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Type:	Web
Title of Submission:	Policing of the sex industry
Comments:	<p>I am a solicitor who acts on behalf of sex workers in a number of areas, including criminal law. I am deeply concerned by the constant harassment and targeting by Gardaí that I hear about. Section 11 of the Criminal Law (Sexual Offences) Act 1993, which prohibits brothel keeping, should not be used against sex workers who are sharing premises. They are working together for their own safety. Enforcement of this law against them encourages them to work alone instead, and also encourages criminals who know that they are less likely to call the Gardaí for help or to report crimes against them because they may be prosecuted if they do so. I am also concerned about the confiscation of their earnings and property. While this should rarely be done and certainly not in connection with so-called brothel keeping offences involving only sex workers sharing premises, in circumstances where it must be done, Gardaí should be REQUIRED to give receipts for any cash or property they confiscate and should be disciplined if they do not. I am concerned that outside of Dublin there seems to be little interest in engaging with sex workers themselves or with their representatives. I also understand that Gardaí have little interest in engaging with Ugly Mugs - this is an ESSENTIAL sex worker safety and support scheme. If the police have any real interest in keeping sex workers safe they simply must take sex workers' views, concerns, and experiences into account.</p>