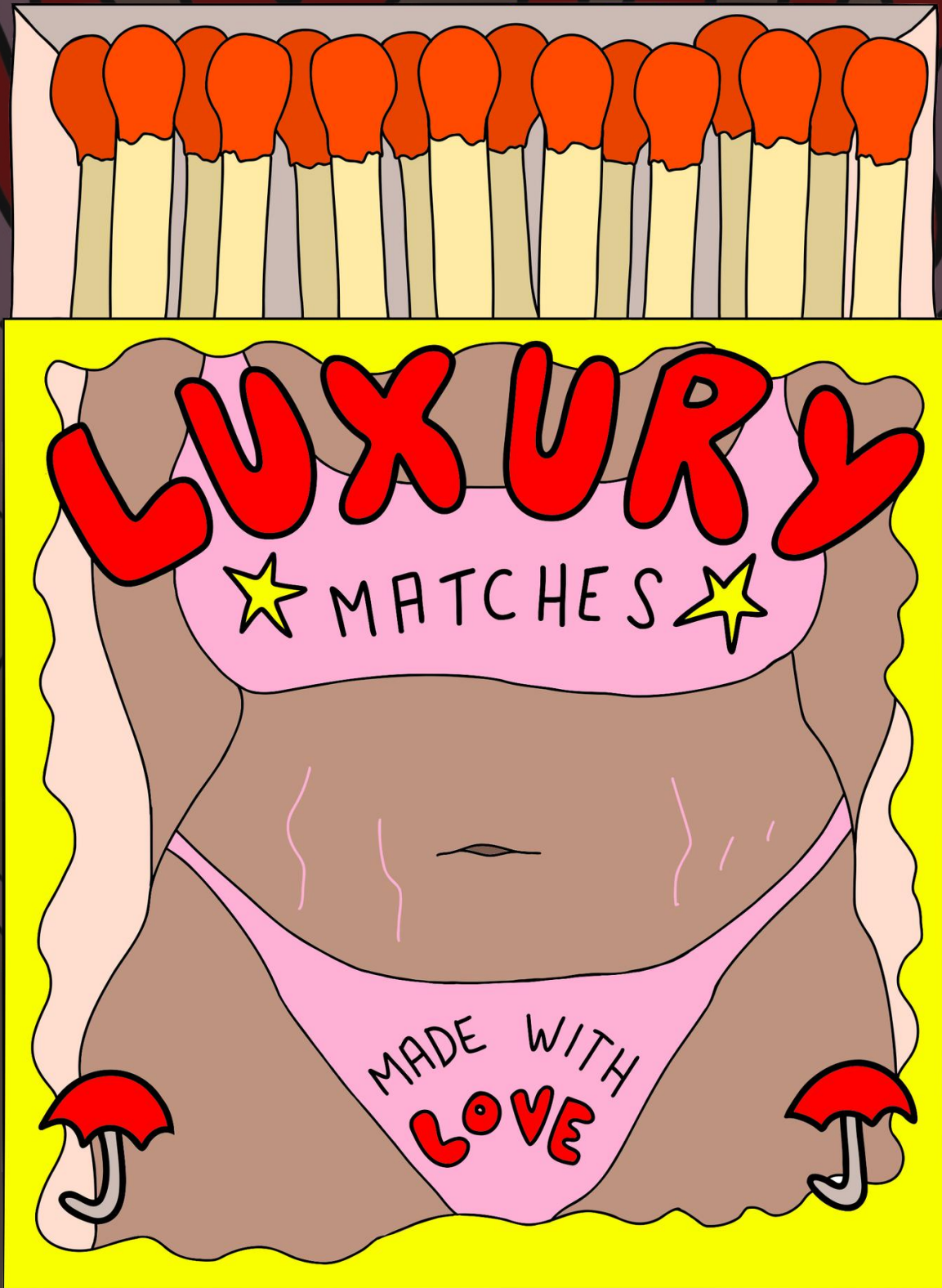


# under the red umbrella



A zine by sex worker groups and creatives in the UK and Ireland  
Issue 9, May 2026

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**Sex worker organisations are fundamental to Under the Red Umbrella. If you'd like to be involved in the next issue, please get in touch. This is your space to share your events, campaigns, news, and publications**

**Contact: [sally@nationaluglymugs.org](mailto:sally@nationaluglymugs.org)**

# **national ugly mugs**

**ending all forms of violence**

**against sex workers**

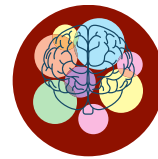
## **Our services**



Reporting,  
Alerting and  
Checker Tools



Casework  
Support



Mental  
Health  
Support



Racial Justice



NUMbrella  
Lane



Vocational  
Support



Youth Justice



Drop ins  
Manchester



Research

**General enquiries: 0161 629 9861**

**Freephone (sex workers): 0800 464 7669**

**Our casework team are available 10am-4pm, Tuesday to Friday. Any messages or reports received outside of these hours will be responded to as soon as someone is available.**



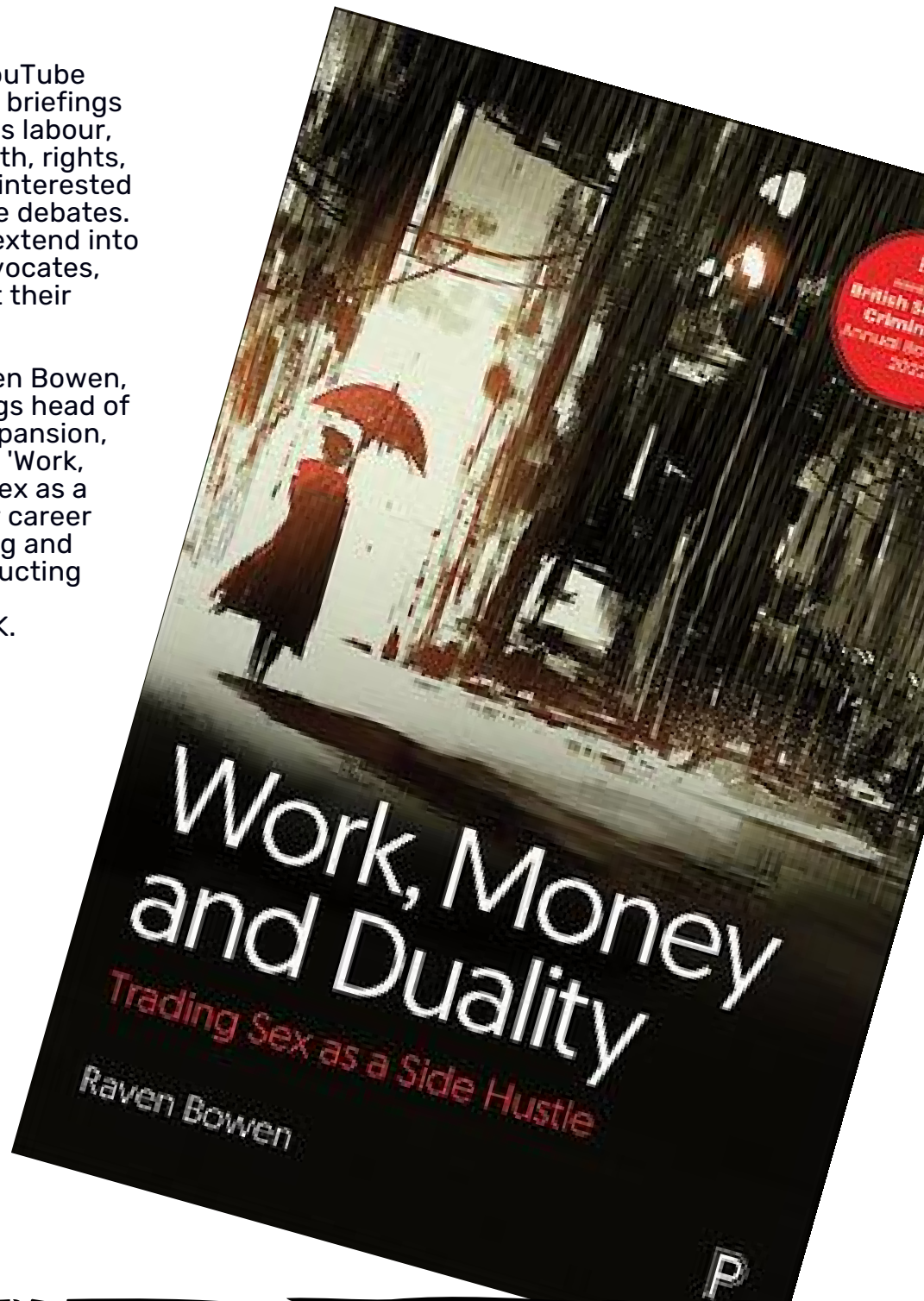
**[nationaluglymugs.org](http://nationaluglymugs.org)**

# RED UMBRELLA RESEARCH

Red Umbrella Research on YouTube presents accessible research briefings on adult industries, precarious labour, social regulation, safety, health, rights, and social justice, for people interested in the evidence shaping these debates. As the channel grows, it will extend into interviewing researchers, advocates, and other stakeholders about their research and why it matters.

The channel is run by Dr Raven Bowen, sociologist, National Ugly Mugs head of Research, Innovation, and Expansion, and award-winning author of 'Work, Money and Duality: Trading Sex as a Side Hustle'. Raven spent her career in the charity sector designing and delivering services, and conducting research with adult industry workers in Canada and the UK.

Subscribe now on YouTube. You can also donate to support the channel - link on YouTube or see the back page of this issue.



[youtube.com/@redumbrellaresearch](https://youtube.com/@redumbrellaresearch)

# national ugly mugs youth justice project

Youth Justice has just recently concluded their 3 month long research into young adults, aged 18 - 25 years old, in industry.

The research aims to act as a pillar for development at NUM, to improve health, safety, rights and wellbeing for young adults in the industry, ensuring they co-produce and shape change within services that serve them.

Soon, the results of the study will be shared back with the community, and allow workers to talk back to services and policies that set out to support them.

[youthjustice@uglymugs.org](mailto:youthjustice@uglymugs.org)

**phf** Paul Hamlyn  
Foundation



## vocational support

Are you a sex worker with a niche or unusual day job or side hustle? We'd love to hear from you!

People who identify as belonging to under represented groups, including those of global majority, D/deaf, disabled, neurodivergent, and LGBTQIA+ people are particularly encouraged to get in touch

[sally@nationaluglymugs.org](mailto:sally@nationaluglymugs.org)



We're looking to increase our pool of sex worker artists, illustrators, writers, designers, poets, and activists, to work on Under the Red Umbrella. We can provide support for newer practitioners to start your portfolio. Contact:

[sally@nationaluglymugs.org](mailto:sally@nationaluglymugs.org)

# WORKING TOGETHER TO SUPPORT REFUGEES AND ASYLUM SEEKERS

**Search SASH London  
on Eventbrite or click  
the link below**

**[ticket link](#)**

National Ugly Mugs Racial Justice Project is speaking at SASH London's online conference 'Working Together to Support Refugees and Asylum Seekers' (June 9th 10am-3pm)

SASH is hosting the conference with the aim to promote understanding of people's needs and sharing ideas and best practice to create inclusive and accessible services to improve health and wellbeing.

The event includes speakers from across different sectors, bringing into one space a variety of knowledge, experience and expertise.

Speakers include:

SASH  
Migrant Help  
10 Hammersmith Broadway  
National Ugly Mugs (NUM)  
West London Welcome  
Turning Point Diverse Communities  
Red Ribbon Living Well





[www.askforalex.org.uk](http://www.askforalex.org.uk)

[askALEX@spectra-london.org.uk](mailto:askALEX@spectra-london.org.uk)

Call us on 02033226924 and ask for ALEX

ALEX project is a branch of Spectra that specialises in serving sex workers. They are building a peer support community, with workshops, hangouts, and resources, by sex workers, for sex workers.

In response to the negativity and trauma we see daily in the news, coupled with the weight of stigma carried by sex workers, The Alex Project recently launched JOYBAIT. This positive news post will highlight uplifting stories from sex workers and the wider world.

## TOPIC TUESDAYS

AN ONLINE SPACE FOR SWERS, LED BY SWERS, TO CHAT TO THEIR PEERS AND DISCUSS TOPICS THAT IMPACT US

THE ALEX PROJECT

Every fourth tuesday of each month, online at 6pm for an hour. DM us for the sign up

## Wellbeing Wednesdays

THE ALEX PROJECT



An online space, held the third Wednesday of each month for an hour at 6pm, for s3x workers to decompress and practise self-care techniques.

These sessions are held by members of the ALEX team, who have lived experience of s3x work.

DM us for the sign-up form!



## WHAT IS SWIMS?

**SWIMS - SEX WORKERS MAINLY IN SHEFFIELD - IS A SEX WORKER LED COMMUNITY GROUP BASED IN SHEFFIELD CITY CENTRE. WE RUN A MONTHLY IN PERSON MEET UP ON THE THIRD MONDAY OF EVERY MONTH FOR PEOPLE WITH CURRENT/PAST LIVED EXPERIENCE OF WORKING IN THE SEX INDUSTRY. OUR MEET UPS INVOLVE ARTS & CRAFTS SESSIONS, FILM SCREENINGS, SKILL SHARING SESSIONS, AND GENERAL NATTERING! THIS IS ALWAYS A FREE DROP IN SESSION WITH HOT FOOD PROVIDED.**

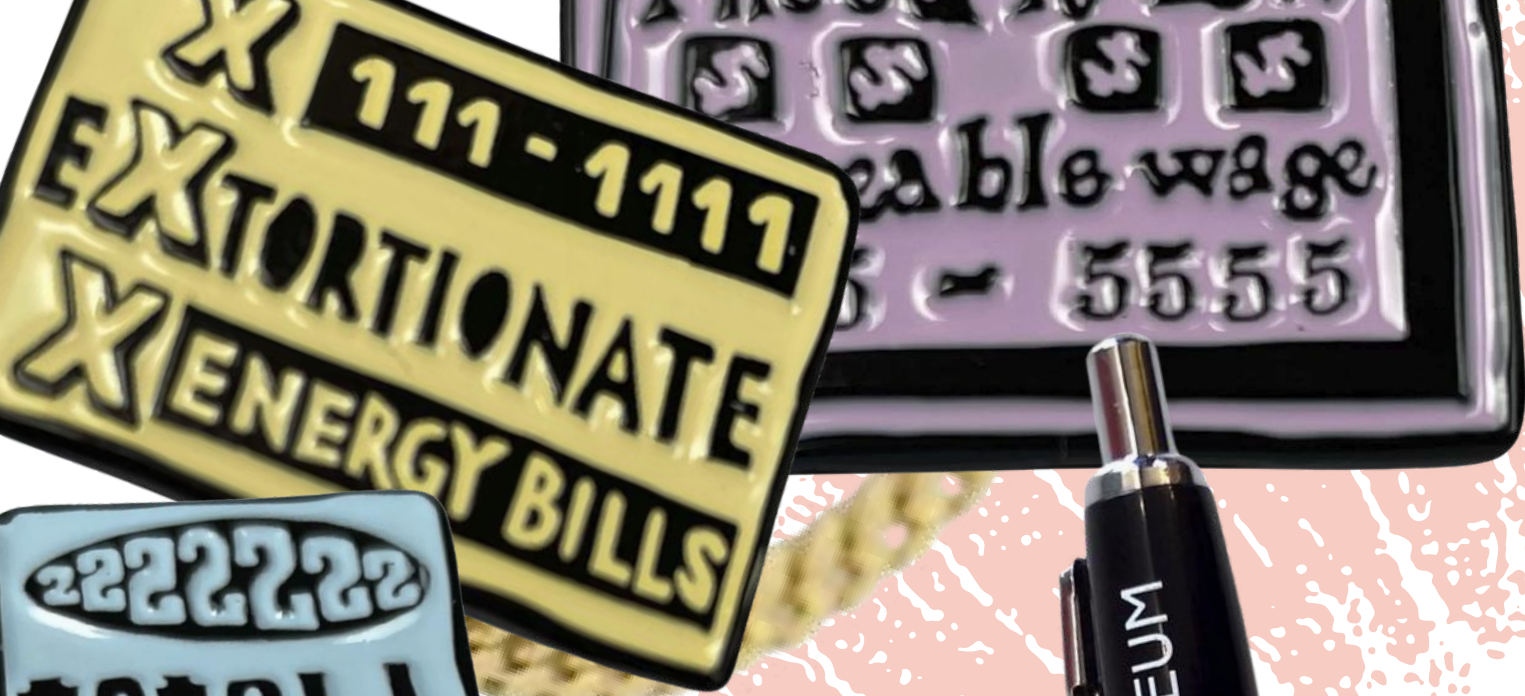
## WHO ARE WE FOR...

**WE WELCOME ALL SEX WORKERS, FULL SERVICE PROVIDERS, STREET SEX WORKERS, STRIPPERS, DOMINATRIXES, CAMMERS, PORNSTARS, SUGAR BABIES, ESCORTS, MASSEUSES... ANYONE WITH LIVED EXPERIENCE OF WORKING IN THE SEX INDUSTRY - NO CLIENTS, PIMPS, CIVIS!!**

**SEX WORKERS ONLY!!**

**WE ARE A TRANS INCLUSIVE LGBTQ+ LED GROUP WITH A ZERO TOLERANCE STANCE TO ANY KIND OF DISCRIMINATION. WE ARE ANTI NORDIC MODEL AND SUPPORT THE DECRIMINALISATION OF SEX WORK.**

**@swims.sheffield on Insta for details**



All purchases from Vagina Museum supports running costs to keep the museum admission free, with an exciting range of exhibitions, events and an outreach programme

Above: NUM x Vagina Museum pin badges



Shop all Vagina Museum at [vaginamuseumshop.co.uk](http://vaginamuseumshop.co.uk)

# VAGINA MUSEUM

Lip Service is a quarterly publication by the Vagina Museum in the style of old school community magazines. In this 60-page A5 zine, the content ranges from expanded exhibition content and other longform commentary and cultural critique, to tongue-in-cheek advice and letters.

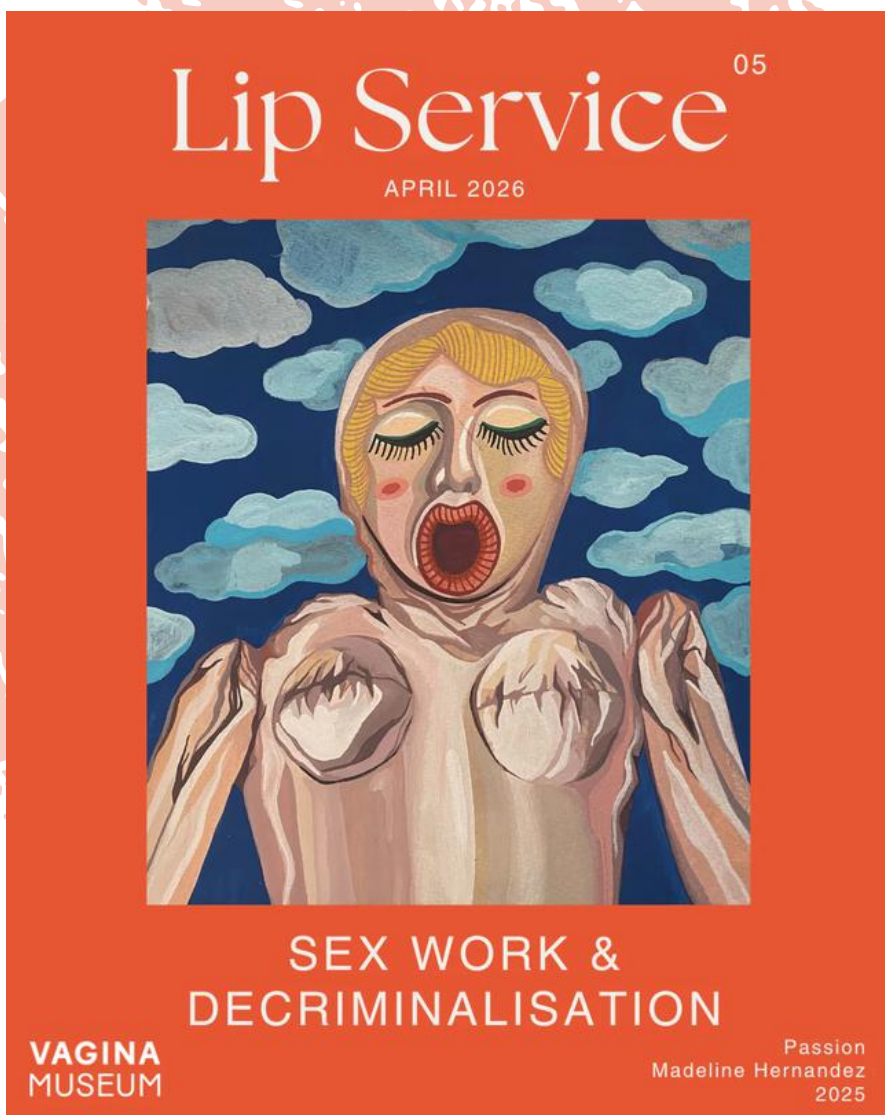
This quarter's issue is on Sex Work & Decriminalisation. It features contributions from sex workers and allies, including essays on domination and motherhood, sex work, care work, and disability, and corporate criminalisation; short stories and poetry; and a whole host of incredible mixed media submission. It also includes access to an audio recording of the issue.

NUM and Vagina Museum have a history of collaboration. NUM CEO Lynsey Walton and NUM Vocational Support Coordinator Sally Anderson shared writing in issue 6, tackling the sticky issue of sex work stigma, and reflecting on our shared work on a sex worker art exhibition.

Submissions for the next issue of Lip Service are now open, with written and visual submissions welcome on the theme of The Pregnant Body.

The zine is available as a digital download or in print.

Cover art by Madeline Hernandez.



**Buy Lip Service**

**Submit work to Issue 6: The Pregnant Body**

# CONGRATULATIONS!

## SEXUAL

# *Freedom*

## AWARDS

### winners & nominees



[sexualfreedomawards.co.uk](http://sexualfreedomawards.co.uk)



**Above: Beth from SW Friendly Accountants**

**Left: Laura Baillie, Diana Rotten, Lizzi McGuinness, Beth, and friends**

**Interested in the Golden Penis trophies?  
selametnyoman44@gmail.com**

**Find out more about the Outsiders Trust  
outsiders.org.uk**

**Find out more about SW Friendly Accountants  
swfriendlyaccountants.co.uk**

**Scotland for Decrim  
scotlandfordecrim.org**

**Sexual Freedom Awards  
sexualfreedomawards.co.uk**

Famous for their Golden Flying Penis trophies (every one is hand carved in Bali by artist Ketut Selamet), the Sexual Freedom Awards celebrate and recognise excellence in erotic performance and sexual services and pioneers in the field of sexuality.

The Awards evolved out of the international Erotic Awards, which were run by Tuppy Owens in London once a year from 1994-2013, and 2026 marked the 30<sup>th</sup> awards ceremony.

Proceeds from the awards support The Outsiders Trust, a charity which supports disabled people in their sexual freedom and expression. The trust offers social events, sexual health advice, consent and respect toolkits, and a sex and disability specific helpline.

Individuals, organisations, and services can be nominated for an award, and from National Ugly Mugs we'd like to extend our congratulations to all those who were nominated and won one of the beautiful trophies.

Laura Baillie, Policy and Research Officer at Scotland 4 Decrim scooped a well deserved Activist of the Year award for her tireless work in the fight against damaging legislation (find out more about her in an interview on page )

SW Friendly Accountants - who recently worked with NUM Vocational Support Services to deliver a jargon busting information session on Making Tax Digital - won Ally of The Year. They specifically extend their accountancy services to sex workers, working hard to offer a judgement free, confidential, and fully informed financial service to sex workers.

The Sexual Freedom Awards are just that - a celebration of the freedom of adults to enjoy, express, and share their sexuality. National Ugly Mugs and Under the Red Umbrella would like to extend our heartfelt congratulations and solidarity to all those who took part in this years and all past years awards. We see you, and we're very glad you're here.

# GOOD NIGHT BAD NIGHT

3:34 am. Bad night. Waiting for the bus—didn't earn enough to treat myself to an Uber. My body aches, my head is throbbing, my feet are sore and numb simultaneously. 21 pounds richer. Less than minimum wage. 90 pound house fee tonight.

I try not to think about having to pay that much to go to work. About the cost of my wax earlier this week, my nails, the makeup, the skincare, the stupid fucking rhinestoned bikini that scratches between my thighs while I'm dancing. I try not to think about how the bathrooms smell like piss and sweat. I try not to think about the black bruises on my legs, gripped to a pole—showing hole to strangers I hate.

An empty club. No drinks. Water with ice poured by me into a pint glass T just washed. The glass still warm. Not to worry—some dickhead knocked it out of my hand while I was walking to my stage set. Hadn't even taken a sip. Glass smashed everywhere. The dickhead laughed while S cleaned it up.  
"It's okay babe, I've got it, you go on stage."

I like S, but he should have kicked the dickhead out. He's too drunk to be here and not spending any money anyway. But S gets the business, and when it's quiet like this his security gets a little more lenient in the aim of keeping the place open. Who can blame him.

4 pounds in the pint glass for my last stage show. 4 freaks in the club. 2 at the front leaning on the tipping rail. Not tipping. Dickhead stumbling around, sloshing his Guinness on the floor. One extra freak tucked in the back corner, switching between watching reels and the football on TV.

The DJ is a cunt. He's always a cunt. He plays songs too quickly. No time to breathe between collecting the pounds and the start of the track. No time to wipe my hands on the alcohol-soaked tea towel. Slippery hands and shitty pole work, my bruised thighs doing the heavy lifting.

I walk off stage. No one claps. Back to the booth—four other girls already there, scrolling. Everyone looks bored and the night has just started.



# By Emily Dickson

Instagram: [geminipurgatory](#)  
substack: [substack.com/@geminipurgatory](#)  
[images courtesy of @ejack.jpg](#)

3:36 am. Good night. On my way home in an Uber—feeling tired but content. My body aches in a way that feels like energy well spent. 849 pounds richer. More than minimum wage. Only a 60 pound house fee tonight.

I think about a massage tomorrow. Breakfast. Maybe that coffee table book I've been eyeing. Maybe more emerald lingerie—I got so many compliments on that rhinestoned bikini tonight.

A little tipsy still—a couple glasses of champagne and some good top-shelf tequila. We only spoke for a few minutes. VIP was his idea. Travelling for work, lonely, bored. He was kind. He was Interesting. He even asked me questions.

The hours flew. My feet don't hurt. He didn't want me to dance—just to talk. He smelt nice. Sandalwood and herbs. When he got hungry he Ubered us sushi to the club. Salmon, tuna, kingfish and some gyozas to share.

We talked. I told him I write. He asked me what about.

The dance area is busy through the beaded curtains, people moving in and out. Money is flowing. VIP is full. Not just my lucky night then. There's a lightness in the air, the kind that moves through the club when everyone relaxes their shoulder muscles, knowing we will all leave with money tonight.

S is in good spirits. He's happy when we're happy.

My customer tipped big. Tipped T and the bar staff too.

I say goodbye—early flight, but he promises to come back next time he's in London. We exchange numbers. A man in a suit waves me over. He's with two friends—Gigi and Lexi are already there. He tells me he wants to take us all to VIP. A party, he says.

We look at each other. Everyone's happy. The night is still young.



# So you're contemplating talking to the media?

Here's what you need to know from two strippers/former strippers who used to be journalists (Ruth Ramsay/Solitaire and Lucinda), and Stacey Clare, activist and founder of the ELSC, who has been interviewed many times.

## Don't commit to anything until you know:

- Can you protect your anonymity?
- What's the angle, target audience and overall goal?
- Will they share questions in advance?
- How long is the piece/deadline? A short piece at short notice reduces nuance
- The media organisation, reporters, other interviewees and others involved in the project, their previous work and biases around SW
- Will an interview be at a time of day when you're not normally awake?

## Get everything in writing first:

- If you've asked to check the content before it goes out, make sure you know the timeframes involved
- Assurances on angle, other interviewees etc.
- If you're writing/making something yourself, negotiate your fee in advance along with how the editing process will be handled, both for draft and final versions
- Payment practices and timeframes
- Confidentiality agreements re: your identity
- Any negotiation around promotion of your voice/image eg on socials and syndication of written work
- Are you part of the editing process (very rare)?

# Do

## **Understand how biases creep in and how assurances can get lost just by the nature of the process:**

- A researcher or staff reporter is lowest in hierarchy and won't make final editorial decisions, whatever they tell you.
- Much more content will be collected than can be used. Radio: 10 to 1 ratio; Film: depends but up to 200 hours raw footage for a 90 min documentary.
- This distillation process may reduce nuance let alone further choices that the producer/writer make about the angle and story.
- You don't have full control over this unless you've explicitly agreed in writing to be part of the editing process - rare.

## **Know what format will be best for you:**

- PRINT: Time to think your answers through.
  - You may be able to answer via email. It's easier to ask for copy approval and changes, provided it isn't a news piece or short deadline.
- PRE-RECORDED RADIO/TV: Have your voice or face seen/heard, you're good at saying exactly what you want to say first time but want a chance to approve your clips before they go out?
  - Rare but possible: if you are a key interviewee and have explicitly agreed control over editing choices.
  - Work with an ally or friend podcaster.
- LIVE INTERVIEW (TV or radio): Can be very intimidating and nerve-wracking.
  - Consider what you can do to support yourself, e.g. bring a trusted person, will there be space and time for calming/grounding yourself? Incredibly fast-moving and almost military - avoid if you don't think you can keep yourself. psychologically safe.
  -

## **For maximum editorial control:**

- Do a podcast or video interview with an ally/friend.
- Write or make your own content.
  - If you feel you are better-placed to create a piece than whoever's contacted you, politely say so, and ask if they'd connect you with their editor. This is how @ruthramsay\_ got her first big break.
  - Submit any written copy well before the deadline and insist on full editorial approval after the sub-editing process.
- Specify you want to pre-approve any clips and soundbites of your image/voice etc that are used as social media content.
- Know if they plan to syndicate your writing.

## Payment:

- If you are writing/creating, you should be paid. Most publications have price-per-word rates. Get this in writing before agreeing to anything. See if you can charge more if the publisher plans to republish it elsewhere.
- Standard practice is that interviewees are not paid, so as not to risk bribery, or threaten journalistic integrity/ the ability of independent journalists or creators with no money to report angles going against dominant narratives.
  - You could ask that your web address or social media handles be included or ask for travel reimbursement.

## Talking About Sex Work:

- **BOUNDARIES:** Don't be afraid to communicate and uphold boundaries about what you will and won't talk about. Most good interviewers/journalists will respect these - if not that's a red flag.
- **PRE-WARNING:** Getting a guide of where the interviewer wants to go or questions in advance is essential when talking about potentially triggering subjects. If you don't feel safe to discuss certain details, trust your gut.
- **"BOTH SIDES":** Be vigilant if the piece is formatted to be a "balanced" argument. In most cases editors/researchers haven't considered how harmful it is to platform SWERF/abolitionist ideology, and set up "debate" for neutrality. Criminalising sex work (buyer or seller) has harmful consequences for workers, and data/evidence supports this. Allowing SWERFs to argue the moral case for criminalisation, against this evidence, should be a media no-no - don't be afraid to say so. Think carefully about whether you want to participate.
- **DEBATE:** If you do feel resourced enough to continue, prepare fully in advance. Debating is a skill and a power game that favours whoever can dominate with words. Information/ evidence can get lost. It may not be the best opportunity for you to advocate for sex workers' rights and safety but an interesting experience nonetheless. If it doesn't feel safe for you, avoid.



**PREPARATION:** Before an interview, arm yourself with reliable facts and figures you can remember off the top of your head. Ask a friend to quiz you to cement your knowledge.

Do essential research and be clear on how to communicate different legal frameworks and concepts that apply to sex work i.e.:

- criminalisation
- legalisation
- Nordic Model
- decriminalisation
- harm reduction
- intersectional feminism

Familiarise yourself with key sex worker orgs. For example in the UK it would be:

- NUM (National Ugly Mugs)
- SWARM (Sex Worker Advocacy and Resistance Movement)
- ECP (English Collective of Prostitutes)
- DecrimNow
- Scotland for Decrim
- Sex Workers Union

Also national and global organisations/NGOs that support decriminalisation such as:

- Amnesty International
- Royal College of Nursing
- World Health Organisation
- Human Rights Watch
- UNAIDS



**STAYING CALM:** prepare for an interview to go in any direction. It may become combative/ something may be said to get a reaction. Practise remaining unbothered. Can you reframe a difficult question/ throw it back to them? Can a generalised comment be applied to workers in other industries? Remember - you're a sex worker, communicating is your profession!

**FINDING YOUR VOICE:** Watch/listen to other media interviews that include sex workers' voices. What worked? What didn't? What do public comments say? Think about how different approaches "land" for different audiences. This can help you find your voice.

**IDENTITY:** Be clear about whether you're speaking as your work persona or the real life you etc.

Talking about sex work publicly involves some internal navigation between different parts of yourself. Many sex workers feel a huge responsibility to speak on behalf of the whole community but there are so many different jobs/demographics that can't be represented by just one person.

If you can, acknowledge this as part of your contribution. Audiences and other sex workers will appreciate awareness of your limitations.

## **IMPORTANTLY:**

Never disclose the identity of another sex worker without their consent.

Nor disclose publicly things that sex workers use to keep themselves safe - such as screening tools.

Preparing in advance:

- Video/film/TV - think carefully about what to wear. Take control if you don't like the background behind you if you're on video - ask to see how it looks in the camera before shooting begins properly; think about what you will convey in a non-verbal way and how that might play into common stereotypes about SWers to your advantage or disadvantage. This also goes for in-person radio or print interviews.
- Then:
  - Decide on 2-3 key messages you want to convey.
  - Prepare concise statements.
  - Share examples or evidence.
  - Anticipate and prepare for difficult questions.
  - Practice answers with a friend who can be adversarial/help you spot when you might be misinterpreted
  - Decide and practice a phrase you are going to use to deflect things you don't want to answer.
- Practising with your phone or mirror can help you refine your ideas and reduce feeling weird about seeing/hearing yourself. OR you may decide you'd rather not watch the final product - that's OK too!

## **Preparing on the day:**

- Get grounded.
- Acknowledge nerves - they're normal and help us think more quickly.
- Afterwards, understand you might replay and regret some responses. This is natural, but try some thought-stopping processes to stop excessive rumination.
- Be ready for it to not go how you wanted/expected. Sex work is still so divisive that many outlets rely on it for click bait. Don't be surprised if you felt you built yourself up to talk about something meaningful, only to feel let down by insensitivity or ignorance. This is commonplace. You may join a large group of people who have felt let down by the media, but take pride that the more sex workers' voices heard in wider society the more social stigma decreases - so BE PROUD no matter what.

**Ruth Ramsay** [ruthramsay.com](http://ruthramsay.com) IG: @ruthramsay\_

**Lucinda** [ess-wellness.com](http://ess-wellness.com) IG: @ess\_wellness

**Stacey Clare** IG: @ethicalstripper



# SCOTLAND FOR DECRIM

## **An interview with Laura Baillie and Diana Rotten**

### **Could you give us a brief overview of Scotland 4 Decrim's work, and recent developments?**

Scotland for Decrim is a grassroots organisation fighting for the full decriminalisation of sex work in Scotland, and we also lead campaigns against the criminalisation of the purchase of sex. We work with sex workers, trade unions, allies, academics and third sector organisations to collate and disseminate knowledge and resources to educate the Scottish public on why sex work should be decriminalised. We engage with community members with lived experience to ensure their voices are heard when it comes to legislation that directly affects them.

We have recently published a report on HIV and sex work in Scotland with the National AIDS Trust and academics from the University of Stirling and St. Andrews. The report states that if the Scottish Government is to reach its target to eliminate HIV transmission by 2030, then it must not criminalise the purchase of sex.

### **Are there any key pieces of research or examples you'd like to share that support the need for full decriminalisation?**

Much of our research has come from important organisations such as Amnesty International and Medicin du Monde.

In a [2019 review](#) commissioned by the Northern Irish Ministry of Justice, the policy of criminalising the purchasing of sexual services in Northern Ireland was shown to be an abject failure. Reported assaults against sex workers increased by 225% from 2016 – 2018. Evidence suggested that, while some clients were deterred by the law, dangerous, violent and abusive clients remained unaffected by the legislation. Nearly all workers interviewed felt that the law had increased the stigmatisation of sex workers in ways that made them more anxious and which had a negative impact on their day to day life.

In France, the Nordic Model has been in place since 2016. A [Medicins du Monde](#) report found that the law has led to 42% of workers being more exposed to violence, 38% finding it increasingly hard to demand condom use, 70% observing no improvement or a deterioration of their relations with the police, 78% losing income, and 63% experiencing a deterioration of living conditions. A [2018 systematic review](#) of 28 years of global research found that any criminalisation of sex work (including client criminalisation) triples the likelihood of sex workers experiencing violence, and doubles their likelihood of acquiring HIV.

In countries that have brought in the Nordic Model, sex workers have not, as is often promised, been 'decriminalised'. Brothel-keeping – which is often defined in law as two or more sex workers working together from the same premises – remains a crime, forcing women to work alone or risk arrest. When police raid workplaces with the stated aim of arresting clients, it is consistently sex workers who are charged. This has happened in Nordic Model countries such as Ireland, Norway, Finland, and Sweden.

### **Are there any lessons we can learn from countries and territories which currently have a decriminalised model?**

Decriminalisation has been implemented in a number of Australian states over the past three decades, in New Zealand in 2003, and in Belgium in 2023. The New Zealand Prostitutes Collective has reported an overall increase in safety since decriminalisation, as workers feel more able to refuse risky clients, to report violence from clients, and to access healthcare. Violence against women who are street-based sex workers appears to have decreased significantly after decriminalisation. Similar reductions in adverse experiences occurred for indoor workers. Relationships with the police have shifted from a position of being combative to more collaborative since decriminalisation. Sex workers have felt more able to disclose their occupation to their GP. Discrimination and stigma towards sex workers has reduced significantly.

In New South Wales, one of the states in Australia which has decriminalised sex work, they found that there were: exceptionally good public health outcomes and low rates of STIs and HIV, better access to Occupational Health and Safety, and there was no increase in the size of the sex industry.

In Belgium, sex workers now have access to maternity pay and labour rights, which will take significant steps to decrease poverty and exploitation.

### **Looking ahead, what would success look like? In terms of workers' rights and how sex workers are perceived and treated in the wider societal context?**

In terms of sex workers rights, wins for us include sex workers being able to form trade unions and hold their bosses to account, workplaces being regulated through employment law, the repeal of penalties on prostitution;

and the ability to work with who they want, wherever they want. Through decriminalisation we can create fairer working conditions for sex workers and enact material change to many peoples' lives in Scotland. Scotland for Decrim doesn't just advocate for the full decriminalisation of sex work - we also hope for a society with stronger anti-poverty measures, rent controls, living wages that are actually fit to live off, a universal basic income, an end to benefit



sanctions, and the end of 'no recourse to public funds' conditions for migrants. We want to tackle racism, misogyny, transphobia, homophobia, and all forms of oppression. We want a fairer society for the most marginalised, to prevent financially vulnerable people from entering the sex industry if they don't want to.

**Is there anything else you'd like to share or mention? Any colleagues or campaigners who deserve recognition, or anything important that we haven't talked about?**

We would like to give thanks to all of the sex workers who worked with us on this campaign, who were unable to be face-out. Their lived experience and valuable insight continually shaped our response to the dangerous legislation that affects them more than anyone else. Without these contributions in all their different forms we would not have been able to effectively communicate to the Scottish Government that Nordic Model legislation actively harms sex workers. We would also like to give recognition to Andy Ramsay at Industrial Workers of the World, who as Scotland Area Organiser, worked with us to release our HIV briefing paper, and who continues to advocate for the rights and needs of sex workers now.

We also wish to thank PCS Scotland and other trade unions for their invaluable solidarity. They have truly shown what it is to be workers united, and we cannot thank them enough.

There are also many sex worker organisations across the UK, Europe, and the world who heard our call to action and stepped up. In our most difficult moments, they helped keep us going. We would specifically like to mention Decrim Now, without whom we would not have been able to organise as effectively as we have.

Finally, all the academics who have helped write reports, who have submitted to public consultations, who gave evidence to the Scottish Government and the Criminal Justice Committee - you have shown us what academia should be. It is not about being the most published, the most awarded; it is about using research to enact social change.

**For anyone reading who supports your work but is unsure where to start, how can they become even better allies, or contribute to meaningful change?**

You don't need to be a sex worker to help sex workers, and you don't need to be an expert on the industry either - our group is made up of people from all walks of life who have one thing in common - a desire to create safer working conditions for those who are in the sex industry. We have group chats and mailing lists available where we have frequent calls to action with varying degrees of involvement and we actively encourage the public to get involved in any ways they can. If you'd like to learn more about us and our work so far, you can follow us on [Instagram](#), check out our [Ally Kit](#) which has some useful tips on how you can help sex workers in your local communities, and learn a bit more about myths and facts surrounding sex industry legal models.

It would also be great if you could donate to us so we can keep doing our work, as we do not have any funding other than directly from supporters. You can find the donation link on our Instagram page. We also have a newsletter you can sign up to in order to keep track of what we are doing, as well as the [updates](#) section on our website.

**Image: Laura Baillie (front, centre) and Diana Rotten (front, right) with members of Scotland for Decrim, National Aids Trust, University of Stirling, St. Andrews University, Industrial Workers of the World, and Waverley Care**

# OMG FUCK IT'S

You know those moments, we've all had them; you're looking up at your client, legs akimbo, eyebrows tented, giving the performance of a lifetime - and all of a sudden, you register exactly what you're seeing. It jolts you out of your slight dissociation and slam dunks you back into reality. Maybe their tongue is lolling out of their mouth like a dog, or their eyes are unsettlingly vacant; maybe they're moaning in a weird way, their sweat is dripping onto you, or you've accidentally caught a glance of their unkempt toenails - whatever it is, it's a challenging observation, and you'll potentially have the passing thought: "what the hell am I doing?".

I had it once with a hobbyist. I knew he'd done the rounds of my friends, but I didn't have much of an idea of what he'd be like on a date. As it turned out, he was...boorish. Oafish. Borderline repugnant. And I had that moment, during sex, I remember it vividly: his bright red face was grunting with each straight-backed pump, my dainty ankles were clenched in his ham fists, and in theatrical terms, I temporarily corpsed. Record scratch, you're probably wondering how I ended up here. Me too! I think sometimes I forget that past the boujee marketing and weekday boozy brunches, this is often the job - fucking strange and fairly nauseating men while feigning boundless enthusiasm. It's ridiculous, and a bit jarring. As bleak as that thought sounds, it actually filled me with a weird sense of joy.

I knew I wasn't the first of my colleagues to spread my legs for this man, and that I wouldn't be the last. I felt a powerful sense of connection to the sisterhood as I pictured us all gazing at him just as I was then, experiencing the pause of puzzlement at the absurdity of it all. It warmed my heart. I take a great deal of solace from the fact that we're all down in the mud together, even if publicly we're making it look glamorous. I love that we can giggle about it amongst ourselves without judgement, the clandestine conversations we can't really have with anyone else. There's a whimsy to the work, a silliness which stems from the mischievous way we've navigated the system, and all the nonsense which ensues. Sure, it can be a bit gross, but ultimately, it's fine - because we have each other.

Maybe they have this camaraderie in other industries, but from the few I've peered into, I've yet to be convinced of a professional community as tight-knit and supportive as that of sex workers. This job can, on occasion, have you questioning what you're doing with your life, but the comfort of the debrief is unmatched. Even if the odd escapade does turn our stomachs, it also brings us that much closer together. Don't worry babe, I've licked that guy's ballsack skin tag too. At least it paid for the mimosas. Cheers x



# drop

# Q



# SWARM

SEX WORKER'S  
BRUNCH  
BRIGHTON

DEVON & CORNWALL  
HOOKERS COLLECTIVE



# o ins socials

**Scotland: NUMbrella Lane** is a safe, collective space located in central Glasgow that seeks to create opportunities to strengthen mental health, wellbeing and community support for sex workers. We promote a friendly environment where all sex workers are welcome, and also run online drop ins.

**View the calendar at: [nationaluglymugs.org/numbrella-lane](http://nationaluglymugs.org/numbrella-lane)**

**North East: Spicy Coffee** mees up happen regularly at different venues around the region. Events are a sober space and based on mutual aid principles - feel free to drop in at any time for a hot drink, pick up some condoms/hygiene products and chill out. Feel free to bring your own items to swap with others too!

**Email: [necoffeeforhotties@proton.me](mailto:necoffeeforhotties@proton.me)**

**North East Sex Worker Collective Collective** is a group current & former SWers building community in the NE

**Instagram: [northeastswcollective](https://www.instagram.com/northeastswcollective)**

**Manchester: NUM** offer a monthly drop in session for anyone engaged in sex work. We provide free safe sex supplies, sanitary products, access to a toiletries bank, hot drinks and snacks, and the opportunity to discuss ISVA support or other casework needs.

**Email: [Rosalie@nationaluglymugs.org](mailto:Rosalie@nationaluglymugs.org)**

**Sheffield: SWIMS** is a sex worker led community group. Find out more on page 9

**Instagram: [@SWIMSSheffield](https://www.instagram.com/SWIMSSheffield)**

**Nottingham: Swan** is a sex worker led collective based in Nottingham, campaigning for decrim, and working towards community events

**[swan.collective.nottingham@gmail.com](mailto:swan.collective.nottingham@gmail.com)**

**London: SWARM Suppers** are a informal meet ups for sex workers (some sessions are open to allies) to learn about SWARM, and enjoy a free meal

**[swarmcollective.org/event/swarm-supper/](http://swarmcollective.org/event/swarm-supper/)**

**Ask for Alex** organises regular wellbeing sessions in London, see page 8 for more details  
**[askforalex.org.uk](http://askforalex.org.uk)**

**Brighton: Sex Workers' Brunch**, is a Monthly brunch meet up for sex workers.

LGBTQIA+ inclusive space. Email for dates and locations

**[brightonsexworkersbrunch@gmail.com](mailto:brightonsexworkersbrunch@gmail.com)**

**South West: Devon and Cornwall Hookers Collective.** Meet ups for full service sex workers and escorts only. Head to the NUM members' area for the contact number to attend the next event

# EAST LONDON STRIPPER COLLECTIVE

## life drawing



Many artists have used sex workers as models & muses for their work, however because sex work throughout history has been framed as inherently degrading, this age-old practice has been a long-ignored fact. The term 'muse' is important to this history as it is often used in the context of the male 'creator' who is inspired' by his female muse – in other words, she's incapable of her own creation or self-realisation – reinforcing women as passive object in relation to the male, active, subject.

The way we navigate the artist/muse issue & questions of exploitation in the sex industry is by asserting sex work as work, & stripping as a legitimate art form. The message isn't about blanket narratives of exploitation or empowerment, but framing this work in a way that centres harm-reduction, destigmatisation & labour rights.

The desire for sex workers as art models isn't going away & after centuries of poor representation, our view is that it's irresponsible to produce this artwork without using it as a platform for de-stigmatisation & the sex worker's rights movement. Images produced in our classes break away from the strip club's prevailing male gaze, giving an insight into our dancers' worlds & celebrating ownership over their own images, reclaiming the agency that is too often stripped of narratives around our bodies.

[eastlondonstripperscollective.com/life-drawing-with-elsc/](http://eastlondonstripperscollective.com/life-drawing-with-elsc/)

[info@eastlondonstripperscollective.com](mailto:info@eastlondonstripperscollective.com)



**MON JUNE 8TH – Life Drawing with ELSC  
ft. LUNA MINXX**

**MON JUNE 15TH – Life Drawing with ELSC  
ft. SYMONE (above)**

# Red Light Icons

## Sex Workers Fashion Show



A colorful tribute from sex workers to their heroines!

Sex workers take you on a thrilling journey through history. As warriors, rebels, and revolutionaries, heroines and heroes, they changed the world. Through sex work, many fought for their freedom and built power, which they used for their community.

Using clothing as expression and resistance, sex workers left an indelible mark on fashion. This colorful fashion show is an ode to those who fought for women's and queer rights and against slavery.

**Tuesday 4th August**

**Cafe Correct, Amsterdam**

**[deparade.nl/programma/red-light-  
icons-sex-workers-fashion-show/](https://deparade.nl/programma/red-light-icons-sex-workers-fashion-show/)**

# contacts

## sex workers' advocacy and resistance movement

[www.swarmcollective.org](http://www.swarmcollective.org)  
X: @SexWorkHive  
instagram: @swarmhive

## national ugly mugs

[www.nationaluglymugs.org](http://www.nationaluglymugs.org)  
X: @NationalUglyMug  
instagram: @nationaluglymugs

## scotland for decrim

[www.scotlandfordecrim.org](http://www.scotlandfordecrim.org)  
instagram: @scotland4decrim

## sex workers' union

[www.swunion.co.uk](http://www.swunion.co.uk)  
X: @swunion\_uk  
instagram: @swunion\_uk

## english collective of prostitutes

[www.prostitutescollective.net](http://www.prostitutescollective.net)  
X: @ProstitutesColl  
instagram: @ecp\_org

## east london strippers collective

[www.eastlondonstripperscollective.com](http://www.eastlondonstripperscollective.com)  
instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/eastlondonstripperscollective/>

## sex workers' alliance ireland

[www.sexworkersallianceireland.org](http://www.sexworkersallianceireland.org)  
X: @SWAllIreland  
instagram: @swaiireland

## decrim now

[www.decrimnow.org.uk](http://www.decrimnow.org.uk)  
X: @ukdecrimnow  
instagram: @decrimnow

## european sex workers' rights alliance

[www.eswalliance.org](http://www.eswalliance.org)  
X: @sexworkeurope  
instagram: @sexworkeurope

## hookers against hardship

[www.decrimnow.org.uk](http://www.decrimnow.org.uk)  
X: @HAHcampaign  
instagram: @hah\_campaign

## Ess Wellness

[www.ess-wellness.com](http://www.ess-wellness.com)

## north east spicy coffee collective

X: @NESpicyCC  
instagram: @NESpicyCC

## spectra: ask for alex

[www.spectra-london.org.uk](http://www.spectra-london.org.uk)  
X: @askforalexldn  
instagram: @spectra\_london

## Vagina Museum

[www.vaginamuseum.co.uk](http://www.vaginamuseum.co.uk)  
X: @vagina\_museum  
instagram: @vagina\_museum  
bluesky: @vaginamuseum.bsky.social

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**Lip Service Zine**

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merch**

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**work, money, duality**

subscribe to

**red umbrella  
research**

join the

**sex workers'  
union**

donate to

**european sex workers'  
rights alliance**

get involved at

**decrim now**

get involved at

**scotland for  
decrim**

buy some merch from the

**eswa shop**

buy some merch from the

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# the back page

**the purpose of this zine is to share information about sex worker organisations and organising across the united kingdom and the republic of ireland.**

it has been created by a coalition of sex worker groups, with submissions from sex worker creatives and contributors

if you belong to a sex worker rights organisation or are a sex worker designer, artist, or writer, and you'd like to be involved in the next issue, please contact: [sally@nationaluglymugs.org](mailto:sally@nationaluglymugs.org)

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John Ellerman  
Foundation

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