



Ruhama

Fighting sexual exploitation, prostitution
and human trafficking

General Election 2024
MANIFESTO

Ruhama is an Irish NGO and registered charity that offers nationwide support to women impacted by prostitution and human trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation

Founded in 1989, our organisation has extensive expertise in providing a wide range of specialist, holistic support services. Our services are free, confidential and delivered by a committed and experienced team.

Ruhama also advocates and engages in policy work on issues related to prostitution and human trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation and the experiences of the women we work with.

We are calling on candidates in the 2024 General Election to commit to implementing **five key actions** should they be elected to Government. These actions aim to protect women impacted by prostitution and human trafficking.

1 Erase criminal convictions for selling sex prior to 2017

2 Disrupt demand for purchasing sexual acts

3 Increase protection for female victims

4 Regularise status for undocumented victims

5 Establish Exiting Fund for women leaving prostitution

1

Erase criminal convictions for selling sex prior to 2017

It is no longer a crime to sell sex in Ireland.
Women with convictions must be free to move on
with their lives.

Expedite proposals to erase the criminal convictions of those
convicted for selling sex prior to the enactment of the Criminal
Law (Sexual Offences) Act, 2017 so that women can move on
with their lives without the stigma of criminal convictions.



2

Disrupt demand for the purchase of sexual acts

Disrupting demand is key to effectively reducing the size of the sex trade and therefore the exploitation and violence that are inherent within it.

Update relevant legislation in Part 4 of the Criminal Law (Sexual Offences) Act, 2017 to increase penalties and strengthen the powers of An Garda Síochána to pursue and secure the prosecution of sex buyers.



3

Increase protection for female victims

A range of medium to long term supported housing should be provided to support women in their recovery.

Increase provision of safe accommodation for female victims of sexual exploitation as an alternative to Direct Provision or unstable and unsuitable living arrangements.



4

Regularise status for undocumented victims of human trafficking

Many women trapped in prostitution have been trafficked and are undocumented.

Undocumented women must be supported to regularise their status where feasible and decisions on their status as victims of human trafficking should be made in a prompt and timely fashion.



5

Establish an Exiting Fund for women leaving prostitution

Women who have experienced sexual exploitation require specialist exiting supports that take account of the deep level of trauma they have experienced.

An Exiting Fund that can be distributed via the social welfare system should be established. It should be designed to provide women with a welfare payment to support them through the initial stages of the exiting process. This would ensure that they do not have to return to the sex trade simply to survive.





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