

Nordic Model Now! A review of 2025

January 2026

Nordic Model Now! is a small grassroots group with no paid workers. We are run entirely by unpaid activists who do this work alongside paid jobs and family and other commitments because they care desperately about the damage that the sexexploitation industry causes to women and girls and to the whole of society.

It is easy to think that we are too small to make much difference when those who campaign for the expansion of the sexexploitation industry have the backing of so many – not just the multitude of men who are users and consumers of women and girls trapped in the industry, but also the financial beneficiaries of this multi-billion-pound industry and the Government who appears to want it to thrive so that it can prop up our failing economy.

Setting out what we have done in 2025 helps us to see that we can and have made a difference even if it has not yet brought about the change that we long for. We are reminded of Margaret Mead's wisdom:

“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it’s the only thing that ever has.”

Feedback

Sometimes our work feels thankless but from time to time people send us feedback that shows that we are making a difference. Here are just two small examples:

“I was speaking to a PCS official a few weeks ago who said he took the leaflet comparing prostitution to a normal job at the TUC Conference and it really hit home to him. Also a colleague of mine in GMB, another man, said the health and safety aspect made the penny drop for him. He said, ‘This isn’t about pearl clutching, it’s a serious approach that makes people question prostitution.’ Please keep going.”

“Hello, I just wanted to message you to show that your posts are making a difference. You recently made a post about the language of choking / strangulation. It’s not something that had occurred to me before and it was great to have it pointed out so clearly. I live in Wales and my Senedd Member recently posted about ‘choking’ being taught to young people. I commented under the post about the language used citing the reasoning I had seen on your page. She has since written to the leader of a County Council using ‘strangulation’ rather than ‘choking’. And I consider that this is as a direct result of the comment I made which I learnt from your page. So I just wanted to let you know that your work does have impact even perhaps if you don’t see it. Between us I think we made a small difference.”

Report on the social and economic costs of prostitution

In January, we published a ground-breaking report, [The Social & Economic Costs of Prostitution & Other Forms of Sexual Exploitation: The Case for Investing in Equality](#). We had a meeting booked

with Jess Phillips, Minister for Safeguarding and Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) in February and we wanted to provide her with some ammunition against the Treasury, who we had heard, was resisting radical ideas for addressing VAWG, including through the introduction of the Nordic Model.

We wanted to show that the sexexploitation industry is causing massive social problems that are threatening the very fabric of our society and that cost the country far more than any putative gains to the economy. The report covered: the costs to the women directly involved, with three detailed case studies that detail how the harms manifest and an estimation of the associated personal and social financial costs; the wider social and economic costs to society, including contributing to the recent tripling of reported rapes and quadrupling of child sexual abuse rates; and sexexploitation's role in serious and organised crime, high rates of family breakdown, the critically low birth rate, children's welfare, 'grooming gangs', and inequality between women and men. Finally the report made a number of recommendations.

While it appears that Jess Phillips did not make use of it in her recent VAWG strategy, Ash Regan MSP referred to it in the [Financial Memorandum](#) for her 'Unbuyable' Bill in the Scottish Parliament.

Our events

In 2025, we hosted three successful webinars, a fundraising party, and a fringe meeting at the TUC Conference in Brighton:

- [Raising Kids in a Pornified world](#): An online workshop led by Helen McDonald.
- [Easy Money or Excuse for Abuse](#): How OnlyFans broke down the boundaries of a generation
- ['Grooming gangs'](#): Where did the idea come from?
- Fundraising Party
- [Prostitution and the trade union movement](#). Which approach is the best fit: the Nordic Model or full decriminalisation?

TUC Women's Conference

ASLEF and the GMB brought motions calling for full decriminalisation of prostitution to the TUC Women's Conference, which was held in London on 5-7 March 2025. We were part of a coalition of feminist and trade union women working against these motions. We published [an article](#) explaining why full decriminalisation would contravene TUC policies against sexual harassment and misconduct, and for equality in the workplace, and for safety for women workers and provisions for victims of male violence.

We printed [flyers](#) specifically against the two motions which a team of women handed out to delegates as they entered the building, along with our [introductory leaflet](#) about the harms of prostitution. We had a stall where we talked to delegates and gave out our publications.

TUC Women's Conference 2025

SUPPORT WOMEN! 

 **SAY NO TO MOTIONS 8 & 9**

8: Decriminalisation of Sex Work (ASLEF)
9: Sex work is still work (GMB)
& the CWU amendment

Because they both call for the **full decriminalisation of prostitution** (decrim), which:

- Decriminalises brothels, pimps, & punters.
- Normalises & legitimises prostitution.
- Treats women & girls as commodities.
- Fails to recognise the inherent harms of prostitution.
- Is not the solution to women's poverty.
- Is associated with a general increase in male violence.
- Deepens the inequality between the sexes.
- In practice always leads to:
 - A rapid expansion of the sex trade.
 - An increase in sex trafficking.
 - More girls & young women being drawn into it.
 - Lower prices.
 - Increased competition.
 - Increased expectations from punters.

 **WOMEN DESERVE BETTER**

What's the alternative?

The alternative, the **Nordic Model**, decriminalises selling sex and provides high-quality support services to all those involved, including genuine alternatives and routes out of prostitution. It also makes buying sex a criminal offence, with the key aim of changing men's attitudes and behaviour.

Comparison of the two approaches

	Nordic Model	Decrim
Selling sex is legal?	✓	✓
Services, incl routes out?	✓	✗
Pimping is legal?	✗	✓
Brothels are legal?	✗	✓
Buying sex is legal?	✗	✓

"Prostitution has this way of stealing all the dreams, goals and beautiful essence out of a woman. During my years in it, I didn't meet one woman who enjoyed what she was doing. Everyone was trying to get out." - Anonymous survivor

Find out more 

Supported by:

NORDIC MODEL NOW!    

We were thrilled that both motions were defeated with sizeable majorities. Here are the results:

Motion 8 (ASLEF) – LOST

- 54 in favour
- 93 against
- 63 abstained

Motion 9 (GMB/CWU) – LOST

- 55 In favour
- 91 Against
- 67 Abstained

It was a brilliant mobilisation of women from a variety of backgrounds working together for the benefit of women. However, this is unlikely to be the end of it. When unions have a formal policy on the issue, delegates are mandated to vote in line with that policy. There is a very powerful movement that is working to attempt to get unions to adopt a formal policy for full decriminalisation. We need to be alert to these attempts and to do all we can to stop them succeeding. And we need to encourage women to work in their unions raising awareness of the harms of prostitution and bringing motions of support for the Nordic Model as the only equitable solution. Do get in touch if you want to know how you can get involved in this work.

Some trade union women have drafted an excellent model motion that is [available to download](#).

The success of this action encouraged us to organise a fringe event at the main TUC Conference later in the year, where, with the help of Labour Party and trade union women, we gave out well over a thousand flyers to delegates as they entered the building.

Other events

We were honoured to be invited to provide speakers for more than 20 events organised by a variety of groups and organisations, including Labour Party, trade union, and women's groups, the Women's Rights Network, Alloa Women's Festival, the Scottish Women's Convention, the Public Policy Exchange, the Women's Liberation Alliance, and Morning Star conferences. Speaking at these events was an excellent way of increasing the reach of our message – so if you are part of a group or are involved in organising events and conferences, please consider inviting us to provide speakers.

This year we supported a number of women who have survived prostitution to speak at events, often for the first time. When asked to provide speakers, wherever possible we give the opportunity to a woman who has lived experience of prostitution, supported where appropriate by another member of NMN.

CEDAW General Recommendation 41

The CEDAW Committee is working on a new General Recommendation (GR 41) on gender stereotypes and invited comments on their initial [concept note](#). We [submitted a response](#) that welcomed the recognition that gender stereotypes contribute to trafficking and the exploitation of women's prostitution but argued that this needs to be expanded on in detail, and their major impact highlighted, including how the sexploitation industry continually produces and reproduces negative stereotypes about women. We were grateful to the 25 other organisations who signed in support of our response.

The Committee held [a half-day general discussion](#) on gender stereotypes in Geneva on 17 February and we were grateful for a donation that enabled us to send one of our members to this to do a short presentation on our behalf. You can see a [recording of that here](#).

NPCC 'Sex Work National Police Guidance'

In April, the NPCC issued new 'Sex Work National Police Guidance'. This was a response to a legal challenge from Not Buying It about the legality of the previous version. We posted [our analysis of the new guidance](#) on our website.

In summary, it appeared that Not Buying It's legal challenge made the NPCC realise that they needed to make some changes to avoid challenge to its bias. But instead of going back to the drawing board and rethinking the guidance from scratch, they seem to have simply made some superficial changes in the hope that this would deflect any criticism, while almost all the substantive advice remains fundamentally unchanged. As a result, most of the problems that we addressed in our reviews of the [2019](#) and [2023](#) versions remain.

Our concerns focused on the shallow understanding of how the sex industry works and its impact on the wider community, the idea that the police can successfully "safeguard" women who are involved in prostitution, the partnering with pimping websites, and the emphasis on lack of enforcement of the legislation against brothels, pimps, and sex buyers. We believe the guidance goes beyond both the law that has been democratically passed by Parliament and the legitimate role of the police.

The Foreword states that resources are finite and demand exceeds the police's capacity to respond. As such, it goes on, "there is a need to prioritise and focus efforts on tackling the highest harm offences".

But this underestimates the amount of harm that prostitution causes to both individuals and communities.

The contrast with the official strategy against drug crime set out in the [Serious and Organised Crime Strategy](#) is stark. While overall this prioritises the top of the criminal chain, it recognises the need to attack the **drug supply chain at every level** and to tackle the middle market of the drug supply, in recognition of the immense harm that drug crime causes to individuals and communities. Given that prostitution also causes immense harm to individuals and communities, we do not believe there is any justification for not taking a similar approach to the prostitution industry.

The idea that resourcing issues is the reason for the NPCC decision not to enforce the law on brothels, pimping websites and kerb crawlers for example, is far-fetched given that eye watering amounts of police resources are spent on arresting people who post “offensive” messages on social media – more than 30 **a day** [according to a recent report](#). That’s more than twice as many as the number of pimps prosecuted in **a year** on average [over the five years to 2022](#).

[Evidence is now compelling](#) that men who pay for sex are more prone to commit rape and other sexual misconduct against women and girls in the wider community. The Government has no hope of achieving its commitment to halve male violence against women and girls if the police continue along these same lines.

We fear that the real problem is the [capture](#) of the NPCC and most other key UK institutions by lobbyists for the expansion of the sex industry. The capture is so complete that it would seem that many policy makers are simply unable to even hear other viewpoints, let alone consider whether they might have value.

We followed up our analysis with an [FOI request](#) and published an [article that summarised](#) what we learned from the response. We subsequently had some correspondence with the Home Office which was generally dismissive of our very serious concerns. This led us to believe that it would not be including a robust strategy to clamp down on sex buyers and third parties profiting from women’s prostitution in the forthcoming much trumpeted VAWG strategy and we were being frozen out. Sadly when [the strategy was published](#) on 18 December, we found our prediction was vindicated.

We also wrote to the EHRC detailing our concerns that the NPCC had not complied with the Public Sector Equality Duty. They responded saying they would carefully consider our input but that they don’t have the resources to take action on every matter.

Ash Regan MSP's 'Unbuyable Bill'



Amanda Quick giving evidence to the Criminal Justice Committee in the Scottish Parliament

In May 2025, Ash Regan MSP (Member of the Scottish Parliament) introduced a private member's bill, the [Prostitution, Offences and Support \(Scotland\) Bill](#), informally known as the 'Unbuyable' Bill, to the Scottish Parliament. If this passes, it will bring the Nordic Model to Scotland. We were keen to do all we could to support this.

Consultation. In the summer, she ran a consultation on it, which of course we responded to and [encouraged our followers](#) to respond to.

Oral evidence at the Scottish Parliament. In October, Amanda Quick, one of our survivor members, gave oral evidence in support of the Bill to the Criminal Justice Committee in the Scottish Parliament. In that formal setting, in a session chaired by a woman who repeatedly reminded everyone that they were to discuss the draft legislation in the bill and not other issues no matter how related, Amanda steadfastly brought everything back to the messy reality of prostitution – the entitlement and cruelty of the male punters, the violence, the misery, and the grinding down of her self-worth until doing anything else became unimaginable. This required extraordinary courage and strength, by which we are humbled.

You can watch the entire session on the [Scottish Parliament website](#), but we have [two clips of Amanda speaking](#) on our website that we particularly recommend. After the session, we sent [further information](#) supporting Amanda's oral evidence to the Criminal Justice Committee.

Open letter. Concerned that the Bill does not have enough MSPs on side to get it through the vote scheduled for the end of Stage 1 later in January 2026, we organised an [open letter](#) calling on the Scottish Ministers and MSPs to support Ash Regan's 'Unbuyable' Bill. This provided much needed context to the polarisation of opinion on this issue.

The letter was signed by 128 organisations from 27 countries and 630 individuals from 26 countries, including 37 women who identify themselves as having personally experienced prostitution, plus professors, social workers, support workers, lawyers, journalists, feminist activists and more.

The global nature of the signers reflects the global nature of the prostitution industry and how each country's policies and legislation have a wide-ranging impact on the populations in other countries.

Many of those signing have left comments, which make enlightening reading. For example, Borbála Juhász, a Hungarian policy analyst wrote:

“Hungary is a source country for human trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation. The more countries introduce the Nordic model, the less opportunities pimps will have to move around Hungarian young women, just reaching adulthood, and the more incentive the Hungarian state will have to make a strong social net to help families in extreme poverty and segregation and fight domestic abuse which always precedes prostitution.”

Laura S, who identifies herself as a survivor of prostitution, wrote:

“I can't put into words the hell that prostitution is. Women need support to exit, and men need educating (backed with the full force of law) not to believe they have the right to purchase women and girls. Prostitution ruined my life. I don't want anyone else to go through this.”

2-minute tool. We have also been encouraging people who live in Scotland to write to their MSPs to ask them to support the bill. We have provided a [2-minute tool](#) that makes this really easy and also [tips for people](#) who want to send their own hand-crafted letter.

Booklet. At the suggestion of Allison Graham, Ash Regan's communications officer, we have sent copies of an [updated edition](#) of our 'Decriminalisation of the sex trade vs. the Nordic Model: What you need to know' booklet to be distributed to all MSPs in early January.

Webinar. Finally, we have been [planning a webinar](#) featuring Ash Regan MSP and Venessa MacLeod, a survivor of Edinburgh's brutal 'saunas' (i.e. brothels) discussing the Bill and debunking some of the common myths about the Nordic Model. This is due to take place on Sunday 11 January.

The DWP and its treatment of OnlyFans

In the summer, we were contacted by a work coach in a government-run jobcentre who was concerned that it appears that the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) regards OnlyFans as a legitimate source of self-employment and that as a result young female job seekers are being encouraged to develop their income through it. The work coach had several related concerns including that there seemed to be a gap in the DWP's approach to sexual exploitation in comparison to other forms of vulnerability, general ignorance about the exploitative nature of OnlyFans, and some (male) work coaches taking advantage of young female claimants who were on it.

After meeting with the job coach and having several conversations with them, we [published an article](#) they had written. The article was shocking and it received a positive but appalled response on social media, which led to several journalists contacting us. Some of the journalists we spoke to, while bright and well informed on many matters had unquestioningly accepted the myth that OnlyFans is an easy and safe way for young women to make loads of money.

It was clear that there is a general lack of awareness of the exploitative nature of OnlyFans, including: that the vast majority of "content creators" make very little money; that the main way of increasing earnings through it is to post ever more degrading and extreme content; that this requires posting clips and stills of this on mainstream social media in an attempt to attract paying "fans"; and how this is

increasing kids' exposure to extreme porn. We therefore published a new article, [Everything you need to know about OnlyFans](#), that attempted to summarise the reality and why it is dangerous.

We were alerted to 2012 legislation that banned the DWP from including sex industry jobs in employment options for claimants but it was not clear to us whether this would cover self-employment on OnlyFans and similar.

After further discussion with the job coach, we wrote a [follow up article](#) and then submitted two FOI requests. The [first one](#) was focused on whether the DWP suggests or mandates Universal Credit claimants build an income on OnlyFans, and related issues and the [second one](#) was focused on implementation of Section 2A of the Employment and Training Act 1973. We have now received responses to these and are analysing them and considering next steps. Watch this space.

What's REALLY Happening in Switzerland? A Case Study in Regulated Prostitution

We were proud to [publish a ground-breaking article](#) about the regulated sex industry in Switzerland. Using meticulous and forensic analysis of publicly available data, this shows that Switzerland's regulatory approach has created a system where exploitation flourishes in plain sight. The Swiss Government's justifications for maintaining this system collapses under their own evidence. While claiming criminalisation would drive exploitation "underground," the Federal Council (2015) acknowledged Sweden's success in reducing demand without increasing violence. If you haven't already read this, it is highly recommended.

Inquiries, consultations, and calls for evidence, etc

In addition to those already mentioned, we responded to a number of inquiries, consultations and calls for evidence this year, including:

- [The UN Special Rapporteur on VAWG's call for input to her report on consent.](#)
- [The UN Special Rapporteur on VAWG's call for input to her report on surrogacy.](#)
- [The Public Accounts Committee's inquiry into tackling VAWG](#)
- [Call for evidence on the identification of victims of modern slavery](#)
- The Women and Equalities Committee's inquiry into misogyny

Reem Alsalem, UN Special Rapporteur on VAWG invited us to take part in zoom consultations on both consent and surrogacy. We were also invited to participate in a workshop for key stakeholders who have direct experience and knowledge of the victim identification system for modern slavery,

Stalls

We ran stalls at the following events and conferences. These were brilliant opportunities to engage with visitors, distribute our publications and gain support. We are keen to have stalls at more events in the future, so if you are organising an event, do please consider inviting us to have a stall.

- The TUC Women's Conference
- The Alloa Women's Festival
- The TUC Black Workers' Conference
- Women Create

- STUC Conference
- FiLiA
- The Women's Liberation Alliance Conference
- Morning Star Conference
- Battle of Ideas

Journalists and the media

We were contacted by a variety of journalists, media outlets and students throughout the year and met with a number of them to share knowledge, information and contacts, etc.

Website

We published 39 new articles, survivor stories and blogs on our website in 2025, some of which we have mentioned above. Here are links to a few key ones:

- [Supporting women in prostitution in a culture of official indifference](#)
- [The Nordic Model as progressive and holistic solution to intractable social problems](#)
- [Lily Phillips: Pleasing men or pandering to their sexual fetishes?](#)
- [AI: Putting women back in their place. A review of 'The New Age of Sexism' by Laura Bates](#)
- [If we make prostitution legitimate and respectable, it would make things easier for buyers and pimps but NOT the women](#)
- [MYTH: The Nordic Model pushes prostitution underground](#)
- [The invisible line between "independent escort" and trafficking victim](#)

YouTube

We published recordings of our three webinars, a voice recording of our TUC Conference fringe event and two clips of Amanda speaking to the Criminal Justice Committee in the Scottish Parliament.

Engagement is up year on year and we are pleased that our content is appealing increasingly to a younger audience. If you haven't already, do please subscribe to our [YouTube channel](#).

Esther, our policy adviser, recorded a podcast called [The Modern Sex Industry's Race to the Bottom](#) with the German activist Elly Arrow as part of the [Red Light Exposé](#) series.

Social media

In addition to all the above, we posted on Facebook and X (Twitter) almost every single day of the year and on Instagram several times a week and have continued to build our following and engagement, in spite of occasionally being hammered by the big social media companies because of claims that our content is "inappropriate". So then we have to spend time appealing. But on we go.

Thank you!

We want to thank everyone who contributed to our work, whether through financial donations, giving up your time to help out on a stall, handing out flyers at the TUC conferences, providing technical, legal or strategic advice, sharing our posts on social media, signing our open letters, arranging for us to speak at your organisation's events, or helping in a myriad different ways.

Plans for 2026

We started NMN in early 2016, so 2026 is our tenth anniversary year. We've hardly had time to stop and consider how to celebrate our ten years of activism, but watch this space.