



PROTECTING THE RIGHTS OF WOMEN & CHILDREN

Annette Mansell-Green
Chair, Women's TUC Committee

a.mansell-green@bda.uk.com

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Dear Annette

The Women's Rights Network (WRN) is a network of women from across the UK, which defends the rights of women and girls. WRN represents over 3,000 members and nearly 8,000 supporters.

We have been alerted by several of our members to two draft motions intended to go to the TUC Women's Conference in March, calling for the complete de-criminalisation of the sex trade. Although the exact wording is not yet in public, we understand that this means that ALL aspects of the industry would be legalised – pimping, brothels, advertising. No age limits are specified. The two unions calling for this motion to go through are the GMB and ASLEF. The GMB is of course the union described by a former regional president as “riddled with misogyny”. ASLEF is a union in which only 6.5% of train drivers are women. It is staggering that these are the unions to call for legalisation of sexual exploitation of women.

WRN's position is that prostitution is exploitation of women, by men. It is men using (usually young) women as objects, for their own pleasure, demanding that whatever they want be provided, regardless of how unpleasant, degrading or harmful that is for the woman. Please see our blog <https://www.womensrights.network/post/prostitution-and-its-impact-on-women>. In the context of public concern about the systematic exploitation of young girls by rape gangs, and of the horrific story of Gisele Pelicot, raped by large numbers of her neighbours, it is astonishing that these unions are making this call – and to add to the insult, to the Women's Committee.

WRN considers that these draft motions conflict fundamentally with the TUC's core values, its position on male violence against women, on modern slavery and on sexual harassment. We are writing to the Women's Committee to call for the draft motions to be held inadmissible on this basis, and for a public statement that the TUC will not consider any motion of this nature. These motions are about men's wants, not women's safety. They must be struck out.

Yours sincerely

Heather Binning
Executive Director

cc: info@tuc.org.uk
equalities@tuc.org.uk
pnowak@tuc.org.uk