



News

Coronavirus latest: Scotland promises support for sex workers during lockdown

The 'hidden nature' of sex work could make it difficult for those involved to find support, the Scottish government says



By **Alina Polianskaya**

May 17, 2020 12:31 pm

Updated July 13, 2020 4:03 pm



The **Scottish government** has pledged to support women involved in sex work



00:01 AD

 [SHOP NOW](#)



- Government timeline for gradually lifting lockdown, explained
- All the changes to lockdown announced
- Why you're less likely to catch coronavirus outside than indoors, according to experts
- The full list of UK testing locations and who is allowed to book a test
- Contact tracing: How the track-and-trace app trial will work

Community Safety Minister Ash Denham said the "hidden nature" of sex work could make it difficult for those involved to get support in conventional ways during the pandemic.

The i newsletter cut through the noise

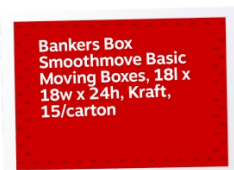
[Sign up](#)

She said **the lockdown** may "raise the risk of harm to victims of **gender-based violence**" and it was important that "no one should feel unsupported during this crisis".

Many sex workers have struggled during the pandemic due to difficulties accessing financial support schemes – with **reports** of many forced to continue working due to fears they will run out of money.

Advertisement

However, only £61,000 in funding will be provided under the scheme – delivered through the Encompass Network, which works with nine organisations that help people "who are currently involved in and/or planning to exit prostitution."



00:01 AD Staples

[SHOP NOW](#)



Stigma may be making it hard for women in sex work to access support (Photo: Remy Gabalda/AFP via Getty Images)

"Women involved in prostitution may be experiencing extreme hardship due to Covid-19 as well as facing additional challenges which need to be addressed to ensure they have access to resources and support," Ms Denham said.

"**Stigma** and the hidden nature of prostitution creates a barrier to engagement with mainstream services.

"It is essential that specialist services, such as those within the Encompass Network, provide a bridge to national support and this funding will enable such services to reach out to women to help them access assistance and counselling."

The **Scottish National Party** politician added that they were working with victim support groups and justice partners to see where additional support could be needed across at-risk communities.

Advertisement

'Incredibly difficult times'

Linda Thompson, National Co-ordinator for the Women's Support Project and Encompass Network welcomed the additional funding, which she said would help offer "more direct support" to women in tough situations.

She said women involved in the sex trade had "faced some incredibly difficult times recently" and it was particularly hard for them to overcome barriers to accessing financial help.

"This will help offer more direct support to women who are facing difficulties, work alongside them to link into local services and offer some financial help. We need to make sure their needs are met now and in the future as well," she said.

Coronavirus; Covid-19

Prostitution

Scottish Government



Essentials

News

Useful links

Contact Us

Bankers Box

Smoothmove Basic

Moving Boxes, 18l x

18w x 24h, Kraft,

15/carton

00:01 AD

Staples

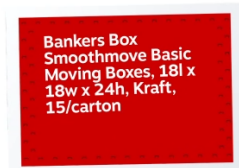
SHOP NOW

[Culture](#)[Opinion](#)[ibuy](#)[Subscribe to i](#)[i competitions](#)[i newsletters](#)[i app](#)

Follow us on



All rights reserved. © 2020 JPIMedia Publications Ltd.

[Cookie Settings](#)[Don't sell my info](#)[Terms and Conditions](#)[Privacy Policy](#)

00:01 AD Staples

[SHOP NOW](#)