

## Support for sex workers during the Corona pandemic

*Updated the 22nd of April 2020*

The Corona virus and the measures taken to prevent the spread of the virus, have far reaching consequences for you as a sex worker. For those of you whom have been affected and are in need of support, Door2Door and PMW of 'Stichting Humanitas Rotterdam' have put together a list of helpful tips.

Are you in need of support or personalized advice? Please contact our PMW department via:

E-mail [pmw@stichtinghumanitas.nl](mailto:pmw@stichtinghumanitas.nl)

Telephone 010 236 52 12

You can reach us on weekdays from 9:30 to 16:30. We will have a look at your situation to see what we can do to support you. You can also contact us if you live and/or work outside the city of Rotterdam. If this is the case, we will try and help you via telephone or if we can, connect you to a professional in your area. Sex workers who find it difficult to talk in Dutch or English can send us an email. Tell us what language you speak and we will call you back with an interpreter.

### Information regarding health, (payed) sex and Corona

If you have any health concerns, please visit the following website:

<https://www.soaaids.nl/nl/professionals/nieuws-en-standpunten/nieuwsbericht/vragen-antwoorden-over-coronavirus-seks-soas>

### In need of financial support, due to a lack of income?

These are tough times for many people. You are possibly worried about a loss of income in the coming weeks. Below we have gathered some options for financial aid. Please keep in mind that this situation is new to all of us. Organisations are trying to figure out the best course of action. But together we are strong, and we will persevere. Do you experience difficulties with your application? Please contact us: where we can help, we will.

### The TOZO

Independent workers can apply for the TOZO. TOZO is a temporary bridging measure for self employed professionals. In case you qualify for the TOZO, you are eligible for a €1,050 (net) grant for a period of three months. In case you have a partner, you may qualify for a grant of €1.500 (net) together. Any income you may have will be deducted from this amount. The TOZO is non-repayable. You will receive the money within four weeks.

### Terms and conditions for the TOZO:

You live in the Netherlands

- Most of your labour takes place in the Netherlands
- Due to the corona pandemic your income has fallen below the social minimum
- On an annual basis, you work at least 1.225 hours as a self-employed person, which comes down to 23,5 hours a week on average. You register the hours you have worked. When applicable, pregnancy leave is taken into consideration. In case you started your business recently, you can count the hours you have worked pro rata.
- You hold a licence for running your business. In Rotterdam, sex workers who work as independent escorts, must have an escort licence. In-calls in your own home are permitted in Rotterdam. However, you are not allowed to work 'as an entrepreneur' at home. By applying for the TOZO, the government may believe that you do work as an entrepreneur. In that case you may receive an official warning or a fine for working illegally. This may also happen to escorts who work without a licence.
- You are registered in the Chamber of Commerce (Kamer van Koophandel). You registered your business before the 17th of March 2020, 18:45.

The government will not look at your assets such as savings or property. In case you have a partner, the government will also not look at his or her income. As far as we know, EU citizens qualify for the TOZO without any negative consequences for their residence permit. Get in touch with us in case you have any doubts. Students under 27 who have access to a bursary or student loan cannot apply for the TOZO.

### How to apply for the TOZO

You apply for the TOZO in the municipality in which you are registered. Information about the TOZO in Rotterdam can be found here (in Dutch): <https://www.rotterdam.nl/werken-leren/coronamaatregelen-rbz>. In case you live somewhere else, you can look at the website of your municipality for information about the TOZO. General information about the TOZO in English can be found here: <https://business.gov.nl/subsidy/temporary-bridging-measure-self-employed-professionals-tozo/>

### Sex workers who work via the opting-in construction

A large number of sex workers work via the opting-in. In so far, it seems that this group does not qualify for the TOZO. One of the reasons for this is that they usually do not have a KvK-registration. In case you work via the opting-in, you can try to apply for general (special) welfare support. Do not hesitate to get in touch, in case you need any help with that.

### Special tax deferral

Self-employed sex workers can request a 3 months payment extension for income tax, health insurance law (this is not the same as your private health insurance) and VAT with the tax administration. After declaring your turnover, you must wait until the first tax bill comes in. When you have a tax bill, you fill out the form that opens when you click the blue button at this website (in Dutch): <https://www.belastingdienst.nl/wps/wcm/connect/nl/ondernemers/content/hoe-vraag-ik-voor-3-maanden-bijzonder-uitstel-van-betaling-aan-vanwege-de-coronacrisis>. Upon receiving your request, the tax administration will put on hold any measures in place to collect payment. See for more information in English: <https://business.gov.nl/the-coronavirus-and-your-company>

### Tip→ You may qualify for the Small Businesses Scheme

If your annual turnover is below €20.000, you may be eligible for the Small Businesses Scheme (in Dutch 'kleineondernemersregeling', or KOR). If so, you will not pay turnover tax (VAT). You must apply for the KOR at least 4 weeks before the start of the next quarter. If you apply for exemption, the exemption will last for at least 3 years, unless your annual turnover exceeds €20,000. You can find the application form here (only available in Dutch): [https://www.belastingdienst.nl/wps/wcm/connect/bldcontentnl/themaoverstijgend/programmas\\_en\\_formulieren/melding-omzetbelasting-kleineondernemersregeling](https://www.belastingdienst.nl/wps/wcm/connect/bldcontentnl/themaoverstijgend/programmas_en_formulieren/melding-omzetbelasting-kleineondernemersregeling). Sex workers that work via the opting-in cannot use the KOR. More information about the regulation can be found here: <https://business.gov.nl/subsidy/small-businesses-scheme/>

### Council tax deferral for self-employed workers

Entrepreneurs registered in Rotterdam automatically get a 3 months council tax deferral for sewage levy and waste collection levy.

### General information for self-employed workers

Entrepreneurs with questions about the consequences of the Corona outbreak for their business can get in touch with the Chamber of Commerce (KvK): <https://www.kvk.nl/english/>. The KvK operates from Monday to Friday from 08:30 to 17:00. You can reach them via 0800-2117. You can also use the contact form at the website to enable a member of staff to call you back.

### A reduction of your provisional tax assessment

If you have received a provisional assessment for income tax and you expect a lower income this year, you can lower its' amount. Log in with your DigiD at 'Mijn belastingdienst' and give a realistic estimation of your income for this year. See for more information: <https://business.gov.nl/the-coronavirus-and-your-company>.

### **Special social assistance benefit to bridge the gap (bijzondere bijstand)**

You may qualify for a gift or a loan via your municipality. The municipality of Rotterdam aims to respond to your request within two weeks. However, this may take longer. See the website of the municipality of Rotterdam for further information: <https://www.rotterdam.nl/wonen-leven/bijzondere-bijstand>. Use the translate button on the upper right side of the webpage for translations in other languages. In case you live in another municipality, you can search the municipalities' website using the key terms 'Bijzondere Bijstand'.

### **Applying for social assistance benefits ('bijstand') if you want to exit sex work**

Some sex workers may consider quitting sex work permanently. When you have no other financial recourses and are unable to apply for other benefits you may qualify for social assistance benefits via the participation law. You can do so with the municipality in which you are registered as a citizen. The municipality will encourage you to find another job. In case the municipality is unable to respond to your request within 4 weeks, you may qualify for an advance payment. In case you have absolutely no money left for basic necessities you may qualify for an emergency advance payment. You apply for benefits via the website of the municipality. In case you are 27 or older, you can use this link: <https://www.rotterdam.nl/loket/bijstandsuitkering/>. Use the translate button on the upper right side of the webpage for translations in other languages. If you are aged 18-26, you can access this link: <https://www.rotterdam.nl/loket/bijstandsuitkering-jongeren/>. In case you live in another municipality, you can search the municipalities' website using the key term 'Bijstandsuitkering'. Get in touch with us if you need help. Sex workers in Rotterdam and nearby municipalities can take part in our exit programme in which we support you exiting the sex industry. Sex workers in other municipalities can be referred to other exit programmes.

### **Important information for EU sex workers**

EU sex workers who do not have permanent residence in the Netherlands (in Dutch 'duurzaam verblijf') would, under normal circumstances, usually not qualify for income support. Under normal circumstances, the city council would report a request for assistance to the IND. Depending on criteria such as how long you have stayed in the Netherlands, your income and the hours you have worked, the IND could end your residence. Because of the Corona epidemic, the IND will act more accommodating. Are you from an EU country outside the Netherlands and do you want to apply for benefits? We advise you to get in touch with us or with a specialised lawyer before you submit your request.

### Supporting letter

We are aware of the fact that it is not very common for sex workers to receive financial aid or other types of governmental support. We also know that not all municipalities are well-informed about sex work. This is why we have put together a letter in which we explain the situation in which sex workers currently find themselves. You can attach this letter to your application for financial support. It is also a possibility to attach a letter that further explains your specific situation. Contact us if you need support writing this letter.

### Dutch Emergency Fund (DEF) for sex workers

Are you facing immediate financial difficulties? For sex workers living off short term income and not (yet) able to make use of the governmental financial aid, an emergency fund has been started. The DEF is an initiative started by sex worker Hella Dee and has been made possible by public donations.

♥ ♥ The fund pays out 40 euros cash (as long as funds are available) to all sex workers facing financial crisis due to the Corona crisis. This money is meant to cover basic needs, such as groceries, medication, emergency transport and phone credit. So far, the emergency funds are being handed out by organisations in Amsterdam, Utrecht and Rotterdam. Check out [www.dutchemergencyfund.nl](http://www.dutchemergencyfund.nl) for the latest updates on which organisations are collaborating with DEF. Would you like to be considered for the emergency funding and is Rotterdam a good location for you? Call us on weekdays between 9:30 and 16:30 on 010-23 65 212 or e-mail us at [pmw@stichtinghumanitas.nl](mailto:pmw@stichtinghumanitas.nl). If we are unable to answer, please leave a message and we will get back to you as soon as possible. We make a plan for you to collect the money in Rotterdam. Usually this will be on the same day. You can only apply for emergency funding at one of the DEF collaborators.

### Donations

Are you able to donate to the DEF? It would be amazing if you could help other sex workers in these difficult times. Please visit [www.dutchemergencyfund.nl](http://www.dutchemergencyfund.nl) for more information on how to donate.

### Alternative ways to make ends meet:

The practice of all types of contact professions is prohibited by de Dutch government, as long as it is not possible to keep a distance of 1.5 meters from the customer. The Corona virus can spread easily whilst having sex. If you continue seeing clients, you may contribute to the spread of the virus.

Consider these alternative ways of making ends meet:

- You could consider becoming a webcam model. The requirements for doing so consist of being in possession of a valid passport or ID, a good internet connection and a webcam. In addition to this, you may also need a credit card. Notice that many webcam portals ask you to confirm that they can use your images for the promotion of their business. To lower the chance that you get in touch with people you know, you can select geographical regions. In case you are unwilling to appear on camera,

you could also consider offering phone or chat conversations. The most well-known websites for a variety of erotic services are: adultwork, streamate, Big7, my dirty hobby, onlymevip, chaturbate, sexpanther and adulttime (Source: BesD).

- You can also make home videos (clips) that you can offer to porn websites. You will get provision for every bulk of viewers. Be aware that your images may be on the internet for a long time. The sale of erotic pictures is also an option.
- Have a look at your wardrobe. You may have clothing, lingerie or shoes that you no longer wear. Consider selling them on Marktplaats or Ebay. It is not permitted to sell second-hand goods as fetish objects on these websites. For this purpose, you can use sexjobs. Consider how you want to protect your privacy whilst selling goods. Only send items once they have been paid.
- Visit the 'Ladies Only Club' at the review board Hookers.nl to share your experiences with other sex workers.