

Victory as Peers vote for women, not pimps and punters!

The Demand Change! Campaign (1) is delighted to announce a major victory for women exploited by the sex industry, as last night the House of Lords voted in favour of Clause 14 (formerly 13) of the Policing & Crime Bill^[i], putting the rights of exploited women over those of pimps and punters.

In focusing on the demand for sexual services, Clause 14 shifts criminal liability away from people exploited through prostitution and places responsibility firmly on the shoulders of those who contribute to commercial sexual exploitation by *choosing* to purchase girls, boys, women and men for sexual use.

This is a huge achievement for the 67 women's and human rights organisations^[ii] which supported this bill, and which campaigned tirelessly to obtain justice for the women, children and men who have for so long been exploited by the sex industry. Many of these organisations attended the successful Demand Change! mass support rally in Parliament Square just before the vote^[iii], calling on Peers to 'Vote for Women, not Pimps and Punters!'.

Comments from Eaves (2) chief executive Denise Marshall

"This is fantastic news. Legislation to make it an offence to pay for sex with someone subject to force, who has been exploited, is a no-brainer. It should clearly be illegal. I am delighted for the women whom we support, who have a right to live without fear of force, violence or exploitation, and for whom this law is crucial.

"The vital next step in the process is for those exploited in prostitution to be fully decriminalised and provided with high quality support to exit the sex industry safely, and the Demand Change! campaign will continue to press for this."

Comments from Anna van Heeswijk, OBJECT (3)

"Clause 14 brings the buyer out of the shadows and says that as a society we put the rights of vulnerable women, children and men above the right of punters to buy sex. This is a major victory for all those who have been exploited – many of whom shared their stories in a film screened in front of a packed audience in the House of Commons on the eve of the debate – and it is also a victory for all those who have joined the campaign to end commercial sexual exploitation by tackling demand. Thank you Peers for listening to our protest chants and for deciding to 'vote for women, not pimps and punters!'"

Testimony from "Angel", a survivor of prostitution^[iv]

"I had to say I enjoyed it and that I chose it – it's what the johns want to hear, and as a prostitute I existed for their pleasure, my body and words were there for their pleasure. The real me was effectively mute.

It makes sense to target the johns and criminalise them, because they hold the money and they have all the power."

– ENDS –

Notes to editors

(1)The Demand Change! campaign calls for the Government to introduce a human rights based approach to prostitution by decriminalising the selling of sex and offering support to those currently in prostitution to help them exit, whilst at the same time criminalising the purchase of sex to tackle demand for commercial sexual exploitation and trafficking.

(2)Eaves provides high quality housing and support to vulnerable women including those who have been exploited through prostitution. It also carries out research, advocacy and campaigning to prevent all forms of violence against women. www.eaves4women.co.uk

(3) OBJECT is the leading human rights organisation which challenges the sexual objectification of women in the media and popular culture because of its links to discrimination and violence against women. www.object.org.uk

For further information, to arrange interviews or to request a copy of the Demand Change! film please contact Eaves' communications officer Anna Bowden on 020 7840 7126 or at anna.bowden@eaveshousing.co.uk.

[i] The House of Lords voted on Tuesday 3 November to pass Clause 14 (formerly Clause 13) of the Policing and Crime Bill, which criminalises the purchase of sex acts from a person who has been exploited. It shifts criminal liability away from the person being exploited and places it firmly on the shoulders of the person contributing to the exploitation by choosing to pay for sex and thereby creating demand. This is a crucial step towards ending the exploitation of women and men through prostitution by tackling the problem at its root – tackling the demand.

[ii] The 67 organisations are:

1. Advance Advocacy Project www.advanceadvocacyproject.org.uk
2. AFRUCA (Africans Unite Against Child Abuse) www.afruca.org
3. Ashiana www.ashiana.org.uk
4. Asylum Aid www.asylumaid.org.uk
5. Aurora Health Foundation www.aurorahealthfoundation.org.uk
6. Beyond the Streets www.beyondthestreets.org.uk
7. Black Association of Women Step Out www.bawso.org.uk
8. Brecknock Women's Aid
9. Bristol Fawcett www.bristolfawcett.org.uk
10. CAADA (Coordinated action against domestic abuse) www.caada.org.uk
11. Campaign to End Rape www.cer.truthaboutrape.co.uk
12. CARE www.care.org.uk
13. CAST (Creative and Supportive Trust) www.castwomen.org.uk
14. Clean Break www.cleanbreak.org.uk
15. Citylight www.citylight.org.uk
16. CROP (Coalition for the Removal of Pimping) www.cropuk.org.uk
17. Door of Hope www.doorofhope.org.uk
18. Eaves www.eaves4women.co.uk
19. Equality Now www.equalitynow.org
20. Feminist Coalition Against Prostitution www.fcip.btik.com
21. Greater London Domestic Violence Project www.gldvp.org.uk
22. Hafan Cymru
23. Her Centre
24. Immigrant Council of Ireland www.immigrantcouncil.ie
25. Imkaan www.imkaan.org.uk
26. Independent Choices – Women's Domestic Abuse Helpline
27. Justice for Women www.justiceforwomen.org.uk
28. Million Women Rise www.millionwomenrise.com
29. National Alliance of Women's Organisations www.nawo.org.uk
30. National Association for People Abused in Childhood www.napac.org.uk
31. nia Project www.niaproject.info
32. OBJECT www.object.org.uk
33. One in Four www.oneinfour.org.uk
34. Rape Crisis www.rapecrisis.org.uk
35. Rape and Sexual Abuse Support Centre www.rasasc.org.uk

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36. Respect www.respect.uk.net
 37. Rights of Women www.rightsofwomen.org.uk
 38. RISE www.riseuk.org.uk
 39. Rotherham Women's Refuge
 40. Savana www.savana.org.uk
 41. Scottish Women Against Pornography
 42. Solent Feminist Network www.solentfeministnetwork.co.uk
 43. South Essex Rape and Incest Crisis Centre www.sericc.org.uk
 44. South London Fawcett Group www.slonfawcett.org.uk
 45. STOP UK www.stop-uk.org
 46. Streetlife www.citygatechurch.net
 47. Swansea Women's Aid
 48. The Early Intervention Project
 49. The Henna Foundation www.hennafoundation.org
 50. The Hull Lighthouse Project www.community-house.co.uk
 51. The Medaille Trust www.medaille.co.uk
 52. The RAHAB Project www.themustardtree.org
 53. The Salvation Army www.salvationarmy.org.uk
 54. Torfaen Women's Aid
 55. Toyndbee Hall www.toyndbeehall.org.uk
 56. TRUST
 57. Truth About Rape www.truthaboutrape.co.uk
 58. Urban Outreach Bolton
 59. Walsall Street Teams www.walsallstreetteams.co.uk
 60. Wearside Women in Need www.wearsidewomeninneed.org.uk
 61. Welsh Women's Aid www.welshwomensaid.org
 62. White Ribbon Campaign www.whiteribboncampaign.co.uk
 63. Women and Children's Advocacy Centre <http://wcacentre.org>
 64. Women and Girls Network www.wgn.org.uk
 65. Women's Centre Sutton www.suttonwomen.co.uk
 66. Women in Prison www.womeninprison.org.uk
 67. V-DAY UK www.vdayuk.org

^[iii] For images or further information about the rally contact Eaves' communications officer Anna Bowden (details above).

^[iv] This testimony from "Angel" (not her real name) is her contribution to a Demand Change! film about the true-life experiences of women who have survived prostitution. The film was shown on Monday 2 November in the House of Commons. To obtain a copy of the DVD, contact Eaves' communications officer Anna Bowden (details above).