

Cover Page

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This article focuses on sex work governance within multi-agency partnerships and initiatives in Wales. By engaging with notions of carceral humanism, this article seeks to make tangible the ways in which multi-agency partnerships co-opt and assimilate criminologists, activists, third sector and community organisations so that partisan commitments to advancing sex workers rights are transformed to bipartisan support for non-competing carceral frameworks and solutions. It argues there is a process of carceral bifurcation that enables narratives of safeguarding and sex work to be utilised to strengthen non-competing carceral conceptualisations of, and solutions to sex work.

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Introduction

The numerous reports of individuals turning to sex work during the ongoing 'cost of living crisis' corroborates what sex workers have long articulated; that sex work provides a crucial means of generating income when alternatives are unavailable or insufficient (Heal and Gross, 2022; McCamley and Bell, 2022). Sex worker led organisations have continuously identified that any effort to alleviate the precarity, vulnerability and violence that sex workers face should recognise and target the systems, structures and processes that perpetuate the inequalities and conditions preventing individuals from accessing adequate resources and protections (English Collective of Prostitutes, 2022, US PROStitutes Collective, 2023). This is true whether recognising the ways in which the increased proximity of sex workers to harm

is underpinned and enabled by restrictive immigration policies (Platt et al, 2020; Connelly & The English Collective of Prostitutes, 2021; Hanks, 2021), punitive benefits sanctions or inadequate welfare provisions (Safety First Wales, 2023). Indeed, it is the effects of these policies which lead many individuals to sex work, where they are exposed to prostitution legislation that criminalises them and undermines their safety rather than offering protection or alleviating the circumstances that led them there (Platt et al, 2018; 2020; McBride et al, 2021; Connelly & The English Collective of Prostitutes, 2021, Hanks, 2021). Sex workers from Safety First Wales (2023) have, for example, documented how delays in accessing welfare payments and accommodation are key factors that determine whether or not they engage in sex work at particular points in time. This is compounded by the fact that individuals are criminalised at the point at which they solicit sexual services and are disincentivised from working collectively by legislation such as The Sexual Offences Act (1967) that makes it an offence to work alongside colleagues, despite the enhanced safety it can provide. Similarly migrant workers are disproportionately monitored and raided on suspicion of irregular immigration or supposed trafficked victim status (Kenway, 2022; Hanks, 2022).

Once pushed towards criminalised forms of labour, sex workers are placed within the remit of a range of criminal justice actors and systems that frame inequalities grounded across a range of social and legislative domains as issues of crime control and community safety. Yet in identifying that their increased proximity to harm, violence and exploitation is underpinned by a variety of policies and inequalities, sex workers have revealed the fallibility of arguments made by those who regard an expansion of criminal justice powers as a panacea for the violence and exploitation perpetrated against them. Extensive empirical data show increased policing powers reduce sex worker safety (Platt et al, 2018; 2020), yet there remains broad support for the increased criminalisation of sex work in the United Kingdom, often through the Nordic Model which criminalises the purchasing of sexual services. This is in part attributable to the ongoing legacy of a carceral feminist ideology and praxis that views the state as 'synonymous with security and protection' (Verges, 2021: 62) and therefore turns to the criminal justice system for solutions to societal issues (Bernstein, 2012). But it is argued in this article that criminological analyses of sex work must recognise and

resist the carceral beyond its immediate manifestation in the Nordic Model and criminalisation of sex work. Indeed, it seeks to demonstrate how a sizeable faction of organisations, academics and activists in favour of the decriminalisation of sex work share a bipartisan commitment to the logics and systems of carcerality through their proximity to, support of and interaction with various legislative reforms, organisational structures and service providers.

The arguments presented in this article are informed by the authors research and organising alongside sex workers that advocates for the decriminalisation of sex work and prioritisation of sex workers' safety, health and well-being in Wales. What began as a doctoral research project in 2015 involving interviews with sex workers and observations of Welsh multi-agency sex work governance meetings led to a recognition that multi-agency structures seemed unable to recognise and engage with sex work in accordance with sex workers' own accounts and constructions of their social conditions. Their inability to do so however did not appear to undermine the hegemonic status of such partnerships amongst much of the 'occupational community' (Quinnney, 1970) of institutions and organisations that engage with them relating to sex work across Wales. This paper is a culmination of efforts to understand and conceptualise both how and why this dissonance has persisted, which have concluded such an entrenched disjuncture can only be understood if we recognise the integral carceral function that such groups serve across an increasingly diffuse carceral state. It aims to provide a conceptual framework that begins to develop an understanding and articulation of such tensions in the hope of supporting the possibility of broader social transformations in the sex workers rights movement in Wales and across the United Kingdom through a recognition of the need to resist and operate beyond the orthodoxy of multi-agency spheres. In doing so, it simultaneously aims to counter scepticism of the ability for carceral abolitionist theory and praxis to usefully contribute to criminological sex work scholarship and activism (Sanders et al, 2022: 12). It does so in the spirit of Belknap's (2015) call for an 'activist criminology' that challenges ineffective policies and practice whilst advocating for social and legal justice.

Whilst the article is predominantly theoretical in substance it draws at times from a variety of sources of publicly available data. It takes influence from Luscombe and Walby's (2017: 380) reflection on the utility of data made available as part of broader bureaucratic processes of record production and preservation, often in the name of transparency and accountability. The theoretical arguments are accordingly supplemented with primary financial data in the form of grants awarded by Police and Crime Commissioners to service providers across Wales between 2018 and 2023 (NPCC 2020, 2022, 2023) as well as the secondary analysis of Police and Crime Commissioner Annual Impact Reports (NPCC 2017/19), local authority multi-agency reviews (Cardiff Council's Community and Adult Services Scrutiny Committee, 2012) and local government cabinet meeting minutes relating to sex work governance and service provision in Wales (Cardiff Council's Community and Adult Services Scrutiny Committee, 2013). Examining the content of these documents enables insights in to the often obscure financial and ideological relationships that emerge within and between institutions, as well as how such relationships reproduce dominant configurations of policy and practice through multi-agency partnerships across Wales. It is argued that documenting such relationships across the multi-agency 'occupational community' (Quinnney, 1970) helps in understanding both their inability to recognise sex workers' accounts of their own lived experiences, whilst generating insights in to wider manifestations of carcerality in the United Kingdom.

Sex work and the carceral state

This article draws from a growing literature that explores the scale, composition and extent of a carceral state embedded across multiple domains and consisting of a range of logics which reinforce, reproduce and bolster the hegemony of criminal justice structures and systems. Much of the existing carceral state literature, theorising and praxis is grounded in the United States context (Beckett and Murakawa, 2012; Bernstein, 2012; Martensen, 2020). This is true of carceral state studies, as well as the particular exploration of sex workers' interactions with carcerality, often in relation to trafficking and sexual exploitation (Agystín, 2007; Bernstein, 2012; Capous-Desyllas, Payne, and Panichelli, 2021; Kay Hoang, 2016). This

article aims to contribute to the growing exploration of the existence, scale, extent and functioning of a carceral state in the United Kingdom (Sim, 2009; Burnett, 2017, 2022; Lambie, 2014; Cooper and Mansfield, 2020; McElhone et al, 2023) and to develop and draw attention to the particular usefulness of carceral abolitionist theory and praxis for understanding experiences of sex work and its governance in Wales.

The article builds on work that has highlighted the cynical and co-optive powers underpinning many of the welfare and rescue programmes that target sex workers (Augustín, 2006). Munro and Scoular (2012, 2013) have for example pointed to the way in which notions of vulnerability are employed to facilitate the imposition of forced welfarism and criminal justice sanctions against sex workers. Additional analysis has suggested that constructions of safeguarding are used to facilitate the repressive raiding and surveillance of sex workers (Hanks, 2022). This article seeks to examine the broader role that such ostensibly benevolent manipulations play within the wider functioning of a carceral state. In conjunction with multi-agency partnerships, such manipulations are presented as integral to preserving the governance of sex work within carceral structures. They help secure the support of a range of actors and service providers for solutions billed as 'caring and rehabilitative' alternatives (Dewey and St. Germain, 2016 in: Jackson, 2022: 327) that do not fundamentally challenge dominant logics and practices through the provision of a genuine 'alternative' (Mathiesen, 1974) and in so doing preserve entrenched carceral frameworks and systems of power and control. It is this 'discursive strategy of rebranding or repackaging carceral control under the caring provision of social services' that Heiner and Tyson (2017: 4) define as carceral humanism. The article draws from this carceral humanist framework to elicit the carceral functions of both multi-agency partnerships and those services they facilitate, often in the name of safeguarding and protecting sex workers.

Alongside carceral humanism, the conceptualisation of a carceral state is employed to capture the ways in which a variety of logics and systems of control that were historically embedded within the prison have increasingly permeated everyday life (Gottschalk, 2016). Foucault's (1977) notion of a carceral archipelago describes the way in which penal logics

and practices have been transported from prisons to multiple institutions, which whilst not explicitly grounded in traditional criminal justice structures, when endowed with power function to extend and embed the carceral network across society (Beckett and Murakawa, 2012; Martensen, 2020: 5). This enables us to see how an increasingly diverse array of organisations play a key role in facilitating punitive and penal social controls whilst 'doing the work of the state '(Meiners, 2015: 122; Ruggiero, 2010). Indeed, it helps articulate the ways in which a carceral state is able to function as an overarching network in which punitive control has become an indistinguishable and integral part of the work conducted by a range of social and care agencies.

Carceral humanism is therefore presented as central to the processes through which carceral control has been morphed and legitimised to such an extent that sex workers concurrent criminalisation and commodification is seen as a sign of benevolence and compassion. This article presents the governance of sex work in Wales as an example that can illuminate the often diffuse and opaque forms of power and control that underpin carceral state systems in the United Kingdom. By tracing the emergence and evolution of multi-agency governance structures and services through a lens of carceral abolitionist theory and praxis, the article aims to demonstrate that such partnerships must be understood as intrinsically and inescapably carceral. In doing so it suggests there is a need to recognise that the continued exposure of sex workers to harm has become fundamental not only to the existence of such partnerships, but to the maintenance of the criminal justice system and carceral state itself. Indeed, distortions of sex work are central in both enabling and preserving policy domains, carceral logics and industries of protection across the carceral archipelago.

Multi-agency partnerships as carceral communities

Tracing the emergence and evolution of governance via multi-agency partnerships since the mid 1980s enables contemporary partnership initiatives in Wales to be seen as more recent iterations in, rather than a benevolent departure from and rejection of repressive carceral

controls. The scarcity of such critique is especially relevant given the renewed emphasis on partnership working amongst the legislature and state institutions across Wales. Indeed, the 2022 launch of the Welsh Safety Communities Network saw the Welsh Government reaffirm Community Safety Partnerships as the preferred way of 'address[ing] activity or behaviour that is unlawful, anti-social [and] harmful to individuals and society '(Welsh Government, 2017: 2). Most recently, the National Police Chief's Council's (2023) Sex Work National Police Guidance has stated sex workers proximity to harm can only be realised through 'collaborative, multi-agency working [and] effective information-sharing '(2023: 3). It is therefore important to locate this renewed faith in multi-agency partnerships as a means of promoting sex worker safety as part of a wider shift in patterns of crime control that has occurred over recent decades. Indeed, despite their potentially well-meaning intentions, this section outlines the legislative origins of contemporary multi-agency practice in relation to sex work and prostitution to underscore their inexorable carceral foundations, instincts and implications.

David Garland (1996: 452) spoke of a 'preventive turn 'that saw the increased mobilisation of a range of organisations in relation to crime and deviance beyond traditional criminal justice agencies. The transition has been traced in part to Home Office interdepartmental circular 8/1984, which announced crime as a 'task for the whole community '(Crawford and Evans, 2017: 805). This was subsequently echoed by The Morgan Report (1990) which called for 'community safety 'over 'crime prevention', suggesting that a broader interpretation would enable 'greater participation from all sections of the community in the fight against crime '(Morgan 1991: 13, In Crawford and Evans, 2017: 805). The Crime and Disorder Act (1998) later placed a statutory responsibility on local authorities to 'work closely with police to prevent crime, share information, and develop joint strategies alongside a wide range of other agencies from the public, private, voluntary, and community sectors '(Crawford and Evans, 2017: 806). It is here that the emergence and cementing of multi-agency working as preferential can be seen, with its proponents regarding it as capable of targeting holistically the diverse aetiologies of crime and deviance through the 'pooling of expertise, information and responses '(Crawford and Evans, 2017: 800).

Whilst there has been a consolidation of multi-agency approaches towards crime control more broadly, the Home Office's (2011) report 'Effective Practice in Responding to Prostitution' helps contextualise the dominance of multi-agency partnerships in relation to sex work more specifically. The report sought to 'improve the lives of people involved' in and 'affected by prostitution' (2011: 12) 'by helping Local Authorities and Community Safety Partnerships to develop a proactive approach to the complex issues involved' (ibid). It suggested that 'local agencies know how to best respond to the needs of their particular community and [that] the most effective responses are therefore developed at a local level' (ibid). In a similar vein, ACPO's (2011) strategy 'Supporting Operational Guidance for Policing Prostitution and Sexual Exploitation' recommended 'an approach based throughout on partnerships with local authorities, other statutory agencies and non-governmental organisations'. Welsh Local Authority committees such as Cardiff Council's Community and Adult Services Scrutiny Committee (2012: 4) also reported being united in agreement that they 'have a duty to effectively tackle sex work/ prostitution and to play a key role with relevant partner agencies to do so'. Most recently, the National Police Chief's Council's (2023) Sex Work National Police Guidance has stated harm reduction can only be realised through 'collaborative, multi-agency working [and] effective information-sharing' (2023: 3) via its Harm Reduction Compass model.

Such agreements and guidance have centralised multi-agency partnerships within the governance of sex work. In Wales, this led to the creation of fora such as the Wales Strategic Sex Work Safety & Support Group (WSSWSSG) and Sex work and Prostitution Southern Wales Regional Meeting (SWPSWRM). The groups were/are attended by representatives of Welsh Police Forces, the Crown Prosecution Service, Public Health Wales, a range of third and public sector organisations and academics who perceived sex work to be part of their remit. The WSSWSSG functioned between 2015 and 2021 and aimed to oversee the governance of sex work in Wales whilst navigating members' opposing views on the decriminalisation of sex work. Whilst it was chaired independently, it collapsed in 2021 following irreconcilable differences between those who sought decriminalisation and groups

and service providers who either endorsed or were agnostic about further criminalisation via the introduction of the Nordic Model. The termination of the WSSWSSG led to the police establishing and charing their own SWPSWRM in its place, alluding to both the co-optive tendencies of criminal justice actors within multi-agency structures, as well the centrality of such partnerships to the practical and performative functioning and maintenance of carceral control. Indeed, the occupational community (Quinnney, 1970: 19) that has emerged to study, police, and deliver services to sex workers is heavily reliant on the existence of such partnerships to avoid becoming obsolete or unviable.

Multi-agency partnerships have therefore remained a constant feature in the governance of sex work in Wales over recent decades. Yet the transition from the WSSWSSG to SWPSWRM has led to a gradual consolidation of who participates in and contributes to discussions on sex work in Wales. All organisations that attend SWPSWRM meetings and deliver services to sex workers either explicitly endorse, or are at best agnostic about the introduction of the further criminalisation of sex work in Wales. The launch of the SWPSWRM has maintained multi-agency partnerships as *the* places where discussions on sex work that influence policy, legislation and practice may take place. It protects an established arrangement whereby those seeking to promote the wellbeing of sex workers are required to enter into such multi-agency partnerships to share their concerns with those empowered to implement change, in turn exposing them to the assimilative and co-optive powers of such spaces.

Multi-agency partnerships, carceral control and co-option.

Whilst such partnerships are readily accessible to many individuals, third sector groups and state organisations, identifying that they are set on carceral foundations necessitates a recognition that they are unable to produce the transformative outcomes sex workers demand. The point at which any alternative vision or construction of sex work comes to be based on or overseen by the tenants, ideologies or practices of an existing hegemonic system sees such an alternative cease to contradict, and no longer represent a departure from that which is resisted (Mathiesen, 1974: 13-14). Furthermore 'the more we use the language of the powerful, the more attuned we become to defining the problems at hand

as the powerful usually do; in other words, the more integrated we become into the old system '(1974: x). It is for this reason that efforts to resist the institutionalised harms imposed on sex workers through, for example, the promotion and incorporation of notions of safeguarding and vulnerability across multi-agency partnerships are misplaced. Mathiesen's (1974:13-24) theoretical analysis of the politics of abolition, and more specifically the 'unfinished' reveals the impossibility of sex workers demands for decriminalisation, self-determination, safety, and equal legal protection (UKNSWP, 2020) being achieved through multi-agency structures and processes, irrespective of their level of commitment to safeguarding. Indeed they are predisposed towards the implementation of reformist reforms, producing change that is 'situated in the discursive formation of the system as is' and accordingly 'within or against this existing framework '(Ben Moshe, 2013:87). They are therefore unable to deliver non-reformist alternatives that 'imagine a different horizon that should be realisable for the improvement of humanity, and are not limited by a discussion of what is possible at present '(ibid). This enables us to begin to see how multi-agency partnerships create the conditions in which certain ideas, values and practices are privileged over others. Power is woven in to these spaces through their language and membership in such a way that those aligned with dominant accounts of the realities of sex work are able to more readily exist within, and exert greater power over the governance of them.

Support for the notion that multi-agency partnerships are predisposed towards producing reformist reforms can be found by examining the recommendations for policy and practice that have emerged from such groups and associated reports including 'Multi-Agency Approaches to Tackling Sex Work/ Prostitution' (Community and Adult Services Scrutiny Committee, 2013). Indeed, the widely documented violence inflicted on sex workers during the repressive surveillance and raiding of police operations between 2006 and 2007 (Freis-Bries, 2018, Hanks, 2022) in addition to on-going harmful policing practice seen across Wales in recent years (Safety First Wales, 2023; Wales Online, Oppenheim, 2019; IOPC, 2023) has not led to a questioning of the compatibility of the police with partnerships designed to enhance the safety and wellbeing of sex workers. Rather they have produced measures to 'provide local awareness training for police response officers so that they understand the

vulnerability of street sex workers and reasons why they do not engage with police' and to 'formalise and embed the role of sex worker liaison officer' in an effort to 'improve and sustain 'the relationship between police and sex workers (Cardiff Council, 2013: 18 §1,4,5). Similarly, additional work is currently being conducted by members of the SWPSWRM to reflect on and disseminate revised National Police Chief Council guidance (2023) on prostitution across Wales with a continued emphasis on training police officers to recognise their role to safeguard and protect rather than prosecute sex workers. In such instances the occupational community's engagement with and participation in multi-agency partnerships becomes central to efforts to legitimise and sustain established systems of power and control. Rather than seeking to identify solutions to transform the roots of violence that increase certain individuals 'dependence on sex work as a sole form of income (Safety First Wales, 2023), the focus is drawn to supporting Police priorities which perceive concerns around confidence and legitimacy as an integral prerequisite to the promotion of sex workers safety and wellbeing. Ruggiero's (2010: 36) abolitionist reflections help recognise that such co-option perpetuates structures in which the continued exposure of sex workers to harm becomes fundamental to the very existence of such partnerships, which function to provide a mechanism to renew and promote rather than disrupt the legitimacy of existing hierarchies of power, systems and logics.

Carceral humanism and the commodification and criminalisation of sex workers

The co-optive effects and functions outlined above can also be detected in the financial relationships that emerge between members of multi-agency partnerships. Over the past three years Police and Crime Commissioners in Wales have allocated funding to services designed to support sex workers across the country (PCC, 2023). In 2020 £123,686 was awarded to an organisation in Swansea to 'develop and deliver a holistic victim focussed service responsive to the needs of sex workers across all sectors'. An organisation in Newport was allocated £69,101 in 2019, and £20,000 in 2022 to support services that engage with sex workers as 'sexually exploited adults and young people'. Additionally, in 2020, £37,547.35

was awarded from Ministry of Justice Extraordinary Funding by the Police and Crime Commissioner for South Wales to an organisation in Cardiff to ‘increase safety and improve wellbeing of women who are sexually exploited through prostitution’. Each of these organisations that received this funding was selected from within the ‘occupational community’ (Quinnney, 1970: 19) of organisations that attend sex work multi-agency partnerships in Wales. Yet despite the seemingly benevolent intentions of such funding, there have been instances where sex workers have been threatened with Criminal Behaviour Orders for non-compliance with support services made available through such funding (Oppenheim, 2019; BBC, 2019; Wales News Online, 2019). Indeed, Police and Crime Commissioners have cited the provision of funds to services for sexually exploited women to evidence their commitment to protecting sex workers (PCC, 2022) whilst simultaneously cultivating a system in which non-compliance with such services is used to issue Criminal Behaviour Orders against those they purport to protect. It is in this way that carceral humanism helps reveal the role of multi-agency partnerships in producing and reconfiguring carceral control in relation to a series of ostensibly caring and altruistic services. There is a process of carceral bifurcation that enables narratives of safeguarding and wellbeing to be utilised to strengthen non-competing carceral conceptualisations of, and solutions to sex work, whilst simultaneously strengthening the penal control of sex workers. We are therefore witnessing a similar process to that which Dewey and St. Germain (2016) (In: Jackson, 2022: 327) describe, whereby ‘alternatives billed as caring and rehabilitate options [are] in reality... new forms of surveillance and control undergirded by “social service-criminal justice system alliances”’. Indeed multi-agency structures and their organisational communities have established industries of protection in which the construction of sex workers as being in need of carceral solutions and services has become a valuable commodity. It is carceral humanism’s discursive repackaging and subcontracting of punitive control in this way that enables this simultaneous commodification and criminalisation of sex workers within multi-agency partnerships.

Such an analysis builds on Burnett’s (2017) notion of ‘industries of hate’ which captures the numerous organisations receiving funding to deliver services that tackle hate crime and

support its victims in the United Kingdom. His critique (2017: 13) considers how hate crime legislation, which sees the handing down of longer sentences to perpetrators and touting of zero tolerance narratives by state actors and agencies function to 'absolve the state of institutionalising racism'. He describes how the state is able to simultaneously 'create the conditions of racial violence at exactly the same time as it promises to amass greater powers to combat it '(2017: 14), revealing how individuals and agencies can deny and obfuscate responsibility for violence despite clear connections between policies and harms. Whilst Holt and Gott (2022) have outlined arguments against adopting a Hate Crime Model of policing towards sex work, Burnett's analysis enables us to recognise how the provision of funding to services designed to support and safeguard sex workers is central to the maintenance and functioning of a carceral state within a broader politics of protection. Indeed, Safety First Wales (2023), Connelly and The English Collective of Prostitutes (2021), Hanks (2021) and Platt et al (2020) have revealed how many of the harms sex workers face are grounded in domestic policies relating to welfare, housing, care and immigration. The effect of extensive legislation has been to create the conditions in which an individual's reliance on sex work and proximity to harm is increased, whilst citing concerns about such harm to strengthen and expand carceral controls in the name of their alleviation. Sex workers ongoing efforts to resist and organise against reductionist accounts that locate the possibility of addressing the harms they face within the carceral must therefore overcome a series of structures and systems that are both economically and ideologically entrenched.

Conclusion: towards a decarceration of sex work

This article has sought to explore the emergence and dominance of multi-agency partnerships within the governance of sex work in Wales and examine both their carceral foundations and role in the functioning and maintenance of carceral control. This article intends to provide an initial conceptual framework to understand how, through processes of carceral humanism, penal control has been repackaged and reconfigured in such a way that sex workers concurrent criminalisation and commodification is seen as a sign of benevolence and compassion. It is suggested that carceral abolitionist theory and praxis is

especially useful given its ability to provide both knowledge and ways of unknowing (Ben-Moshe, 2020) in the face of broader criminological imaginations that fail to conceptualise and interact with sex work without simultaneously reproducing hegemonic constructions of, and solutions to, sex work. Although criminology as a discipline has been broadly dismissive of the potential of penal abolitionist thought for sex work studies, this article has sought to generate impetus for a further exploration of its ability to counter sex workers experiences of oppression and abandonment. Indeed, it challenges the notion that it is possible to cultivate solutions to the harms sex workers identify within multi-agency partnerships without bolstering a broader politics of protection that functions to encompass sex workers within carceral systems.

The need for robust insight that draws attention to and transforms recognitions of the roots of the harms sex workers face must be calibrated within an approach that re-imagines (Ben-Moshe, 2012; 2020) and re-configures the role, function and location of criminological theory and practice. Criminological scholarship and engagement should support the development of non-reformist solutions to the harms and risks that sex workers identify, in turn weakening rather than strengthening the hegemonic power of existing carceral systems. This is not a purely abstract and detached objective as it is possible to focus on and target those factors that perpetuate the conditions of harm against sex workers. Safety First Wales (2023) is calling on the Senedd for a guaranteed care income for mothers in recognition that many sex workers are parents supporting their children. They draw from a similar approaches in Hawaii (State of Hawaii, 2022) and San Fransisco (2023) which seek to reduce an individuals 'exposure to criminalisation and violence by targeting the aetiological factors that lead them to, and can create a reliance on sex work. Such approaches redirect funding from carceral service providers and instead distribute it to those individuals and communities most in need. They are non-reformist in so far as the targeting of resources to sex workers enables individuals to stop sex working if they choose, without strengthening a carceral archipelago that relies on the continued exposure of sex workers to harm in order to preserve its remit and viability.

The extensive work being undertaken by criminologists to advocate for the decriminalisation of sex work has an important role to play in securing the safety and rights of sex workers. But in seeking to support calls for decriminalisation, criminologists must be conscious of the co-optive and assimilative power of multi-agency partnerships. Academics are privileged in being afforded the power to more easily access and participate in such spaces. But opting to enter and participate without sufficient consideration of their carceral foundations and co-optive tendencies can lead to a bolstering of measures that function to further encompass sex workers within increasingly opaque carceral controls. Criminological research has a central role to play in revealing the multiple ways in which a variety of policies, systems and practices create the conditions of violence that sex workers are exposed to. But caution must be exercised to guard against such research being deployed in such a way that detracts from and undermines the efforts of those seeking to highlight the role of the state and its practitioners in institutionalising and perpetrating such violence.

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