



Only Rights Can Stop the Wrongs

NSWP STATEMENT

NSWP WELCOMES ONLYFANS' REVERSAL OF DECISION TO BAN SEXUALLY-EXPLICIT CONTENT

NSWP welcomes reports that the online platform OnlyFans has reversed its decision to ban content containing “sexually-explicit conduct” on its website from October 2021, after the backlash the announcement received from its users. The plan would have resulted in a severe loss of income for many sex workers, including those who have moved online to work during the COVID-19 pandemic, and for whom OnlyFans has become a main source of income as the pandemic continues.

NSWP is a global network of sex worker-led organisations, with 301 members in 98 countries, that exists to uphold the voice of sex workers globally and connect regional networks advocating for the rights of female, male and transgender sex workers. It advocates for rights-based health and social services, freedom from abuse and discrimination, and self-determination for sex workers.

The OnlyFans crackdown against sex workers would have been yet another attack on sex workers' income from online platforms, following similar restrictions implemented by Facebook, Instagram, and others in recent years. The decision originally made by OnlyFans was a clear example of discrimination against sex workers in digital spaces. During the [COVID-19 pandemic](#), sex workers all over the world have been excluded from social protection schemes, have faced a loss of livelihood resulting in severe hardship, and increased discrimination and harassment. Many sex work venues and other physical workplaces where sex workers operated were closed and many sex workers who were able to, moved online to be able to continue earning an income to support themselves and their families. OnlyFans became one of the most popular platforms for online sex work and has profited immensely from sex workers selling their content through the platform. When the platform announced that it would ban sexually-explicit content, sex workers rightly felt that they were being abruptly and unfairly discriminated against, despite having contributed significantly to OnlyFans' growth.

Online platforms such as OnlyFans are attractive to sex workers for the safety that they can provide by making it easier for sex workers to work flexible hours and manage their own businesses without the need for a third-party intermediary. [Working online](#), sex workers can mobilise and enhance their safety, including by developing ways to warn each other of dangerous and violent clients, do background checks before booking a client, and use online payment systems.



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Sex workers migrated to the platform not only because they could keep more of their earnings from their content than other streaming sites or production companies, but also because it afforded them autonomy and a way to engage with clients that other sites did not. They also received proof of financial transactions and an income history, useful for sex workers trying to rent a flat or obtain bank loans or mortgages, for example. OnlyFans' plan to censor sex work was a blow to the [economic empowerment](#) that the site offers to many sex workers.

The pressure from banks that prompted the original move by OnlyFans is another example of how payment processors, such as Paypal and others, have become a key driving force in the ideological war against sex work. By putting pressure on adult entertainment sites to censor sexually-explicit content as a requirement for continuing to process payments, they reflect the political interests that conflate sex work with trafficking and sexual exploitation. As NSWP has continually emphasised, this [conflation](#) only leads to further criminalisation and marginalisation of sex workers, the deterioration of their working conditions and fails to protect, fulfil and respect their human rights.

NSWP hopes that OnlyFans will uphold its statement that the platform “stands for inclusion...and will continue to provide a home for all its creators” and that similar online platforms will follow suit in maintaining a space for sex workers to operate online.