PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

Statement from the Civil Society Coalition for the Implementation of Sex for Rent Legislation

The Civil Society Coalition for the Implementation of Sex for Rent Legislation welcomes the progress made towards the enactment of the Criminal Law, Civil Law and Defence (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill 2026, which will introduce a new offence criminalising the advertising or offering of accommodation in exchange for sex - an exploitative practice commonly known as 'sex for rent'.

The Coalition has long advocated for dedicated legislation to address this form of abuse, which disproportionately impacts women, migrants, international students and others experiencing housing insecurity.

Earlier this year, the Coalition - including the Irish Council for International Students, Rape Crisis Ireland, National Women's Council, Ruhama, Threshold, AMLÉ, and Akidwa- welcomed the publication of the Bill and made a series of recommendations and proposed amendments aimed at strengthening the legislation and supporting its effective implementation. While those recommendations will not ultimately be reflected in the Act, we recognise the importance of securing this long-overdue legal protection and commend the Government and all those who are working to bring the legislation into force.

Speaking about the progress made on the legislation, Brian Hearne, Policy and Communications Manager at the Irish Council for International Students (ICOS) said: 'This legislation will send an important message that exploiting someone's need for housing cannot be tolerated and will have legal consequences. Recognising 'sex for rent' as a specific criminal offence is a significant step forward and reflects the reality faced by many renters who have been targeted because of their housing situation. We need to ensure the legislation is backed by effective enforcement, clear reporting pathways and support for those affected, so that its protections are realised in practice.'

Corrinne Hasson, Executive Director of NWC, said 'Women deserve to feel safe in their own homes. Yet many women are trapped between the housing crisis and rising violence against women, which creates the perfect conditions for this kind of exploitation to occur. So this legislation is really important for women, particularly those in precarious housing. We hope that, with proper enforcement, reporting pathways, and support, it will go a long way to protecting women from sex for rent exploitation.'

Barbara Condon, Ruhama CEO said: 'Ruhama welcomes the legislation as an important step towards protecting women from damaging sexual harassment when seeking housing. We are delighted that the Minister for Justice is following through on the commitment made to address this form of exploitation in the programme for government. We need to keep the momentum going and offer protection and pathways to safety for women already living in a situation of sex for rent exploitation. For these their home – the place they should feel safest – is a hostile and dangerous environment and this can't be tolerated in a country that strives towards zero tolerance to domestic sexual and gender-based violence.'

The success of this legislation will also depend on effective implementation, public awareness, and ensuring that victims are able to access the supports and protections they need. Continued collaboration across justice, housing and online safety will be essential to ensure the law achieves its intended purpose.

The Coalition continues to believe that implementation of the legislation should be accompanied by practical measures, including specialist supports for victims, training for frontline agencies, strong enforcement, protections for those in informal rent-a-room housing arrangements (especially licensees), and robust action to regulate and prevent exploitative advertisements appearing on online platforms. These measures will help ensure that the new legislation delivers meaningful protection in practice.

As a coalition, we remain committed to working constructively with Government, Members of the Oireachtas, statutory agencies, civil society, and other stakeholders to support the delivery of this legislation and to ensure that everyone can access safe and secure housing free from exploitation.

Signed by:

AkiDwA
AKINA DADA WA AFRICA

nwc
National Women's Council

AMLÉ
Aontas na Mac Léinn in Éirinn

RAPE CRISIS IRELAND

ICOS
Irish Council for International Students

Ruhama
Fighting Sexual Exploitation, Prostitution and Human Trafficking

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About the Civil Society Coalition for the Implementation of Sex for Rent Legislation: The Civil Society Coalition for the Implementation of Sex for Rent Legislation is a collective of organisations committed to ensuring the introduction and effective enforcement of legislation to outlaw "sex for rent" exploitation in Ireland. The Coalition's membership includes: Akidwa, Aontas na Mac Léinn in Éirinn (AMLÉ) I, the Irish Council for International Students (ICOS), the National Women's Council (NWC), Rape Crisis Ireland (RCI), Ruhama, and Threshold.

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