

**SEX
WORKERS
UNION**

**BAKERS
FOOD
AND ALLIED
WORKERS
UNION**



OUR FIRST YEAR WITH BFAWU



SWU's first year with BFAWU!

It's been an action-packed first year for us, since we not only moved our union but we also succeeded in pushing forward with a number of actions on behalf of our members and continuing to campaign for *better workplaces and fairer treatment*.

Our move to BFAWU

On Wednesday 15th of March 2023, **United Sex Workers (USW)** voted to leave our parent union, *United Voices of the World (UVW)* and to regroup under the **Bakers, Food and Allied Workers Union (BFAWU)**.

We ended up with 104 responses, which is a 57.78% turnout.

89.4%	Yes	(93 votes)
4.8%	No	(5 votes)
5.8%	Abstain	(6 votes)

SWU@UVW was subsequently dissolved and we became **Sex Workers Union (SWU)**, Branch 600 at the Bakers, Food and Allied Workers Union. After meetings between Sarah Woolley, General Secretary of BFAWU, and the core organisers at SWU, a smooth transition was facilitated between unions.

We are grateful to UVW to the support they provided during this move as well, as a small number of members were able to maintain UVW membership while receiving case work support.

Our welcome to BFAWU has been warm and we are over the moon to have a new home for our members - *thank you BFAWU!*

Edinburgh SEVs

We took on Edinburgh City Council and won! Judicial review actions are by no means easy nor are the success rates likely, but the courts declared the nil-cap on Sexual Entertainment Venues declared unlawful.

The nil-cap would have meant the closure of the remaining strip clubs in Edinburgh. The closure of these workplaces would have cost many of our members their jobs. As a trade union that fights to protect the labour rights of the workers we consist of and represent, we could not allow this to happen.

Our strategy was to mobilise a broad response to the SEV consultation, drawing from our various networks of fellow sex worker groups and allies to raise over 21k in legal fees, and the in-kind support we have received from our lawyers at Gilson Gray (with special thanks to Rosie Walker and Caitlin Bell) and our barrister David Welsh. After the legal challenge ECC decided to open another consultation on the number of SEV licenses allowed to operate within the city, and we've once again had to mobilise public response in order to fight for our members' basic rights to remain employed within their chosen profession, one that best suits their lifestyles and allows them to cope with the rising costs of childcare and lack of sufficient state support during a cost of living crisis.



SAVE THE PUBIC TRIANGLE,



SAVE OUR JOBS.

Stand up for strippers' safe workplaces, fill out the consultation
www.swunion.co.uk/public-consultation/

But the battle is not over. The next stage is for a decision to be made on how many SEVs will be allowed to continue to operate, and we will be submitting a deputation for consideration.



Solidarity with other workers

We sex workers have been showing solidarity with other workers and have attended a number of picket lines, including striking NHS and ASLEF workers, where we were warmly received.



At the **Durham Miners' Gala**, we met other trade unions leaders and talked to them about the importance of pushing for a decrim stance across the labour movement. Similarly, we are working towards a decrim statement from the FBU.



SOLIDARITY!

AdultWork and Birchplace

Acting on reports from some of our members that advertising platforms *AdultWork* and *Birchplace* were requiring workers to show their faces, we successfully pushed for AW to retract their face-out policy, protecting the safety of full service sex workers. We are in the process of pushing for a similar retraction from Birchplace, and are currently looking to organise around the few fees brought about by AdultWork for changing locations which will impact the most economically disadvantaged workers.

Babes4Justice

In response to reports of exploitative business practices including GDPR & data protection law breaches, violations of our privacy, and breaches of contract, lawyers were engaged by **Babes4Justice** to organise a mediation with a large adult entertainment company, in order to seek compensation for the affected workers, as well as a change in how the business operates to ensure that current and future workers aren't subject to the same mistreatment.



Financial discrimination

Following a successful mediation with a card processing company, we received the contact for the **FCA** who we contacted to raise issues around sex worker financial discrimination. Despite their work being legal, and paying taxes, sex workers cannot get mortgages, loans or open business accounts and are always at the risk of having their accounts closed down.

We are currently arranging a meeting with the FCA to speak to them about this issue, which will happen in Spring 2024.

Online Safety Act

SWU met with communications regulator **OFCOM** to discuss how the development of the **Online Safety Act** will impact sex workers. We are currently organising an online conference to bring together people with lived experience combined with academic expertise to highlight how the Act can impact us in various ways.

We represented union members experiences and data at the *Part Of The Solution* conference held by **ESWA** (European Sex Workers Alliance). The conference aimed to inform future interventions to combat stigma and discrimination against Sex Workers.

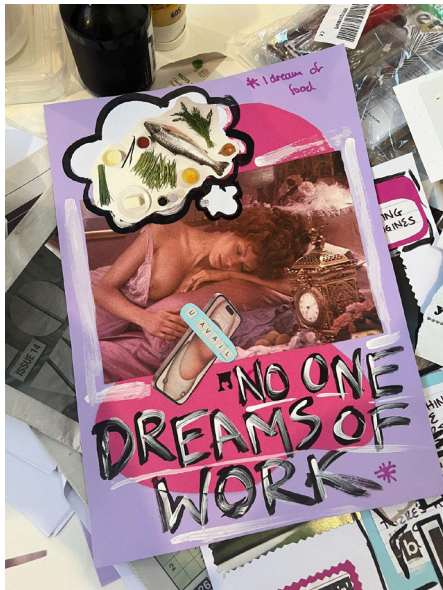
Spoke at the European Parliament's *'Towards Improved Health Outcomes for Sex Workers'* about the harmful impact of the Online Safety Act and the EU Digital Services Act.

Keynote speech at Sex Tech EU



The speech, titled *'Data Violence Against Online Workers: Revenge Porn and Institutionalized Stigma'* lead by our online rep at SWU and assisted by Josie Josie West, (PhD student, King's College London). It was a thought-provoking and enlightening address for the attendees both there physically, and watching via a **Live Stream**. Particularly when our members drew on her own experiences as a sex worker, having had her content stolen and reproduced, banking services terminated, being held and questioned at borders, being personally subjected to doxxing, and more.

Truth & Lies: Our first in-person event!



We collaborated with **NUM** (*National Ugly Mugs*) and political arts organisation *Arika* to bring forth our first in-person SWU event to Conway Hall, London.

We hosted a full daytime session of workshops including ‘Sex Work Inclusive Solutions to Intimate Image Abuse’ by **ESWA**, ‘Know Your Rights - Sex Workers Organising Against Criminalisation’ by **ECP**, the English Collective of Prostitutes, and writing workshop, ‘Writing Our Hearts - Whores in/on Love’ by Amy K.

Our comms officer and in-house graphic design genius helped host a drop-in art workshop where we made a series of hilarious and funny artworks together.

Truth & Lies also consisted of an evening event with book readings from the book *Truth & Lies: An Anthology of Art and Writing* by Sex Workers and performances from both SWU members and the sex worker community in London.

This amazing experience was made possible by the **JRCT Grassroots Movement Fund**.

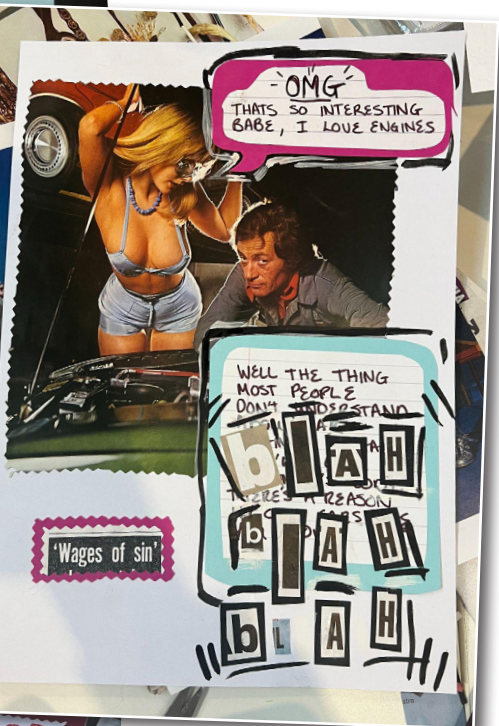


Every woman needs

FINANCIAL
genital autonomy



✓ Same day C



Bristol: Our first in-person committee meeting since before lockdown!



Thanks to the support we received from the **JRCT movement fund**, we were able to support the SWU committee to finally come together for their first in-person meeting since before lockdown. Lockdown meant that our organising team moved online, and as a result became spread out across the country as opposed to being London-centric.

We stayed for two nights in Bristol in a shared house and finally got the opportunity to not only meet each other in person (and for some reps it was the first time they got to meet in person!) but actually get to know each other, and work together in-person.

We shared information about the history of our union, with the reps who had been there for longer sharing their thoughts and experiences of the last few years. The newer reps spoke about their hopes for the future and their plans of action. We strategised about the best ways to grow our union together, via each sector, and came up with different, industry-specific plans to grow our membership and to collectively organise around workplace issues.

We are so excited to put these into action in the coming year!

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Revolting Prostitutes
The Fight for Sex
Workers' Rights

Molly Smith
and
Juno Mac

VERSO
London - New York

