

**Press release from A Model For Scotland**

Contact: [contact@amodelforscotland.org](mailto:contact@amodelforscotland.org), 07720 698957

## **In the week of International Women’s Day, survivor-led campaign group calls on the Scottish Government to be more ambitious in its approach to challenging men’s demand for prostitution**

The Scottish Government has launched its strategic approach (1) to challenging and deterring men’s demand for prostitution and supporting the recovery and sustainable exit of those involved in prostitution. A Model For Scotland (2), an alliance of sexual exploitation survivors, organisations and frontline services, has responded by calling on the Scottish Government to be more ambitious in its approach by introducing legislation which criminalises paying for sex.

The call comes as Encompass, Scotland’s network supporting women involved in the sex trade, releases the findings of its third Snapshot Briefing (3), showing that 93% of women have experienced violence and abuse related to their involvement in the sex trade. A Model For Scotland is clear that whilst it welcomes the Scottish Government’s commitment to providing support for individuals involved in prostitution, the framework must also set out a clear programme of work to challenge men’s demand for prostitution in practice.

- A Model For Scotland’s recently published ‘International Insights’ report (4) evidences the experiences of other countries that have implemented a legal approach which shifts the burden of criminality off victims of sexual exploitation and on to those who perpetrate and profit from it. In Sweden, the proportion of men paying for sex has dropped, public attitudes have changed, and the law acts as a deterrent to sex trafficking. In Ireland, women involved in prostitution report feeling more able to disclose violence against them to the police, and there is a high level of public understanding that prostitution is a form of sexual exploitation. France’s law resulted in law enforcement shifting their focus on penalising victims of sexual exploitation to holding sex buyers accountable and there is a high level of public support for the legal approach.

**Diane Martin CBE, Chair of A Model For Scotland and Survivor of prostitution and sex trafficking, said:**

“We welcome the Scottish Government’s strong and unambiguous recommitment to its position that prostitution is a form of violence against women – and its commitment to providing support for individuals exploited in the sex trade across Scotland.

“However, if the Scottish Government is serious about achieving its goal of challenging men’s demand for prostitution, the new strategic approach must include criminalising paying for sex. The experiences of other countries have shown that legislation to criminalise paying for sex - alongside decriminalising selling sex and providing exiting support to those exploited in prostitution - is central to realising this goal.

“We are happy to support the Scottish Government to get its strategic approach right and therefore provide an effective response to commercial sexual exploitation in Scotland. As well as providing support to those exploited in the sex trade, tackling the demand which fuels prostitution and sex trafficking by criminalising paying for sex is crucial to ensure that women aren’t subjected to the immeasurable harms they face in the sex trade in the first place.”

## **ENDS**

### **Notes to editor**

1. Led by Siobhian Brown MSP, Minister for Victims and Community Safety, in February 2024 the Scottish Government published its strategic approach to challenging and deterring men’s demand for prostitution and supporting the recovery and sustainable exit of those involved in prostitution. The document is accessible at: <https://www.gov.scot/publications/scotlands-strategic-approach-challenging-deterring-mens-demand-prostitution-supporting-recovery-sustainable-exit-those-involved-prostitution/>
2. A Model For Scotland is an alliance of survivors, organisations and frontline services calling for a progressive legal model that shifts the burden of criminality off victims of sexual exploitation and on to those who perpetrate and profit from this abuse. The campaign calls on the Scottish Government to prevent sexual exploitation and deliver justice to victims by enacting the following reforms:
  - Decriminalise victims of sexual exploitation by repealing Section 46 of the Civic Government (Scotland) Act 1982.
  - Wipe previous convictions for soliciting from victims’ criminal records.
  - Outlaw online pimping.
  - Criminalise paying for sex.
  - Provide comprehensive, resourced support and exiting services for victims of sexual exploitation.

The A Model For Scotland alliance includes: The Encompass Network,

Routes Out, TARA (Trafficking Awareness Raising Alliance), Women's Support Project, Unite Scotland, Survivors of Human Trafficking in Scotland (SOHTIS), North Lanarkshire Council, South Lanarkshire Council, SAY Women, ASSIST, Scottish Women's Convention, Wise Women, Restore Glasgow, Cross-Party Group on Commercial Sexual Exploitation, Angus Violence Against Women Partnership, Equally Safe Edinburgh Committee, Fife Rape and Sexual Assault Centre, Women's Aid Lanarkshire and East Renfrewshire and Lanarkshire Rape Crisis Centre.

Further information about A Model For Scotland can be found here:

<https://www.amodelforscotland.org/>

3. The Encompass Network's 'Encompass Snapshot Briefing 2023' was launched on Friday 1 March 2024 and is accessible at:  
[https://www.encompassnetwork.info/uploads/1/4/2/8/142838553/encompass\\_snapshot\\_2023.pdf](https://www.encompassnetwork.info/uploads/1/4/2/8/142838553/encompass_snapshot_2023.pdf)
4. A Model For Scotland's 'International Insights: How Scotland can learn from international efforts to combat commercial sexual exploitation' report, published in 2023, details evidence from a selection of countries that have adopted a legislative approach which criminalises paying for sex, decriminalises selling sex and provides support and exiting services to individuals involved in the sex trade. The report is accessible at:  
[https://www.amodelforscotland.org/files/ugd/43b7aa\\_2de030c749074a31aed9cf3ee6556bb9.pdf](https://www.amodelforscotland.org/files/ugd/43b7aa_2de030c749074a31aed9cf3ee6556bb9.pdf)

The report was debated in the Scottish Parliament on 18 January 2024, in a debate led by Ruth Maguire MSP. Video clips of the debate are accessible at: <https://www.amodelforscotland.org/post/msps-international-efforts-to-combat-sexual-exploitation-pave-the-way-for-a-model-for-scotland>