

Safer Spaces Statement

Hard Labour - events hosted by Scotland for Decrim, supported by Arika & Transmission Gallery

With thanks to SWARM, Abolitionist Futures and Sisters Uncut

This event aims to:

- celebrate sex workers and our lives
- promote sex worker organising
- platform the amazing culture we make
- tackle the oppressions that sex workers face; both as marginalised workers and as members of marginalised communities and identities
- have fun!

We are mindful that people attending this event will be coming from many different communities, experiences, countries, backgrounds, educational levels and contexts and that we might not always have a shared language, vocabulary or understanding. Throughout this event, we aim to foster a space where we can communicate thoughtfully and respectfully of difference, while contributing to a movement that supports not only sex workers' rights but collective liberation.

During this event there will be talks, films and visual art that touch on and explore a wide range of topics that impact on sex workers, and that connect and intersect with sex worker rights organising. Some of these might be complex and emotionally affecting. We want to foster an environment of open-mindedness, willingness to learn, collaboration, and respect for each others' experiences and perspectives.

Whilst we want all event attendees to feel able to explore and engage in ongoing learning around sex workers struggles we ask that you be mindful of when it is appropriate to involve others in that learning process. There is

a wealth of written material (freely available via the internet) that offers first hand insight into sex workers struggles and various lived experiences.

If someone has shared intimate information via the context of a workshop, talk etc. it does not mean they will wish to continue that sharing via conversation with a stranger. At the same time we don't want to close down potentially great conversations - just be mindful of when and how you approach someone. **If someone indicates they do not wish to have further conversation - respect this.**

We live in a world where oppression and violence are widespread and socially entrenched. Challenging and undoing these oppressions, whether on individual, community or structural levels is an ongoing practice that we are committed to doing. We recognise that many of the people attending throughout the weekend experience oppression on multiple intersecting axes and that living with constant oppression can be exhausting and demoralising. Attendees are asked to recognise and honour this in themselves and in others, and attend with the awareness that unlearning our own internalised prejudices is ongoing and imperfect work.

For the majority of the Hard Labour events - but not during the badgemaking workshop and film screening - we will have a **quiet space** for people who need a break from the event, situated in the downstairs basement. During those events - and always for those with limited mobility - the upstairs office will be available.

There will be an **Active Listener - Nosheen** - pronouns: she/her - available offering support during the Human Library event. The Active Listener will be identified at the start of the event. The support offered might be to listen and hear what someone wants to share about an experience or to offer brief emotional support if they have been particularly triggered. Personal matters shared with the Active Listener will be held in confidence – more general feedback about the event/s itself will be shared within the Scotland for Decrim, Arika and Transmission teams teams and reflected upon.

We all respond to harm differently, so please take care of yourself over the weekend, ask for what you need and we will do our best to support.

The following are some suggested guidelines for building a productive and supportive space at this event:

- **This is a sex worker centric space.** Please think before talking over sex workers on topics related to sex work. If you are not a sex worker please be thoughtful about the words you use to describe sex workers and sex work. If you are not a sex worker you do not understand our jobs better than we do ourselves.
- Sex workers and other activists often need to use pseudonyms when speaking publicly about their work. **Please be thoughtful about which names you use for people that you know from other settings. Check you are using their correct name and pronoun if you are unsure.**
- Many of us experience oppression related to factors including (but certainly not limited to) work, gender, disability, race, transition, migration, class - and many others that may not be immediately obvious. Please be aware of your social position in relation to others. Think about how your view of the world may have been shaped and who might be excluded or harmed by your words, opinions and actions. Be careful to avoid making generalisations or assumptions about others.
- In order to foster a culture of consent, **please respect others' physical and emotional boundaries.** Please ask before touching someone, even in passing, and change your behaviour if someone lets you know that you are crossing their boundaries. You are encouraged to think about and communicate your own boundaries. If you need support or assistance with this well-being please support one of the event organisers who will be wearing lanyards.
- Many of those in attendance, including many sex workers, have survived violence physical, sexual, and emotional, including detention, deportation, forced migration and other forms of state

violence. In particular, many sex workers have experienced sexual violence at work. In addition to this, many of those attending will have trauma related to mental illness, familial upheaval, homelessness, poverty, and other traumatic experiences. Please consider the impact of disclosures around harm received or perpetuated and consider the need for support - both for others and for yourself - that may result from these disclosures.

- **If you are a client who is planning to attend the Hard Labour events please be reflective of how your presence might affect sex workers in the space.** Be aware it is possible that you may be asked to leave. If you would like to support the event or sex worker rights organising you can do so by making a donation to Scotland for Decrim.

Addressing harm & challenging oppression

Challenging oppressive behaviours is a collective responsibility. Please comment if you observe someone behaving in a way that reinforces rather than challenges oppressive systems. If you experience or are aware of harmful incidents, we encourage you to raise it as a collective issue and not feel that it is your responsibility to deal with it individually.

We are committed to principles of transformative justice rather than punishment and immediate exclusion. We try to work on a principle of “calling in”, with the aim of changing people’s behaviour and expanding their understanding through compassion and care rather than shaming and aggression. If incidents of harm occur, we will work collectively to support those who have been harmed, and address the issues.

While we are committed to resolving conflict and addressing harm with compassion, we believe it is extremely difficult to achieve anything productive or transformative with people who are not acting in good faith. Based on this, **if anyone attends a Hard Labour event with the intent of disrupting it they will be kindly asked to leave.** This also applies to

anyone who has shown intent to cause harm or distress to sex workers, sex worker rights organisers or our allies in other forums.

If someone needs calling in: do not be afraid to ask for support from one of the core organisers who will have Scotland for Decrim or Arika lanyard on.

Remember that doing this work can be exhausting and difficult, and you are not obligated to damage yourself in the service of it. If possible, name the specific harmful action; if you are aware of any relevant resources, you are encouraged to share them.

If you are called in: understand that the person speaking to you may be upset or angry, and they are entitled to feel this way; take a breath and try to understand the cause of their upset rather than responding defensively. Remember that calling in comes from a place of solidarity, and that whoever is doing so believes that you are able and willing to do better. Attempt to listen attentively, explain what you've learned, apologise for the harm you've caused, and commit to doing better in the future. If you cannot engage productively in the moment, the best response is to apologise, thank the person for their labour, and ask to leave the conversation so you can take time to reflect. Remember that impact is greater than intent, and it is possible to do harm without having intended to do so.

In wider discussions around which behaviours require calling in, please remember that oppressed individuals are the experts on their own oppression, and those who do not experience a particular type of oppression do not understand it as well as those who are currently living it.

If you wish to explore these concepts further, the following articles may be of use:

Calling In: A Less Disposable Way of Holding Each Other Accountable by Ngọc Loan Trần -

Calling In: A Quick Guide on When and How by Sian Ferguson -

What to do if you are called out/called in: 9 Phrases Allies Can Say When Called Out Instead of Getting Defensive by Sam Dylan Finch

You cannot identify someone's gender identity or choice of pronouns simply from looking at them. **If you feel able to do so, please feel free to introduce yourself with your own pronouns and ask others for their pronouns.** If you mistakenly use the wrong pronoun for someone, please apologise briefly (an extended period of beating yourself up helps no one), correct yourself, and move on.

Scotland for Decrim and Arika are explicitly supportive of trans and nonbinary identities, including the use of neopronouns such as xey/xem. If you need assistance understanding a pronoun set, Pronoun Island is a useful website that uses minimal data to load and contains illustrative examples of both traditional pronouns and neopronouns.

Thank you to SWARM, Abolitionist Futures and Sisters Uncut for sharing their safer spaces documents to help us build our own for this event.