

Elena Whitham MSP  
Minister for Community Safety  
Scottish Government  
St Andrew's House  
Regent Road  
Edinburgh  
EH1 3DG

1 December 2022

Dear Minister,

We are a diverse group of churches, individuals, Christian charities and groups. We believe that measures including criminalising the purchase of sex and introducing improved support services for those who wish to exit prostitution will help combat commercial sexual exploitation in Scotland.

We are writing to you after your recent publication of papers which aim to aid the development of a Scottish Government framework to tackle men's demand for prostitution. We welcome the papers which outline the international policymaking evidence base and contain reports from those with lived experience of working in prostitution. We believe these papers affirm and provide further evidence for making legislative change here in Scotland.

We represent Christian charities and groups across Scotland who work to support women who have been and are being exploited, trafficked and objectified.

As a community of faith, we support the Scottish Government's commitment to challenging and ending men's demand for prostitution in Scotland. We write this letter to affirm that we believe the evidence leads to the conclusion that legislative change is part of the solution.

Based on the recently published Scottish Government reports, the experience of other comparable jurisdictions' successful legislation, and our experience working with women in these circumstances, **we believe a Bill should do the following:**

1. Criminalise the purchase of sex while simultaneously decriminalising the selling of sex, recognising that the responsibility for change must come from men who purchase these services;
2. Provide support and exiting services for those involved in prostitution;

3. Implement public education and messaging around the prospective law, helping the public to make the connection between the purchasing of sexual services and violence against women and girls;
  
4. Specific criminalisation of online pimping, based on research by the Scottish Parliament Cross-Party Group on Commercial Sexual Exploitation which found that loopholes in the law have been exploited throughout the COVID-19 pandemic and in the movement of women and girls from Ukraine following the invasion by Russia.

As has been seen in other jurisdictions such as Sweden, this package of measures has the potential to be transformational for those who are being exploited across Scotland today.

We urge the Scottish Government to introduce legislation to these ends, in order to meet the challenge of ending men's demand for prostitution in Scotland.

### Signatories

Restore Glasgow

Evangelical Alliance Scotland

Apostolic Church, Scotland

Bethany Christian Trust

CARE for Scotland

Findlay Memorial Church

Free Church of Scotland

Glasgow City Mission

Life Church Paisley

Logos Scotland

Newton Mearns Baptist Church

Parkhead Nazarene Church

St Paul's & St George's Church

The New Charter Church

United Free Church of Scotland

Upper Room Church

