

Before the Sheffield City Council Licensing Committee  
Application for renewal of SEV licence for Spearmint Rhino, Brown Street

**John Specht**

WITNESS STATEMENT

This statement is made in relation to the renewal of the sexual entertainment venue licence. I am the Vice President UK of Spearmint Rhino UK. I am a director of Sonfield Developments Ltd, the licence holder.

This statement is similar to my previous statements in relation to renewal but has been updated and refers to the objections made to the renewal application this year.

As Vice President UK, I am responsible for the operation of Spearmint Rhino in Bournemouth, London, Birmingham, Sheffield and Leicester. My office is based in London.

I would like to divide my statement into the following areas:

1. Management
2. Security and Door supervisors
3. CCTV
4. Staff and Entertainers
5. Photos of street scene whilst open
6. Male entertainer events
7. Objections

**1. Management**

1.1. In this part, I will set out the management structure and then I will deal with the experience of Andy Foster, area manager and Pete Mercer, the DPS and myself. I then deal with the working relationship of the management team with the police at all venues and specifically at Sheffield.

1.2. The Chief Operating Officer of Spearmint Rhino worldwide is Kathy Vercher. I am responsible for the clubs in England. Andy Foster is the area

manager for the clubs in Birmingham, Leicester and Sheffield. Pete Mercer is the duty manager and DPS for Sheffield.

### 1.3. John Specht

1.3.1. I graduated from school in 1989, and in 1990 I joined the United States Air force.

1.3.2. I was active duty for nearly 10 years working with top-secret projects related to F16's and B1 Bomber's and aero-space ground equipment supporting experimental aircraft.

1.3.3. I held a top-secret security level clearance for nearly all 10 years until my departure in late 1999. I received an honourable discharge along with numerous awards and medals for various reasons over the years.

1.3.4. I joined Spearmint Rhino in America in early 2000. I started off as a security officer and then quickly went through the ranks. After 4 months, I was asked to go through the manager training course and I became General Manager of a new location the company was opening. I was there for 1 year before I was asked to move out of the state of California to open two more new locations in Idaho. I was there for another year and then I was asked to move overseas to various countries opening new locations. It was at this point I became the world-wide operations manager.

1.3.5. Around 2007 I went back to the USA and continued opening more locations in Texas, Kentucky, Florida, New Mexico, California and also in Canada. In September 2009, I moved to the UK to take over the responsibility for all locations and raise the operating standards.

1.3.6. I have since become the Director of 16 UK companies. I have a personal licence. I have no criminal convictions. I am proud to be a British Citizen.

1.3.7. I live with my wife and beautiful 14-year-old daughter in England.

#### 1.4. Andy Foster

1.4.1. Andy has been a manager and licence holder in the late-night industry for over 25 years.

1.4.2. In that time, he has held 10 licences and has never had any negative issues with police, councils or magistrates.

1.4.3. He has worked for First Leisure, Luminar Leisure and Allied and Northern Leisure.

1.4.4. In 2005, he joined Spearmint Rhino as General Manager of Hagley Road Birmingham.

1.4.5. After a year, as General Manager he was promoted to Regional Manager, a position he has held for the last 10 years to the present day. He reports directly to Spearmint Rhino head office and I am his line manager.

1.4.6. As regional manager, he is responsible for the day to day running of all Spearmint Rhino clubs outside London and has operated in Sheffield, Birmingham, Leicester, Brighton, Norwich, Glasgow, Heathrow, and Bournemouth.

#### 1.5. Pete Mercer

1.5.1. He started worked for Spearmint Rhino as an assistant manager at the Harrogate Spearmint Rhino in November 2001.

1.5.2. After six months, he was promoted to General Manager at Harrogate.

1.5.3. Whilst at Harrogate he worked along-side head office in the opening of the Sheffield Spearmint Rhino.

1.5.4. During that period, he would also cover day shifts and holidays at the Sheffield, Heathrow and Bournemouth branches.

1.5.5. In March 2005, he moved from Harrogate and became General Manager at Spearmint Rhino Sheffield where he has continued to this day.

1.5.6. During this time, he has kept a healthy rapport with the police and council working in partnership to promote the licensing objectives.

## 1.6. Spearmint Rhino

1.6.1. In all locations, the management team promote a positive and transparent relationship with local authorities and always join local schemes such as Pub Watch, Town Watch and Best Bar None.

## 1.7. Sheffield

1.7.1. Spearmint Rhino took over the lease of the premises in 2002 and as part of the application for a new licence and a variation to the Public Entertainment Licence a number of objections were raised at the hearing at that time. In 2005, the licences were converted to a premises licence which is still in operation today. Apart from changes to the décor, the layout of the premises has remained the same since 2002. The operation has not changed since 2005 and there have been no complaints in terms of its operation. Spearmint Rhino is a worldwide



organisation and we pride ourselves on the relationships we build with statutory authorities. Inspections by Sheffield City Council officers confirm that all conditions on both the Premises License and SEV licence are being complied with.

1.7.2. In line with Spearmint Rhino management policy one of Pete Mercer's key objectives over the years has been to create a safe environment for the entertainers, staff, customers, neighbours and even passing members of the public.

1.7.3. Part of this has involved liaising with our neighbours and checking if there are problems. Our previous communications have involved the managers visiting and talking with a variety of businesses and persons in the surrounding streets. We have never received any complaints against us.

1.7.4. We have made direct contact with the businesses in the area in the last 12 months. Some individuals have made contact with us to indicate that they have no problem with us being located where we are. I am concerned by the actions of some of the objectors and the pressure they are putting on people and the other businesses in the area. I have not sought to add to this. I am available as the director twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week. The only individuals who have contacted us have been supportive, no-one has made a complaint to me.

1.7.5. In the last couple of weeks, the freehold of the premises was acquired by Spearmint Rhino.

## **2. Security**

2.1. The security team are in-house. We employ 6 security officers. They are an experienced team, with an average of around 9 years' service each. Together they have approximately 50 years of employment. They are very experienced both in the industry and the locality. We have a minimum of 3 security officers on site at any one time, though normally we operate with 5, of which

2 are always outside on the front door when the premises are open. In particular Patrick Dalton, who stands on the entrance to the club, is a 57-year-old man who is very approachable and assists people with directions and in any way he can including ordering taxis.

2.2. As well as Patrick, another of the front of house doormen is Michael Goodwin, aged in his 50's. This provides a mature, friendly presence in and outside of the premises.

2.3. I would suggest that our exterior club lights and our security presence enhance the safety of Brown Street, since there are no other businesses open in the area through the night.

2.4. We are members of the C.R.A.C. Radio (city centre retailers against crime) scheme. This is a crime reduction radio scheme which allows us to communicate with the police and other local traders to reduce crime and disorder.

2.5. It is our practice to work closely with the local police and licensing authorities. We are members of the local pub watch scheme.

### **3. CCTV**

3.1. We have a total of 16 cameras which record 24 hours a day. This includes 2 cameras on the front of the building covering Brown Street, 1 camera at the rear and 1 camera at the side of the building. We retain recordings for in excess of 31 days. Subject to data protection legislation we provide copies of the CCTV to the Police when requested to assist their enquiries.

### **4. Staff and Entertainers**

4.1. We employ 13 staff and have around 40 entertainers on our records at any one time. Some of the staff and entertainers have been working at Spearmint Rhino in excess of 10 years. Some of these have written in setting out why

they work at Spearmint Rhino Sheffield. Contrary to what the objectors say they are respected members of the team and in their words they would not continue to work at Spearmint Rhino for the length of time they have if they did not enjoy it and did not consider themselves to be well treated.

4.2. The entertainers are self-employed. They make a good living from performing at Spearmint Rhino. If they did not, they would move on. To suggest that they are mistreated or do not earn money is without any foundation. We do not fine entertainers. We do have a disciplinary policy to deal with breaches of the rules and codes of conduct.

4.3. There is a suggestion that the employees are men: however 5 are female. It is probably also worth bearing in mind that the President of Spearmint Rhino is a woman; as is the Head of Human Resources, the Head of Marketing and Chief Financial Officer for the company. The manager in Birmingham is female and has been with the company for 18 years. Spearmint Rhino employs managers according to their qualities, not their gender.

4.4. I mention this to illustrate that the company is managed at a high level by women and not as has been suggested by men. Equality is not something aspired to as in some organisations it is something that is practised from the very top.

4.5. Equality and diversity policies have been provided for the committee.

## **5. Photographs of street scene whilst open**

5.1. In answer to allegations regarding the impact of the venue on its environment, last year, I arranged for photographs to be taken of the outside of the premises and the street from opening until close. The photos were taken over two nights, Friday 7<sup>th</sup> into Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> April and Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> into Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> April.

- 5.2. The photos on the Friday into Saturday were taken from the front door looking down the street in each direction. The photos were initially taken on a phone camera and then screen shot to ensure the time that the photograph was taken is shown. There are therefore 2 times on most photos, the one at the top stating the time of the screen shot and the second beneath "Today" setting out the time of the photo. On the few photos where there is just one time this is because the screen shot and photo were taken simultaneously and the time stated is the time of the photo being taken.
- 5.3. The photos were taken by my manager approximately every half an hour until the premises closed. Each time he would go to the front door, step outside and take a photo in each direction. He did not wait or delay, he just took the photo of what he could see at that moment in time. All photos were taken from roughly the same location.
- 5.4. You can see that there are no people passing by. The photos are representative of the general number of people who pass the club during its opening hours each day. There are not many people walking along the street in the area between 9:30pm and 5:30am.
- 5.5. The premises opened at 10:00pm on 7<sup>th</sup> April. The photos taken on the Friday into Saturday start prior to opening at 21:38. The last photos, numbers 33 and 34, were taken at 5:28 am, after the premises had closed and patrons had left.
- 5.6. At the time the photos are taken on the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup>, the only people on the street would be my manager taking the photos, 2 door staff and between 1 and 4 customers who would be smoking. No entertainers are allowed outside the front of the club during the opening hours. As already stated there are very few people walking past the club during the opening hours.
- 5.7. For the photos on the 8<sup>th</sup> into the 9<sup>th</sup> April, these were started earlier in the evening and continued throughout the night until the premises closed and the last customers had left. The photos were taken from the opposite side of the road to the premises to show the front of the club premises.

5.8. There is one photo that shows a group of tourists who were lost and who approached the premises to ask for directions.

5.9. Now although these photos were taken over 12 months ago, I have asked the manager to confirm whether the street scene from 21:30 to 05:30 has changed. He confirmed to me that it has not. These photos could have been taken this week and they would be substantially the same in relation to the numbers of people on the street.

## **6. Male entertainer events**

6.1. During the year, a number of customers who attend the premises are female either as part of a larger group or indeed with a partner. From my records and experience approximately 30% of our customers are female. In addition, we have been working with a group of male entertainers who perform generally around the world and also at other Spearmint Rhino clubs.

6.2. So far these have been booked on two evenings, at the venue. The only times I have seen a queue outside of the premises is on these 2 nights. I have produced photographs which show the extent of the queue of women waiting to gain entry. I estimate that there were over 100 women waiting outside the premises before it opened. The queue started about 20 minutes before the doors were due to open.

6.3. The doors opened at 19:00 hours and the show started at around 20:00. The male dance striptease show ended around 22:00. The customers left, and the premises were cleaned to reopen around 23:00 with female entertainers.

6.4. As you can see from the photograph, on both occasions there were around 400 persons present. Whilst there were a few men, my estimate is that 98% were women. Several wheelchair users also attended.

6.5. At the end of the show, they left the premises and either went home or went onto other premises to continue their night. There is no doubt in my mind that those attending had a great evening's entertainment and thoroughly enjoyed the relevant sexual entertainment.

6.6. We would like to do them more regularly and we are currently arranging convenient dates.

## 7. Objections

- 7.1. I became aware during the consultation process of an internet campaign against Spearmint Rhino. It can be seen that the majority of the letters of objection follow a template.
- 7.2. We have operated in this location for 16 years in a lawful manner. Last year, as part of the Committee's decision we removed the name from the premises and this is only on display when we are open. I am intrigued that the objectors indicate that they know the premises is still here. The feedback we have had from customers and cab drivers is that they thought we had closed down because the name had been removed. There is nothing outside the premises during the times it is closed to indicate that Spearmint Rhino operate there during the day.
- 7.3. I respect the right of the objectors to have a view about our operation. I hope that they would equally respect the fact that we are a very long-established business in this location, which works hard to ensure that, beyond the mere fact of our existence, to which the objectors take objection, we operate without causing harm.
- 7.4. The main objection relates to the public-sector equality duty and gender equality. We do not discriminate against people. I have already mentioned the key roles that women take within the business and the number of female staff directly employed, not to mention the number of female entertainers who rely on the SEV licence for their income, especially as we are now the only lap dance club in Sheffield. I have asked my solicitor to attend a recent event organised by the Women's hub in connection with She fest as I was unable to attend. The event was a debate concerning sex workers. I understand the event was well organised and well attended. A variety of speakers and views were expressed. There was strong support for the view that persons involved in the sex industry do choose to work in this industry and if they choose to do it then that is their right and they are not being exploited.
- 7.5. There is a suggestion that we are only frequented by men. This is mistaken. As I have already stated approximately 30% of patrons are female. We also

host a number of hen parties. Women come to the premises for the entertainment and atmosphere we provide. Our clientele are diverse. We welcome all. Because of what is being said by the objectors I feel it necessary to point out that our patrons also include the LGBTQ community.

7.6. The feedback we get from female parties is that they can feel threatened and intimidated in certain clubs around the city which are selling cheap drink, and in which there are rowdy, aggressive males and violence. This does not happen in our clubs. This is completely opposite to the comments put forward by the objectors.

7.7. This is why, in my opinion, the zero-option put forward by many objectors for Sheffield does not promote the public sector equality duty. There are far more interests that should be taken into account before depriving people from earning their livelihood or from enjoying the facilities at the club. I feel that this view is supported by women in Sheffield

7.8. I was interested to find as part of the research, minutes from the Women's hub that feeds into Sheffield City council. I produce the notes from the debate. I was interested to see the arguments put forward not by an operator or indeed someone involved in the industry but by women who clearly have belief and passion in promoting the interests of women. I was also interested to see that the decision of the Women's hub was not to back zero option and not to oppose the SEV licence renewal.

7.9. It is suggested that "dancers pay a flat fee of approximately £140 per night and are paid £20 per dance of which £5 is 'raked' by the company." The entertainers pay a fee of £20 per night. In relation to dance fees these are £20 per dance and of that £7 will go to Spearmint Rhino. In respect of the number of customers, the more relevant issue is the spend level. Customers will pay for the amount of time an entertainer spends with them.

7.10. I do not recall any reference by me to a club in Wakefield. We do not have a club in Wakefield.

7.11. As is mentioned in the objections the area in Brown Street is dark at night. Reference is made to the area being unsafe, broken bottles in the street and a fear of crime. Late in the evening, save for the student union bar and our premises, no other premises are open and much of the area is in darkness. It is my belief that our external lights, cctv and security have a positive impact in keeping crime levels in the area down. I have produced photos of the street scene through the night to show the very few people in the area. This was true 12 months ago and is not changed now.

7.12. I have had the opportunity of reading a statement from Police Inspector Mutch dated 15<sup>th</sup> November 2016. He is clear that our premises are not associated with any crime and there is no evidence linking our premises to crime in Sheffield. I have looked at the crime figures for Sheffield for the past few years and these all support Police Inspector Mutch's opinion. I produce a copy of that statement which has previously been supplied to the Administrative Court as part of a Judicial review application, and the police stance is referred to in the papers of the current Judicial Review proceedings.

7.13. It is suggested that "lapdancers who work at Spearmint Rhino are expected to provide "extras to punters"." This is not accepted. Neither I nor the managers expect the entertainers to provide extras. There are rules and conditions, and these are complied with. I am not aware of the circumstances set out in the report of the Huddersfield Daily Examiner dated 6<sup>th</sup> August 2017. It does not relate to Spearmint Rhino and whilst it indicates the management at that venue concerned took action, our action would have been more robust.

7.14. Sammy Woodhouse has never worked at Spearmint Rhino and I do not believe she claims she has.

7.15. I have not seen any details of the FOI request made and therefore it is difficult to comment on a list which merely refers to a year. I repeat my comments in relation to the police stance in the statement and in relation to



the consultation process on the latest policy. There have been no police call outs to the premises in the last 12 months.

7.16. At pages 518 to 521, reference is made to a printed exchange. It is not clear what it is. The views expressed do not represent Spearmint Rhino, we have customer rules and if they are breached the customer is approached and either reminded of their responsibility or asked to leave the premises as appropriate.

7.17. The extract of the rules from another club which are referred to at p524 include a reference in the document to “No means No” and I understand that refers to activity including sexual intercourse. Should the committee renew the licence, the terms and conditions do not permit such activity at Spearmint Rhino.

7.18. The Facebook entry is a comment posted by someone outside of the Spearmint Rhino organisation. I have no control over it. Complaints brought to the attention of the club are investigated.

7.19. The images presented are taken from the US website. The UK website has different images which reflect the premises rules and conditions. So, for example the picture at p532 with the woman holding her own breasts would not appear on the UK pages as we do not permit entertainers to hold their own breasts.

7.20. The website gives a viewer a drop-down menu which selects country i.e. U.S. Australia and U.K. You can then select a location i.e. Sheffield. At the time of looking I cannot see ANY nudity at all on the Sheffield page.

7.21. A page is also submitted from a national newspaper. I have no control over the photographs and content of the newspaper.

7.22. Social media pages are submitted for one of the entertainers. We do not control individual entertainer social media. The entertainers are self employed and have their own businesses. If any inappropriate content is brought to the club’s attention the entertainer will be approached to discuss the issue.

7.23. At p584 there is a letter from a person who “previously worked within the lap dancing industry for 10 years”. The person does not state she worked at Spearmint Rhino. We have a welfare policy and a management structure that would prevent this from happening. The entertainers’ letters indicate their views to how the premises operate. There is also the summary of the entertainers’ comments as part of the policy consultation.

7.24. However, if an entertainer was placed in the same positions as the person at p584 their first approach would be to the area manager and in the unlikely event he did not resolve the matter it would be referred to me. If such allegations were made I would expect the manager to refer them to me immediately to investigate. The behaviour set out is not acceptable and I would not tolerate it. The activity described is not just unacceptable it appears to me to be criminal and if I ever came across such allegations I would bring the police in to deal with the situation.

7.25. In relation to the proximity to the train station, the majority of people arriving in the City by train walk straight up Howard Street. There is no reason to walk down Brown Street and past Spearmint Rhino when walking up to the centre of the City. Therefore, at night when Spearmint Rhino is open and other premises are closed not many people walk past Spearmint Rhino.

7.26. There is a lot of graffiti in the area. We keep our premises free from graffiti. I have any graffiti on the premises removed as soon as possible. I was surprised to hear on the BBC an objector admitting they had put graffiti on the premises in the past. I do think the graffiti has more of an impact on how people feel in the area. I produce photographs of the alley.

7.27. An issue is raised about litter. Litter in the area does not relate to our premises or our customers. We have door security at the premises both inside and outside. Patrons are not permitted to take drinks outside and are required to leave bottles and glasses inside. There are no exceptions. Staff clean the immediate pavement around the club periodically during trading hours and at

the end of the evening. They will clear bottles and waste they find outside the premises even if it does not come from our patrons.

7.28. I have been to the area around the club during the early evening. My staff and I are usually at the premises or the area around the premises in the evening from just before opening time until early morning. I arrived around 5pm. Between 5pm and 6pm I counted approximately 12 people walk down Brown Street. I walked around the Pinball Park and it was deserted. Arundel Street was also very quiet. When I walk around the area I am concerned by the amount of graffiti on walls and buildings in the area.

7.29. There were a number of homeless people begging in the area, particularly on Howard street leading up from the station.

7.30. Last year, I offered to work with those objecting to the SEV to put time and effort into fighting against the graffiti and rubbish so that we could make a big difference. I suggested different organisations could commit to volunteer an individual one day a month and that could make a big impact on an area that looks terrible. I am willing to participate in an area wide initiative to address this problem

7.31.

7.32. The venue opens at around 22:00 hours and therefore there is no reason why students or anyone else should feel intimidated or unsafe when walking past or near the premises during the day. We have made changes to the external appearance removing the signage from the premises whilst closed.

7.33. From the entertainers' letters, it can be seen that there are students who work at Spearmint Rhino. Their views as to how safe they feel in the area are clear.

7.34. We have received no complaints about any customers harassing people in any part of the city either via the police or local authority or directly from individuals themselves. I know of no evidence of any customers attending

Spearmint Rhino leaving the premises at any time and committing an offence, stalking or harassing people in the city. In fact, I know of no such evidence from any of our premises.

7.35. The Police statistics regarding crime and anti- social behaviour in and around Sheffield City Centre indicated that, in 2017-18, the area around the premises had low levels of such behaviour. The Police Inspector confirms this is the case in his statement

7.36. The C.R.A.C radio system is designed to ensure that trouble makers from any premises in the city will be prevented from entering other premises because all late-night premises involved in the scheme do not want such people in the centre of Sheffield.

7.37. We welcome discussions with the local businesses in the area. Our purpose in engaging with our neighbours is to encourage dialogue so that if issues arise people are able to approach us to resolve them. I do not want to create a battle ground of who says what to whom in private. It is not helpful to us and it does not promote the licensing objectives. For example, in London, there are residents who live above our premises. To facilitate communication and to promote good relations we meet with the residents every month. A number of residents attend and the residents' association representing the residents actively engages with us to address any issues that arise. I would welcome such a positive approach in Sheffield.

7.38. Last year, my solicitor offered to meet with the objectors to discuss any issues outside of the formal renewal hearing, in a less confrontational way. I wanted to explore what issues could be agreed, though I am aware it may not be possible to resolve everything.

7.39. Staff have had contact with some women who work in the area. They have indicated that they do not oppose us being here. What they say is that they will not go public in expressing that view because of fear from other women in the political movements.

7.40. Previously, objectors I spoke with did not want to provide any details to me. I had no problem with that and that was why I suggested my solicitor. My solicitor has provided his contact details.

7.41. As an operator of a number of SEV licensed premises in England it is very important that we have rules and a code of conduct for entertainers to ensure that our standards are maintained. Our code of conduct for entertainers makes it clear that entertainers are not permitted to accept business cards or contact details from customers or give their contact details to customers. This is monitored, and any entertainer found to be in breach of the code will have their contract terminated.

7.42. The safety of staff and entertainers is also very important and consequently customers are not allowed to wait for the entertainers at the end of the evening. Staff and entertainers will wait at the premises until the customers have left and may be escorted by security to a waiting taxi or car. Any staff or entertainer who felt they were being stalked would notify the management and we, would take it very seriously and encourage that the matter be referred to the police without delay. No such complaints have been made.

7.43. We regularly review our pricing policy and the prices in the locality. We do have promotions including admission and drinks prices. It is common practice in Sheffield for there to be drinks promotions targeted at students. We also offer discounts for members of the emergency services and armed forces. These are generally on a Tuesday and Wednesday. These nights attract a cross section of ages. About 20% of patrons on these nights are female. We do offer drinks discounts but are responsible in our pricing. We do not promote public disorder and again have never received any complaints. We do not offer the cheapest drinks prices in Sheffield and nor are we the most expensive. Our prices are pretty much in the middle. I am aware of certain student venues which offer alcoholic drinks for as low as 70p which is less than half the price at which we and many other operators would offer the same drink. Our offers encourage mixed groups of males and

females to attend. There has never been any allegation that we have operated irresponsibly in relation to prices or have acted in a way that does not promote the licensing objectives or have encouraged people to drink alcohol to excess.

7.44. Reference has been made to the Students Union Hub building and that it is inappropriate for us to be so close. The Students Union moved into the Hub in around 2011. We have therefore peacefully co-existed for 7 years. Indeed, the decision was made to site the Students Union in the Hub building many years after we became a fixture on the street, and presumably that did not cause a concern at that time.

7.45. I note that the Students' Union has itself advertised pole dancing classes as part of their activity.

7.46. Reference is made to student accommodation. I have addressed the equality and safety and crime and disorder issues above. The students attending the university are adults. The university have made no direct contact with me and I do think that dialogue is much better than any objection to the SEV renewal.

7.47. Some objectors state we are bad for local business. However, it is my experience that there is investment into this area now. We have invested in the area and with the Committee's permission, we look to continue to provide a lawful and regulated entertainment to the diverse people with diverse interests and backgrounds who choose to provide the entertainment or choose to enjoy the entertainment provided.

7.48. I am aware of Sheffield's latest sexual entertainment venue policy and I agree with the aim set out in the introduction. As operators of a sexual entertainment venue we seek to ensure we manage our premises properly in accordance with the law and in a manner which integrates into the local community. We believe that the maintenance of the building exterior, the lack of complaints concerning the operation, the quarterly reports from local

authority officers confirming compliance with conditions and the other things referred to above about our operation demonstrates our commitment to the Sheffield policy.

7.49. I am pleased to answer any further questions the committee members may have.

The contents of this statement are true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

John Specht

# APPENDIX 'C'

## Performers Questionnaire Responses

|    |  | 1   | 2   | 3                 | 4                          | 5   |
|----|--|---|---|-------------------|----------------------------|---|
| 1  | Age  | 25  | 20  | 20                | 25                         | 25  |
| 2  | Age started dancing                                    | 25  | 20  | 19                | 24                         | 19  |
| 3  | Relationship status                                    | Single  | Single  | Relationship      | Single                     | Single  |
| 4  | Nationality  | British   | Lithuanian  | British           | English                    | British   |
| 5  | Education and Qualifications                           | College   | University  |                   |                            | A Levels  |
| 6  | Other work and education commitments                   | Bar Work & Veterinary Assistant   | Waitress  | Hairdresser       |                            | Nursing   |
| 7  | Why did you start work at a sexual entertainment venue | Experience and money  | Love dancing  | Extra Money       | Money                      | Pay for University                              |
| 8  | Length of time danced                                  | 3 months  | 2 Weeks   | 18 months         | 1 Year                     | 2 Years   |
| 9  | Number of clubs worked in                              | 1   | 1   | 2                 | 1                          | 2   |
| 10 | How many shifts per week                               | 3   | 6   | 4                 | 3                          | 2   |
| 11 | How would you rate job satisfaction                    | 7   | 8   | 9                 | 10                         | 10  |
| 12 | Do you feel happy at work                              | 10  | 8   | 9                 | 10                         | 10  |
| 13 | Do you feel respected in the workplace                 | 10  | 7   | 7                 | 10                         | 10  |
| 14 | Do you feel safe at work                               | 10  | 10  | 10                | 10                         | 10  |
| 15 | What are your positive feelings about work             | Self confidence increased. Management easy to talk to. Helped to fund veterinary course | Dancers friendly and supportive. Management and Bouncers take good care. Flexible hours.    | Love working here | Good money. Work when want | Pay way through university. Work nights. Money. |
| 16 | What are your negative feelings about work             | Quiet times earn less money   | Some customers nasty, require more than dancing. £20 licence fee excessive on quiet nights. | Hate night shifts | None                       | None  |
| 17 | Do you feel safe in your job                           | Yes   | Yes   | Yes               | Yes                        | Yes   |
| 18 | Are you subject to management fines                    | No  | No  | No                | Yes                        | No  |



|           |   | <b>6</b>               | <b>7</b>   | <b>8</b>                                | <b>9</b>                      | <b>10</b>                                     |
|-----------|---|------------------------|--|---|-------------------------------|---|
| <b>1</b>  | <b>Age</b>  | 28                     | 26   | 32                                      | 33                            | 21  |
| <b>2</b>  | <b>Age started dancing</b>                                    | 22                     | 21   | 29                                      | 21                            | 18  |
| <b>3</b>  | <b>Relationship status</b>                                    | Married                | Single   | Single                                  | Single                        | Relationship                                  |
| <b>4</b>  | <b>Nationality</b>  | UK                     | British  | Russian                                 | British                       | British                                       |
| <b>5</b>  | <b>Education and Qualifications</b>                           | A levels               | GCSE's   | Designer                                | BA Hons                       | Diploma                                       |
| <b>6</b>  | <b>Other work and education commitments</b>                   | None                   |  | Designer                                |                               |   |
| <b>7</b>  | <b>Why did you start work at a sexual entertainment venue</b> | Freedom                | Money. Independence                              | Pay for study and living                | Good Salary                   | Support myself and son                        |
| <b>8</b>  | <b>Length of time danced</b>                                  | 6 Years                | 6 Years  |   | 13 Years                      | 9 Years                                       |
| <b>9</b>  | <b>Number of clubs worked in</b>                              | 3                      | 3  | 1                                       | 8                             | 1   |
| <b>10</b> | <b>How many shifts per week</b>                               | 6                      | 3  | 2                                       | 4                             | 5   |
| <b>11</b> | <b>How would you rate job satisfaction</b>                    | 10                     | 10   | 8                                       | 10                            | 10  |
| <b>12</b> | <b>Do you feel happy at work</b>                              | 10                     | 10   | 8                                       | 10                            | 10  |
| <b>13</b> | <b>Do you feel respected in the workplace</b>                 | 10                     | 10   | 7                                       | 10                            | 10  |
| <b>14</b> | <b>Do you feel safe at work</b>                               | 10                     | 10   | 10                                      | 10                            | 10  |
| <b>15</b> | <b>What are your positive feelings about work</b>             | All aspects. Love job. | Money - provide for children as a single parent. | Great girls and professional management | Good Environment. Great staff | Enjoy job. Colleagues fantastic. Perfect job. |
| <b>16</b> | <b>What are your negative feelings about work</b>             | None                   | None   | None                                    | None                          | None  |
| <b>17</b> | <b>Do you feel safe in your job</b>                           | Yes                    | Yes  | Yes                                     | Yes                           | Yes   |
| <b>18</b> | <b>Are you subject to management fines</b>                    | No                     | No   | No                                      | No                            | No  |

|           |   | <b>11</b>                                    | <b>12</b>                  | <b>13</b>  | <b>14</b>                        | <b>15</b>                                 |
|-----------|---|--|----------------------------|------------|----------------------------------|---|
| <b>1</b>  | <b>Age</b>  | 25   | 24                         | 39         | 22                               | 21  |
| <b>2</b>  | <b>Age started dancing</b>                                    | 18   | 18                         | 29         | 21                               | 21  |
| <b>3</b>  | <b>Relationship status</b>                                    | Single                                       | Single                     | Single     | Relationship                     | Single                                    |
| <b>4</b>  | <b>Nationality</b>  | British                                      | British                    | British    | British                          | British                                   |
| <b>5</b>  | <b>Education and Qualifications</b>                           | Diploma                                      | A levels                   | College    | Level 3                          | Diploma                                   |
| <b>6</b>  | <b>Other work and education commitments</b>                   | Studying to be a Personal Trainer            | Corporate sales management | Key Worker | Taco Bell                        | Trainee personal trainer                  |
| <b>7</b>  | <b>Why did you start work at a sexual entertainment venue</b> | Buy breast augmentation                      | Extra money. Confidence.   | Money      | Money for new business equipment | Good money. Better than claiming benefits |
| <b>8</b>  | <b>Length of time danced</b>                                  | 7 Years                                      | 6 Years                    | 7 Years    | 6 months                         | 7 months                                  |
| <b>9</b>  | <b>Number of clubs worked in</b>                              | 6  | 8                          | 4          | 1                                | 1   |
| <b>10</b> | <b>How many shifts per week</b>                               | 3  | 2                          | 6          | 3                                | 4   |
| <b>11</b> | <b>How would you rate job satisfaction</b>                    | 8  | 10                         | 8          | 8                                | 10  |
| <b>12</b> | <b>Do you feel happy at work</b>                              | 7  | 10                         | 10         | 9                                | 10  |
| <b>13</b> | <b>Do you feel respected in the workplace</b>                 | 7  | 10                         | 10         |                                  | 10  |
| <b>14</b> | <b>Do you feel safe at work</b>                               | 8  | 10                         | 10         | 9                                | 10  |
| <b>15</b> | <b>What are your positive feelings about work</b>             | Good Money. Work when want. Good management. | Money. Confidence.         | Job        | Lovely girls.                    | Everything                                |
| <b>16</b> | <b>What are your negative feelings about work</b>             | Quiet Nights - less money                    | Long Hours. 2 jobs.        | None       | Not always busy                  | Zilch                                     |
| <b>17</b> | <b>Do you feel safe in your job</b>                           | Yes  | Yes                        | Yes        | Yes                              | Yes                                       |
| <b>18</b> | <b>Are you subject to management fines</b>                    | No   | No                         | No         | No                               | No  |

|           |  | <b>16</b>  | <b>17</b>             | <b>18</b>      | <b>19</b>   | <b>20</b>                             |
|-----------|--|--|-----------------------|----------------|---|---------------------------------------|
| <b>1</b>  | Age  | 27   | 27                    | 28             | 26  | 26                                    |
| <b>2</b>  | Age started dancing                                    | 26   | 22                    | 25             | 25  | 26                                    |
| <b>3</b>  | Relationship status                                    | Single   | Single                | Relationship   | Relationship  | Single                                |
| <b>4</b>  | Nationality  | British  | British               | Romanian       | British   | British                               |
| <b>5</b>  | Education and Qualifications                           | MA - Creative Writing. MA - Social Work                  | GCSE's                | GCSE's         | Masters in Engineering. Studying for Doctorate.   | Diploma - Business Admin              |
| <b>6</b>  | Other work and education commitments                   |  | Day job               | Trainee Waiter | General manager retail. Research/Study  | Carer                                 |
| <b>7</b>  | Why did you start work at a sexual entertainment venue | Fund studies   | Good at job           |                | Used to model. Enjoy dancing. Extra money to pay student loans. Savings.  |                                       |
| <b>8</b>  | Length of time danced                                  | 7 months   | 5 Years               |                | 1 Year  | 6 months                              |
| <b>9</b>  | Number of clubs worked in                              | 2  | 3                     |                | 2   | 3                                     |
| <b>10</b> | How many shifts per week                               | 2  | 2                     | 4              | 3   | 2                                     |
| <b>11</b> | How would you rate job satisfaction                    | 9  | 10                    |                | 8   | 8                                     |
| <b>12</b> | Do you feel happy at work                              | 9  | 10                    |                | 8   | 10                                    |
| <b>13</b> | Do you feel respected in the workplace                 | 9  | 10                    |                | 9   | 10                                    |
| <b>14</b> | Do you feel safe at work                               | 10   | 10                    |                | 10  | 10                                    |
| <b>15</b> | What are your positive feelings about work             | Positive about body. Enjoy dancing. Like meeting people. | Good job. Good girls. |                | Feel in control, comfortable and empowered. Great for fitness. Meet people. Make friends (dancers). Boosted confidence. | Freedom in the day. Work when choose. |
| <b>16</b> | What are your negative feelings about work             | Can be hard work.  |                       | None           | Sometimes tired and overworked. Sometimes work and not make money. Feel upset/depressed.                                | None                                  |
| <b>17</b> | Do you feel safe in your job                           | Yes  | Yes                   | Yes            | Yes   | Yes                                   |
| <b>18</b> | Are you subject to management fines                    | No   | No                    | No             | No  | No                                    |

|           |   | <b>21</b>        | <b>22</b>                          | <b>23</b>                               | <b>24</b>                    | <b>25</b>  | <b>Average of Results</b> |
|-----------|---|------------------|------------------------------------|---|------------------------------|------------|---------------------------|
| <b>1</b>  | <b>Age</b>  | 23               | 20                                 | 23                                      | 30                           | 32         | 26                        |
| <b>2</b>  | <b>Age started dancing</b>                                    | 21               | 19                                 | 23                                      | 28                           | 30         | 23                        |
| <b>3</b>  | <b>Relationship status</b>                                    | Single           | Single                             | Single                                  | Married                      | Single     |                           |
| <b>4</b>  | <b>Nationality</b>  | British          | British                            | British                                 | British                      | British    |                           |
| <b>5</b>  | <b>Education and Qualifications</b>                           | Degree           | Motorcycle Maintenance Certificate | A Levels                                | Diploma                      | NVQ Beauty |                           |
| <b>6</b>  | <b>Other work and education commitments</b>                   | Work in kitchen  | L3 Music Technology Diploma        | Hospitality. Self employed photographer | Make Up                      |            |                           |
| <b>7</b>  | <b>Why did you start work at a sexual entertainment venue</b> | Fun              | Money                              | Freedom of hours. Extra cash.           | Pay for course. Support son. |            |                           |
| <b>8</b>  | <b>Length of time danced</b>                                  | 2 Years          | 10 months                          | 2 weeks                                 | 2 Years                      | 2 Years    |                           |
| <b>9</b>  | <b>Number of clubs worked in</b>                              | 5                | 1                                  | 1                                       | 1                            | 1          | 3                         |
| <b>10</b> | <b>How many shifts per week</b>                               | 2                | 2                                  | 3                                       | 2                            | 5          | 3                         |
| <b>11</b> | <b>How would you rate job satisfaction</b>                    | 10               | 7                                  | 9                                       | 10                           | 10         | 9                         |
| <b>12</b> | <b>Do you feel happy at work</b>                              | 10               | 7                                  | 9                                       | 10                           | 10         | 9                         |
| <b>13</b> | <b>Do you feel respected in the workplace</b>                 | 10               | 6                                  | 9                                       | 10                           | 10         | 9                         |
| <b>14</b> | <b>Do you feel safe at work</b>                               | 10               | 9                                  | 9                                       | 10                           | 10         | 10                        |
| <b>15</b> | <b>What are your positive feelings about work</b>             | Fun environment  | Money. Friends. Stage shows.       | Fun. Safety is looked after.            | Fits around son              | Brilliant  |                           |
| <b>16</b> | <b>What are your negative feelings about work</b>             | Not making money | Not earning money.                 | None                                    | None                         | None       |                           |
| <b>17</b> | <b>Do you feel safe in your job</b>                           | Yes              | Yes                                | Yes                                     | Yes                          | Yes        |                           |
| <b>18</b> | <b>Are you subject to management fines</b>                    | No               | No                                 | No                                      | No                           | No         |                           |

17/04/2011

I'm a 27 year old single mother and have been working as a dancer at Spearmint Rhino for the last 2 years. I really enjoy working here as it is flexible with shifts so I can work when it's convenient for me. The working environment is great and most importantly safe as all the floor staff and management have very high standards of security and me and all the other dancers are well looked after. I have worked at other clubs before but have been here consistently for the last 2 years as it is by far the best. I plan on keeping working here for as long as possible as the pay is providing me and my child with a fantastic lifestyle.

Dear Sirs,

I currently work as a dancer at Spearmint Rhino Sheffield and wish to write this letter to outline my experiences throughout my employment.

I have worked for the company over a number of years which enabled me to fund myself through a law degree. I am presently employed as a full time Legal Executive for a Legal 500 firm. My day time employment is very demanding, however I still choose to remain in employment, part time, at Spearmint Rhino given that the management allow me to work as and when it is convenient for me. Aside from supplementing my income from full time employment, I continually and genuinely enjoy working there.

Spearmint Rhino has always provided me with a safe and relaxed working environment, which in this industry is paramount. From the Management to bar staff, every employee is professional and courteous, but more importantly it is an absolutely friendly environment to work in. As a dancer I always feel looked after and supported. I am able to be flexible with my working hours and am able to choose when and how often I work. As I live within close proximity of the club, I am always escorted home at the end of my shifts.

I cannot praise Spearmint Rhino enough as an employer and as such I do intend to continue working there for the foreseeable future.

Yours faithfully,

W.   


24.02 2017

[Redacted]

Sheffield

[Redacted]

22/02/2017

To whom this my concern,

I have worked at Spearmint Rhino Sheffield for a number of years in my opinion it is a very safe environment. There is never any indications of trouble at the club and I always feel at home. The staff that work there look after the club and the women including me who work there with the upmost care. I have noticed the club has become a place for a lot of women to come to as a customer with friends or with partners, which I have become a regular thing, they seem to enjoy themselves a lot. The club has become a great social place for hen parties, stag parties and work parties. I love working at the club and would rather work her than any other gentlemen's club. I truly love where I work as it is my only job and I have and am enjoying every minute as if is such a friendly place to work. The staff and I have I become a family not just work colleagues.

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

22.02.2017 .



22.02.17

MR F. S. DALTON.



Dear Sir,  
For the last 35 years I have worked as a doorman in Sheffield city centre. The last three and a half decades has seen me enjoy regular employment in a majority of the city's premier establishments. Flagship venues that over the years have comprised Sheffield's late night scene in district. The last 9 years have been in the employement of Spearpoint Bar as a part of a house security operative. As a new company they have provided me with a secure position within an environment of safety and good practice. They spare no expense and make every effort to ensure



that customers and employees alike enjoy a positive experience engaged in the entertainment services they offer. I feel sure that our past work with the Council and its agencies will bear testament to that fact. At 55 years of age I look back over to a job that 10 years of happy involvement with Spear in the firm in UK. I would be happy to promote Spear in the firm as a valuable employer and a small business, and who be some addition to the sector.

Kind regards



[Redacted]

23rd Feb 2017

Dear Sir/Madam

I have been an employee at Spearmint Rhino Sheffield for over two years as a Bar tender, this is my full time job and main income, there is no other work that suits and supports me like this job as both my parents are disabled and have to care for them during the day. The management are really supportive of my situation and not find this anywhere else, I also feel safe in my work as security is really good here and get escorted to my car at the end of every shift. The management and employees are very friendly and supportive of each other. I love working here and hope so for some years to come.

Yours faithfully

[Redacted]

Sheffield City  
Council

24/05/2018

To whom it may concern,

I have been working at Spearmint Rhino gentlemen's Club for almost a year and I have been a dancer for approximately 10 years.

After a recent separation and moving into my own house, I rely on this position to top up my earnings to be able to afford to run my home.

In my time of dancing I can honestly say that Spearmint Rhinos in Sheffield, is the nicest, most professional club that I have worked in. I am able to work when I wish and there is no pressure from management or when this is the staff from the dancers, bar staff, door staff to management are all so friendly, professional and caring.

I am never made to feel uncomfortable, pressured or worthless by customers or staff.

Due to this club being just outside of the city centre, I don't believe that it causes

Staff or Customers and I happy to be apart  
of the team here.

Yours Sincerely





I am a 28 year old single mother and have been working as a dancer at Spearmint Rhino for the last 3 years.

I really enjoy working here as it is flexible with shifts so I can work when its convenient for me. The working environment is great and most importantly safe as all the door staff and management have very high standards of security. We are all looked after well.

I have worked other clubs before but they are no where near as good as here.

I plan to carry on working here full time for as long as possible to provide an amazing lifestyle for me and my son.

I dont understand why the feminists want to close us down as it is my choice to work here and without this job I would struggle to make ends meet.

Please keep the club open as I need it  
yours sincerely

I'm a 24 year old history graduate who has been working at Spearmint Rhinos for 18 months. I believe that using female empowerment as your sole cause to shut down this club is wrong and very contradictory.

As other women, you should know that feminism is about giving women autonomy to do what they want with their lives and body. By shutting down this club, you are dictating what we can and cannot do with our bodies. Therefore, you are in turn playing into the patriarchy by demonising ~~the~~ female sexuality.

We are ~~fully~~ aware, we are consenting and you should not dictate how we earn our money! Please contact me if you have any more questions.  
yours sincerely,

[Redacted Signature]

5/6/2018

31/05/19

I'm a 26 year old woman who has been working for  
Spearpoint Rhina Sheffield now for just over a year, I can honestly  
say I have thoroughly enjoyed my job since I started here.  
There have been no issues what so ever from anyone - I've  
the guys working here or customers since working here I  
have never had to worry about my safety, I have  
always felt very well looked after by all security  
and management. This job has amazing flexibilities  
for me as I can work as and when I feel, I am  
never forced to ~~work~~ be here so this works well with  
my home life. Working here has really helped me  
be able to make ends meet, so financially I'm 100%  
better off. I have previously worked in other clubs  
but this one is a favourite of mine to work at  
as it is a really professional environment, it's also  
such a friendly environment everyone I have met  
here has been so lovely and will leave a lasting  
memory and impression on me.



8-6-18

I have been dancing for the previous three years. I am currently working at Spearmint Rhino, I have been here from 2016. I feel comfortable and protected at the club, I have had no issues with customers or staff within the venue.

I decided to start dancing to improve my financial circumstances.

I have the choice to work the evenings that are suitable for myself and family commitments.





8th June 2018.

I have been dancing at Spearmint Rhino for around 4 years.

In my time working at this club I can ~~bonist~~ honestly say I have had no issues with the staff, management or customers. I feel safe and comfortable in the club and environment.

As a single mom of two boys this job gives me the independence and stability to manage my family life both financially and emotionally.

All the girls have a good relationship with each other and get along.

I have the freedom to put my spare time into my family + Business I am happy to stay with Spearmint Rhino and carry on dancing till I am where I want to be financially.

8<sup>th</sup> June 2018

I have been dancing in spearmint Rhino since 2011, I now have a little girl at 5 years old, had an amazing career and will carry on enjoying my work and making money and putting my daughter through private school, as a single mum this job is perfect for me. this club is the best thing that's happened to me, proper family



I have worked for Specmint Rhno  
for several years and have had  
a great career here and am happy  
with my job I thoughtly enjoy it  
and will continue to work here at  
free will . I dont feel in any  
Sort of way under pressure and  
choose my Shifts willingly .



8. 6. 18.



To whom it may concern,

My name is [REDACTED] I am a 35 year old professional relationship coach and mother of 2 children. I started working as a dancer at Spearmint Rhino's Sheffield last year as it was something I had always wanted to try. I have genuinely been blown away by the warm, friendly atmosphere all the staff have created and by the professionalism of everyone who works there.

Management and security are highly polite and welcoming to customers. I have NEVER seen or even heard of any trouble. The worst thing I have seen is an over inebriated customer fall asleep in his chair and then he was politely asked to leave. Security are very skilled at dealing with customers and at making sure all of the girls are safe at all times.

We are briefed on all of the rules and regulations and there are signs and notices up regarding our code of conduct and about how we need to be respectful of the community and business around us, which we are.


The clientele at Spearmint Rhino's has also really surprised me. I have spoken with wonderful people from all over the world, with fantastic jobs who are incredibly respectful and a pleasure to talk with and dance for. People who have been recommended to visit us. 'Regulars' who come in frequently to enjoy the relaxed and friendly atmosphere. We also have many women visit the club, which is always lovely to see.

I have also been pleasantly surprised with how loving, kind and supportive all the dancers are. It is literally a pleasure and joy coming into work and catching up with all of the incredible women that work there. Many of them have full time day jobs and work extra nights to support their families or self-fund their educations. We have psychologists, social workers, health care professionals, mothers and many other interesting, beautiful and hard working women at the club.

Some may believe we are a sordid, seedy hoard of perverts when actually we are quite the opposite. We are a little community of hard working, confident, sexy people who share an interest and appreciation of the female body and erotic dancing. We are a professional business, like any other, the only difference is that ours is frowned upon because ours incorporates nudity.

It genuinely is a pleasure and privilege to work at Spearmint Rhino's and I would encourage anyone to come in and see just how friendly and wonderful our environment actually is.

Yours sincerely

[REDACTED]  


**WITNESS STATEMENT**

**Criminal Procedure Rules, r 27.2; Criminal Justice Act 1967, s. 9; Magistrates' Courts Act 1980, s.5B**

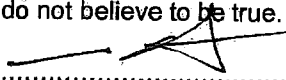
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Statement of Neil Mutch .....

Age if under 18 Over 18.... (If over 18 insert "over 18") Occupation: Police Inspector.....

This statement (consisting of ... page(s) each signed by me) is true to the best of my knowledge and belief and I make it knowing that, if it is tendered in evidence, I shall be liable to prosecution if I have wilfully stated in it, anything which I know to be false, or do not believe to be true.

Signature  ..... (witness) Date: 15<sup>th</sup> November 2016

Tick if witness evidence is visually recorded  (supply witness details on rear)

I am police Inspector of the South Yorkshire Police currently stationed at Snig Hill Police Station.

My role is the neighbourhood inspector for the Sheffield Central Local Policing Team. Included in my duties is the oversight of crime and anti-social behaviour within that policing area. The coordination of police licensing activity and enforcement is a key aspect of this given the number of licensed premises in the city centre and the thriving night time economy. I have held this post for approximately 30 months.

I have been asked to review incidents at and near Spearmint Rhino, Brown St., Sheffield.

From records I can access there have been three incidents at the premises since September 2015.

September 2015 - a report from the premises that a window had been damaged.

October 2015 – an allegation from a female customer that she had been assaulted by a dancer. The investigation was inconclusive

April 2016 – an allegation that a customer had been overcharged.

In addition to this I have reviewed all the incidents on Brown St since September 2015 and of the 26 incidents that occurred on that street only one has a link to Spearmint Rhino. A group of men had asked a taxi to drop them off at Spearmint Rhino and on arrival, the taxi driver was assaulted. None of the other incidents appear to be connected or attributable to Spearmint Rhino.

My professional opinion is that Spearmint Rhino is not be a premises that causes me concern in relation to crime and disorder.

Signature:  ..... Signature Witnessed by: .....



# Women's Hub Meeting

## 11 December 2017

### Actions and notes

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#### Attendees

- Valerie Monti Holland (VMH) – Chair
- Annie Bowman
- Beverley Nunn
- Charlotte Albiston (CA), Key Changes/ Women's Hub Rep
- Dawn Leader, Mums In Need
- Heather Paterson (HP), Together Women Project
- Judith Dodds (JD), Sheffield Feminist Network/VAWG Working Group
- Katherine Warman (KW), Andro & Eve
- Laura Hegarty, Women's Hub Rep/Showroom Cinema
- Laura Riley, Mum's In Need CEO
- Lisa Markham (LM), Women and Poverty Working Group/Sheffield Feminist Network
- Margaret Kilner (MK), Healthwatch
- Maureen Storey (MS), Vida/VAWG Working Group
- Maxine Stavrianakos, SCC Head of Neighbourhood Tenants Support
- Naomi Saxton (NS), Sheffield Hallam University
- Olivia Woolnough, Mums In Need
- Paul Taylor (PT), Sheffield City Council (SCC) Head of Customer Services
- Rachel Sanchez (RS), SCC
- Rebecca Brackett (RB), SheFest
- Stacey Anderson (SA), Women's Hub Vice Chair

#### Apologies

- Nicki Speakman
- Sandra Baker-Donnelly (SBD), Sanctuary Scheme
- Kath Housley, LGBT+ Hub Rep

#### Actions

- Amend Action Plan as agreed (item 3) – HP
- Contact HP if interested in cross Hub SCC Communications sub group – all
- Add SEVs to the next meeting's agenda – Organising Group

### 1. Welcome, introduction and apologies

VMH updated on Equality Hub Network structure.

### 2. Actions and notes of the 11 September 2017 Women's Hub meeting

- Email addresses have been shared by SCC to those who requested.
- No action to date on additional sub groups for Mental Health and Resilience and Reproductive Health.
- Cross Hub communications meeting has been set up re: requests for Hub social media pages etc.
- DACT feedback was given by Alison Higgins at cross Hub event.

### 3. Update on Women's Hub Action Plan and Vision

- Valerie Monti-Holland, Women's Hub Chair, gave an update on Women's Hub Action Plan and Vision.
- Action: SA and CA surnames to be added to plan

- Action: Prevent to be added to Cross Hub Working Groups
- Action: Updated version of Action Plan to be sent with the actions and notes of the meeting
- The Disability Hub will be leading on a cross Hub Employment Working Group, but this has yet to be set up.

#### **4. Communication with Sheffield City Council**

- Paul Taylor, Sheffield City Council (SCC) Head of Customer Services, is seeking feedback from communities regarding how they want to receive communications from SCC.
- Specifically focussing on marginalised communities and trying to improve existing communications
- Has visited each of the EHN Hubs and has is setting up cross Hub SCC Communications sub group to provide advice and guidance on how SCC communicates with customers.
- Seeking 2 reps from each Hub to sit in sub group which will meet quarterly.
- Example of communication issue given of bringing 101 service back in house at SCC including some antisocial behaviour reporting.
- Expected time commitment to be a few hours quarterly.
- People interested in becoming reps to contact HP.
- VMH requested listing all opportunities for involvement with the actions and notes of the meeting.
- LM asked if there would be practical support, e.g. childcare and travel reimbursement.
- PT would ensure appropriate support is made available.
- MK asked if BSL interpreters would be available if required. PT confirmed this would also be arranged if required.
- Customer Services Team looks after all language and interpretation needs for SCC so would be able and focussed on providing that support.
- MK raised concerns re: communication support required e.g. by deaf carers as interpreter is not provided unless required by client.

#### **5. Mums In Need**

- Dawn Leader, Mums In Need SWIFT Support Worker, and Olivia Woolnough gave [presentation about Mums In Need](#).
- KW asked if women from outside of Sheffield can access the service. Olivia confirmed that service is based in Sheffield but as long as women are willing/ able to travel to Sheffield they are able to access the service. There are also longer term plans to expand the service to a wider area.
- JD queried if support for emotional and psychological abuse was already provided within domestic abuse services. Olivia stated that support is available for high level abuse but not all and is still relatively new and often not considered in family courts who Mums In Need are seeking to work closer with.

#### **6. Working Group updates**

##### **a. Violence Against Women and Girls Working Group (VAWG)**

- Maureen Storey, VAWG Working Group Lead, gave an update.
- MS presented the [Women's Hub VAWG Working Group Report](#).
- Know The Line Campaign Launch took place on 24 November and was well attended with speakers including Ashiana, Rape Crisis, VIDA, and Louise Hague MP, Alan Billings (South Yorkshire Police and Crime Commissioner), Celeste Jones (Sheffield University Students Union Women's Officer), DACT (Domestic Abuse Coordination Team).

- Range of speakers and issues raised, ranging from harassment to serious sexual assault, rape and murder, showed breadth of issues which requires major culture change challenging misogyny and sexism.
- The current media focus on Hollywood/Weinstein abuse makes the campaign very timely and an issue that people are currently talking about.
- The campaign is largely focused online due to low budgets, the majority of which have been spent on printing costs for campaign promotional materials.
- Request was made for suggestions for more slogans to be used for the campaign.
- More young women's voices are wanted. HP has offered to consult with young people via VIBE at Together Women Project. RS suggested also contacting the Age Hub.
- The Women's Quilt, which commemorates the lives of 598 women killed by their partners or ex partners between 2009 and 2015, was displayed at the Winter Garden on Wednesday 6 December 2017.
- The VAWG Working Group is also still working on South Yorkshire Police to establish misogyny as a hate crime as already implemented in Nottingham.
- The latest DACT meeting has now agreed to have a section specifically on VAWG within the Sheffield's Domestic and Sexual Abuse Strategy.
- KW asked for clarification of difference between Sheffield's Domestic and Sexual Abuse Strategy and the VAWG strategy. MS confirmed that Sheffield's Domestic and Sexual Abuse Strategy is specific to domestic abuse, i.e. violence or abuse that takes place within the home/family setting by a partner or family member, while VAWG encompasses wider issues of violence against women and girls including (but not limited to) Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), forced marriage, street harassment and any other violence or abuse affecting only or primarily women and girls.
- The VAWG section of Sheffield's Domestic and Sexual Abuse Strategy is a start, but longer term goal is still to create a wider VAWG strategy encompassing the above. Consultation is currently underway with a local survey to be launched in the New Year.
- NS stated she had experienced or witnessed harassment of some level on almost every night out she had ever been on and how that could be practically managed with hate crime reporting. MS confirmed not seeking to change legislation re: hate crimes vs incidents but to increase incident reporting.
- MS also confirmed that city centre venues that have the 'Ask For Angela' posters displayed are part of the U-Nite scheme and staff should have received training regarding incidents reported to them.
- Maxine Stavrianakos is SCC's Community Safety Lead and will invite relevant people to the night-time economy community safety meeting to give input.
- Maxine stated that hate crime is under-reported UK wide (only approximately 20% reported to Police). There is also option of reporting to Stop Hate UK so incident can be logged and support offered with option to not report to police if that isn't wanted.
- MK stated that strategies need to come from women affected rather than SCC or other organisations. People are more ready for change than the organisations are.
- KW was on Paulette Edwards show discussing #MeToo campaign. Paulette is looking for others who have stories of positive impact of campaign.
- KW also stated that Know The Line YouTube campaign video needs information, e.g. contact info and links added to be able to share. Also recommended some shorter social media friendly video clips to be created.
- KW has previous positive experience of incident reporting in Nottingham where information and support was provided including follow up call a month later.
- KW also noted that violence and abuse is also directed at feminine gender non-conforming people and masculine of centre women.



- RB asked re: benefit to individual of incident reporting. MS stated it would allow Police to focus addressing safety concerns in high incident areas and prevention of developing into more serious incidents, i.e. crimes.
- VMH stated that there are lots of opportunities for women to get involved either by joining the VAWG Working Group, the cross Hub Tackling Hate Crime Working Group and/or the Hate Crime Scrutiny Panel.
- Maxine Stavrianakos will take feedback to the Community Safety Partnership Group.

#### **b. Women and Poverty Working Group**

- LM gave an [update on the Women and Poverty Working Group](#). They have conducted one to one interviews for women in poverty study. Survey will take place in New Year.
- Maxine Stavrianakos gave a [presentation on Welfare Reform](#) and the impact on women – see attached presentation.

#### **Sexual Entertainment Venues (SEV) Licensing update**

- SCC SEV Licence Policy has just been updated removing cap.
- JD read [statement on behalf of Zero Option Sheffield](#) opposing SCC licensing of SEVs (see attached).
- JD proposed motion for Women’s Hub to oppose removal of cap – the motion was briefly debated, but there was a lack of consensus and the motion was not carried.
- Further proposals were made with options for further discussing the issues.
  - RB stated SheFest will be hosting debate re: sex work as part of Festival of Debate – proposal to partner
  - Proposal for SEV working group to be set up and/or a separate meeting to discuss further
  - RS stated SCC would support wider event to discuss.
- Due to time constraints no agreements were made. It was agreed to add to the agenda for the next Hub meeting.

#### **Sanctuary Scheme**

Apologies received from SBD

#### **Equality Hub Network Board feedback**

Item not discussed due to overrunning of meeting

#### **Next meeting**

Tuesday 13 March 2018, 12.30pm to 2.30pm, The Circle, Rockingham Lane

## Women's Hub

Tuesday 13 March 2018

12.30pm to 2.30pm\*

The Circle, 33 Rockingham Lane, S1 4FW

(\*Networking and information sharing from 12pm noon)



### Agenda

1. Welcome, introductions and apologies (5 min)
2. Actions and notes from the 11 December 2017 Women's Hub meeting – Valerie Monti Holland, Women's Hub Chair (5 min)
3. Website and communication update – Heather Paterson, Together Women Project (5 min)
4. Working Group updates
  - a. Mental Health – Stacey Anderson and Laura Hegarty, 5 min)
  - b. VAWG (Violence Against Women and Girls) – Maureen Storey, VAWG Working Group Lead (10 min)
  - c. Women and Poverty – Lisa Markham, Women and Poverty Working Group Lead (10 min)
5. Equality Hub Network Board feedback – Women's Hub Reps (10 min)
6. Sexual Entertainment Venues (SEVs)
  - a. Introduction: Sheffield SEV licencing background – Valerie Monti Holland, Women's Hub Chair (5 min)
  - b. Opposition to SEV licencing summary (5 min)
  - c. Support for SEV licencing summary (5 min)
  - d. Group discussion (45 min)
7. Any Other Business (5 min)
8. Information sharing – All (5 min)

### Next meeting

Tuesday 19 June 2018, 5.30pm to 7.30pm, Town Hall, G42

- Notes for Women's Hub Discussion-Sexual Entertainment Venues

- This discussion takes place in the context of a local issue about the Sexual Entertainment Venue Policy. Some of the points **may** be capable of being generalised to other sex work but it's important to be clear that there is a reason now to focus on this issue rather than on "Sex work" in general.
- In declaring my own bias and status I want to recognise the differences of opinion already in the room and position myself as pro woman, pro women's safety and pro sex. In this discussion there is no argument about our rights to all forms of truly consensual sexual behaviours and choices. I am saddened that there are women who have worked or are working in SEV's who feel judged by the very fact of positions being taken about the nature of the work.
- In concentrating on SEVs I note that these establishments were made lawful by a Labour government in 2003. There has been further legislation and guidance since and SEV'S have proliferated. Sheffield is one of many places with campaigns and challenges their existence; most based on concerns about how they diminish women's status and rely on heterosexist and limiting stereotypes about gender relations and roles.
- This meeting should be concerned with equality. Commercial sexual exploitation largely (though not exclusively) of women is the "bread and butter" of SEV's. It is predominantly women who dance and strip and find themselves making difficult choices about whether they "allow" customers to touch them (a means to making more money). "The idea that the sex industry is sex positive and liberal is an absolute Joke and..... a manifestation of gender inequality" ( Hayashi Danns Ex lap dancer).

- The Council has a broad Equality duty which includes fostering good relation between the sexes. A dancer states “It screwed up my views of men. Every time I see a man now I just see him as a punter. There’s only so much bad experience you can have before hating them all”.
- The local campaign Zero Option argues for a nil cap on SEV’s. It does not argue for a cessation of activities in other establishment such as members swingers clubs. A nil cap would reduce work opportunities for a small number of people including those women performers who are on zero hours contracts, have to pay a fee to work, may be fined routinely for minor infractions. experience strict and some would argue unreasonable and unhealthy conditions.
- There is a big equalities picture here; the casualisation of women’s work, employment and wage differentials, flexibility. Arguments about the women’s poor working conditions in other sectors, the gig economy, low paid, zero hours contract work and impact on women’s well - being and health are well made. But they shouldn’t persuade that working in a SEV is better. And they may miss the point about performing in a SEV; what is different, regardless of individual choice that any one of us might make in a given set of circumstances, is something about being on show, virtually naked, exposed, performing and promoting an appearance of sexual availability for whatever a punter wants.
- I’ve never been told to shave my pubes or have men try to put their fingers in my vagina at work and without my truly informed consent. So an important question is what can we do collectively to offer promote alternatives?
- I want to end by reflecting on the nature of the harm of SEV’s. In this room we know a lot about trauma. For many women trauma arises from sexual violence and experiences which

take away power, control and bodily autonomy /integrity. In the debate about individual choice we typically do not take a long view. We forget to factor in the likely long term impact of sexualised encounters in which identity and personal sexual desire are negated and downplayed time after time after time.

- It is not clear to me that the voices of traumatised workers or those who have exited and reflected on the cost to them have been given equal weight in the public debates about agency and choice.
- For performers in SEV's the sexualised encounter is a public pretence outwith a respectful consensual sexual encounter with a specific partners or partners. If she "cock teases" in the street as she does in a club and was raped she would, as the narrative goes, be to blame. And she is often harassed. In one study 100 of performers had been verbally abused at best and sexually assaulted at work. And under reporting is rife.
- We in this room know that sexual violence is rife and impacts disproportionately on women, however we identify. I think we now know that there are connections between objectification and violence. We know at the micro level of human interactions, alcohol, objectification of women's bodies, rape supportive attitudes and beliefs create a toxic cocktail. So I contend that Sexual Entertainment Venues trivialise and confuse notions of consent and help to maintain a climate in which all women are impacted because SEV's uncritically reinforce notions of male entitlement and women's sexual availability.

## Nil Cap Statement Opposing 'Zero Option'

As presented to Sheffield Equality Hub Network Women's Hub Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> March 2018

We all want women to be safe from harm and oppose abuse and exploitation. Our participation in the hubs also indicates we want women's voices to be heard and support empowered women making their own decisions.

Banning SEV licensing not only fails to address any of this, but increases risk to women and fails to listen to the voices of those who would be directly impacted.

There are at least 30 venues in the city that I know of where sexual entertainment takes place; only two are licensed; Spearmint Rhino and La Chambre (and even Zero Option doesn't object to La Chambre).

Zero Option would therefore have no effect on the majority of SEVs in the city, Even if you do want to end strip clubs, zero option would not achieve this, it just attempts to close Spearmint Rhino, the one venue which is reported to have the best working conditions, arguably specifically because of the licensing, while sexual entertainment continues unchecked in unlicensed venues.

As recently as December 2017, Sheffield venue Pandora's was closed down for trafficking offenses. Pandoras was not SEV licensed. <sup>[1]</sup>

We know that prohibition doesn't work, or millions of people across the UK wouldn't use drugs.

But why should we seek to ban strip clubs anyway? Sex and sexual attraction are not inherently bad things, ultimately all of us in this room (barring any rare medical interventions) only exist because people had sex.

Sexual freedom is an essential part of women's freedom and we should support a woman's right to choose. Choice is something most of us would say we support from abortion, to voting rights, employment and parenting but are you really supporting choice unless you equally support the right to choose the option you don't like. Otherwise all you are doing is saying don't do what those evil men say, do what we say instead. To tell a women what she can and cannot do with her own body is guess what - misogyny.

We rightly defend a woman's right to say 'no', but we must equally defend her right to say 'yes'.

Whether a woman wants to be a stay at home or working mother, wear a burka or a bikini, or work in a strip club, it's about time we stopped limiting female experience to a set of purist ideals under the guise of feminism, and started empowering women from all walks of life to make their own choices.

Zero Option is the equivalent of me supporting women's right to vote, unless you vote Tory. I might not like that that's how you vote, but I support your right to make that decision.

Zero Option argue that the act of payment means that there is no choice or consent as there would be no need to pay the woman if she wanted to do the work. By that same argument all of us in paid employment are victims of slavery, otherwise we would be volunteers. To quote former sex worker

Paris Lees, “Trying to cure sexual abuse and exploitation by banning sex work is like trying to cure sweat shops by banning factories”.<sup>[2]</sup> There is nothing in the Zero Option argument, other than a specific sexual morality, that could not equally be applied to other types of work.

Framing all sex work as inherently abusive is incredibly damaging as it restricts the ability of sex working women who have been abused or assaulted to speak out and get justice.

Zero Option argue that there is a lack of consideration given to equalities in SEV licensing yet their proposals would disproportionately impact women, whilst also discriminating on class having made no objection to burlesque which is in all practicality just middle class stripping, instead they seek to shut down working class women's employment. There is no consideration given to LGBT issues or effects on marginalised workers where Trans women, women of colour, migrant workers and single mothers are disproportionately represented. The Global Network of Sex Work Projects' recently published policy brief on 'Sex Work and Gender Equality'<sup>[3]</sup> states that “...abolitionist feminists currently pose the single largest threat to sex workers”.

Zero Option attempt to paint a single view of the poor vulnerable stripper or prostituted woman forced into sex work against her will to support their argument, denying the range of different experiences of women or that any woman in the industry is actually capable of making her own informed choices.

It is notable that the voices of women currently working in the industry are absent from the Zero Option argument. In forming my own views I have actively spoken to as many people working in strip clubs and other types of sex work as well as referring to research and materials from sex worker led organisations and am personally yet to meet a woman currently working in the industry who supports Zero Option.

I appreciate for those of us who work with women who have been abused it is understandable to have a distorted view of sex work if that is the only example you are seeing. While this is one experience of sex work and no one is saying that all sex work is wonderful, neither is a lot of work. I say that as someone who in previous work has cleaned other people's vomit out of urinals in a nightclub at 3 o'clock in the morning and sold double glazing where I was repeatedly told in a variety of creative ways to go forth and multiply but no one is trying to ban those or any other unpleasant jobs.

Some of the people I know who are currently engaged in a variety of different sex work in Sheffield, including stripping, include two academics, a teacher, a librarian and a lawyer. These people represent a demographic of sex workers who are unlikely to ever walk through the doors of our services. One of whom sent me the following message, she said ‘...One of the issues with ‘debate’ around this stuff is the price sex workers pay for outing themselves... so sex workers can be sitting in the audience fuming while posh women talk rubbish about them and not be able to participate fully... To be able to say ‘Well I am a sex worker, and how you imagine it is not how it is for me...’ Except at great personal cost... While the stigma is so strong, it can never be a fair ‘debate’...’.

Independent studies from Amnesty<sup>[4]</sup>, United Nations<sup>[5]</sup>, the World Health Organisation<sup>[6]</sup>, sex worker led organisations including the International Union of Sex Workers<sup>[7]</sup>, The UK Network of Sex Work Projects<sup>[8]</sup>, National Ugly Mugs<sup>[9]</sup>, SWARM Collective<sup>[10]</sup> and others including research completed

here in Sheffield by Dr Brooke Magnanti<sup>[1]</sup> show that the majority of women working in the industry do not support the Zero Option position.

A statement from the workers from SWARM states “We are feminists, but we denounce the carceral feminism which seeks to take away our livelihood and our survival. Policies that increase violence against marginalised women will not end patriarchy. We call on all feminist groups and organisations to listen to sex worker-led organisations and open their doors to us so that we can work together towards the eradication of gender violence.”<sup>[12]</sup>

As women and feminists seeking to keep women safe we need to acknowledge sex work as work, destigmatise workers and improve their working conditions and rights, recognise their autonomy, support their right to choose and work to increase choices available, while Zero Option instead seeks to stop women making their own choices, seeks to remove their income and pushes them into more vulnerable and unsafe situations.

In summary this is not about asking you to like sex work or find strip clubs personally tasteful, nor is it removing the ability to assess and object to venues on a case by case basis, it is asking you to consider women's safety and wellbeing and if you want to support women I urge you to listen to the women who this will affect and oppose the damaging Zero Option proposals for a blanket ban of SEV licensing.

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## References and Further Information

[1] Massage parlour closed over human trafficking raids in Sheffield

<https://www.thestar.co.uk/news/massage-parlour-closed-over-human-trafficking-raids-in-sheffield-1-8893052>

[2] Paris Lees on Twitter

<https://twitter.com/parislees/status/748836655109402624>

[3] Policy Brief: Sex Work and Gender Equality, NSWSP

[http://www.nswp.org/sites/nswp.org/files/policy\\_brief\\_sex\\_work\\_and\\_gender\\_equality\\_nswp\\_-\\_2017.pdf](http://www.nswp.org/sites/nswp.org/files/policy_brief_sex_work_and_gender_equality_nswp_-_2017.pdf)

[4] Amnesty International Policy on state obligations to respect, protect and fulfil the human rights of sex workers

<https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/pol30/4062/2016/en/>

[5] Expert Group Meeting convened by UN Women includes Recommendations on Sex Work

<http://www.nswp.org/news/expert-group-meeting-convened-un-women-includes-recommendations-sex-work>

[6] World Health Organisation – Sex Workers

[http://www.who.int/hiv/topics/sex\\_work/en/](http://www.who.int/hiv/topics/sex_work/en/)

[7] International Union of Sex Workers

<http://www.iusw.org>



[8] The UK Network of Sex Work Projects

<http://www.uknswp.org>

[9] National Ugly Mugs

<https://uknswp.org/um/>

[10] SWARM Collective

<https://www.swarmcollective.org>

[11] Dr Brooke Magnanti – Sex, Lies & Statistics

<https://www.amazon.co.uk/dp/B0751YF6G4>

[12] SWARM – What we stand for

<https://www.swarmcollective.org/what-we-stand-for/>

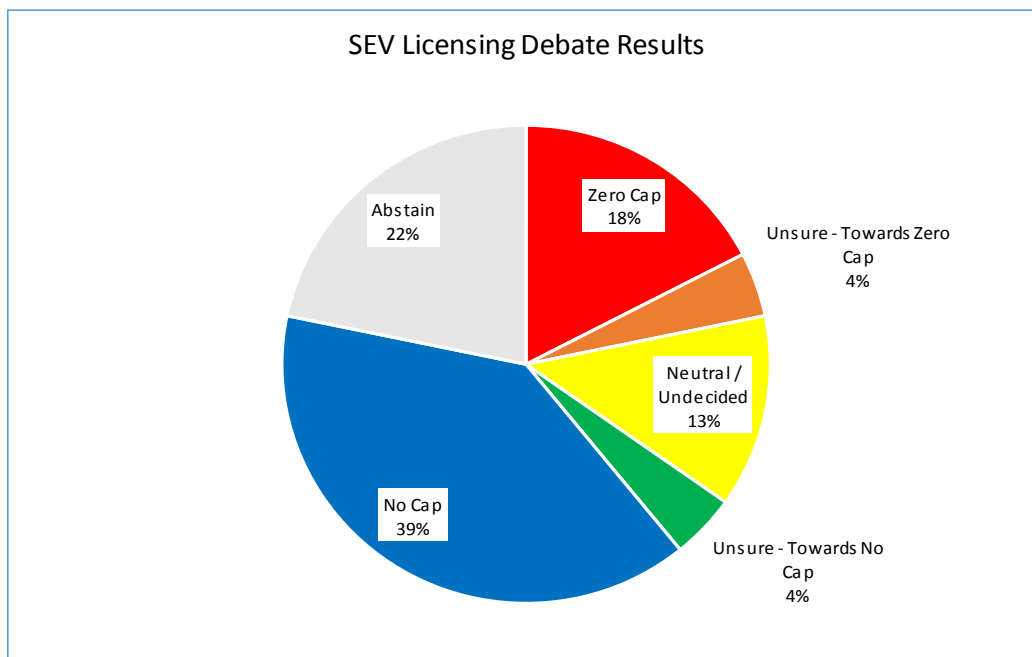
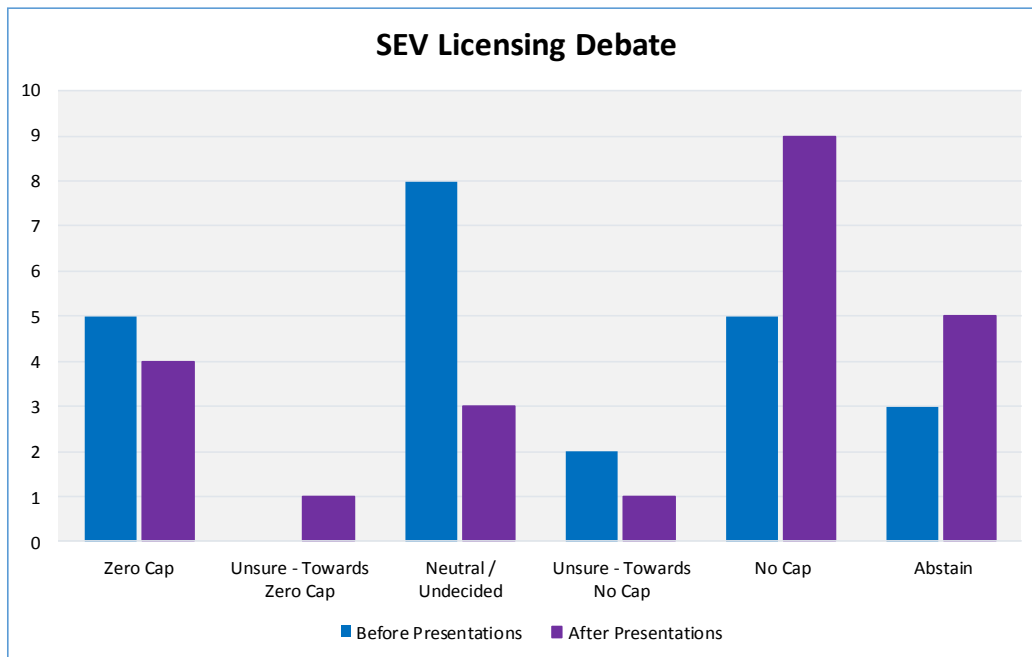
Solidarity to Sheffield Sex Workers/Dancers

<https://ladyfestsheffield.wordpress.com/2016/04/05/solidarity-to-sheffield-sex-workersdancers-2/>

Edinburgh University Feminist Society

<https://edinburghfeminists.wordpress.com/2013/11/18/york-feminist-network-we-reject-your-whorephobia>

## Women's Hub Sexual Entertainment (SEV) Licensing Debate Results



|                                  | Before Presentations |                | After Presentations |                | Variation    |
|----------------------------------|----------------------|----------------|---------------------|----------------|--------------|
| <b>Zero Cap</b>                  | 5                    | 21.74%         | 4                   | 17.39%         | -4.35%       |
| <b>Unsure - Towards Zero Cap</b> | 0                    | 0.00%          | 1                   | 4.35%          | 4.35%        |
| <b>Neutral / Undecided</b>       | 8                    | 34.78%         | 3                   | 13.04%         | -21.74%      |
| <b>Unsure - Towards No Cap</b>   | 2                    | 8.70%          | 1                   | 4.35%          | -4.35%       |
| <b>No Cap</b>                    | 5                    | 21.74%         | 9                   | 39.13%         | 17.39%       |
| <b>Abstain</b>                   | 3                    | 13.04%         | 5                   | 21.74%         | 8.70%        |
| <b>Total</b>                     | <b>23</b>            | <b>100.00%</b> | <b>23</b>           | <b>100.00%</b> | <b>0.00%</b> |

# Area photographs

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**Event Photographs**

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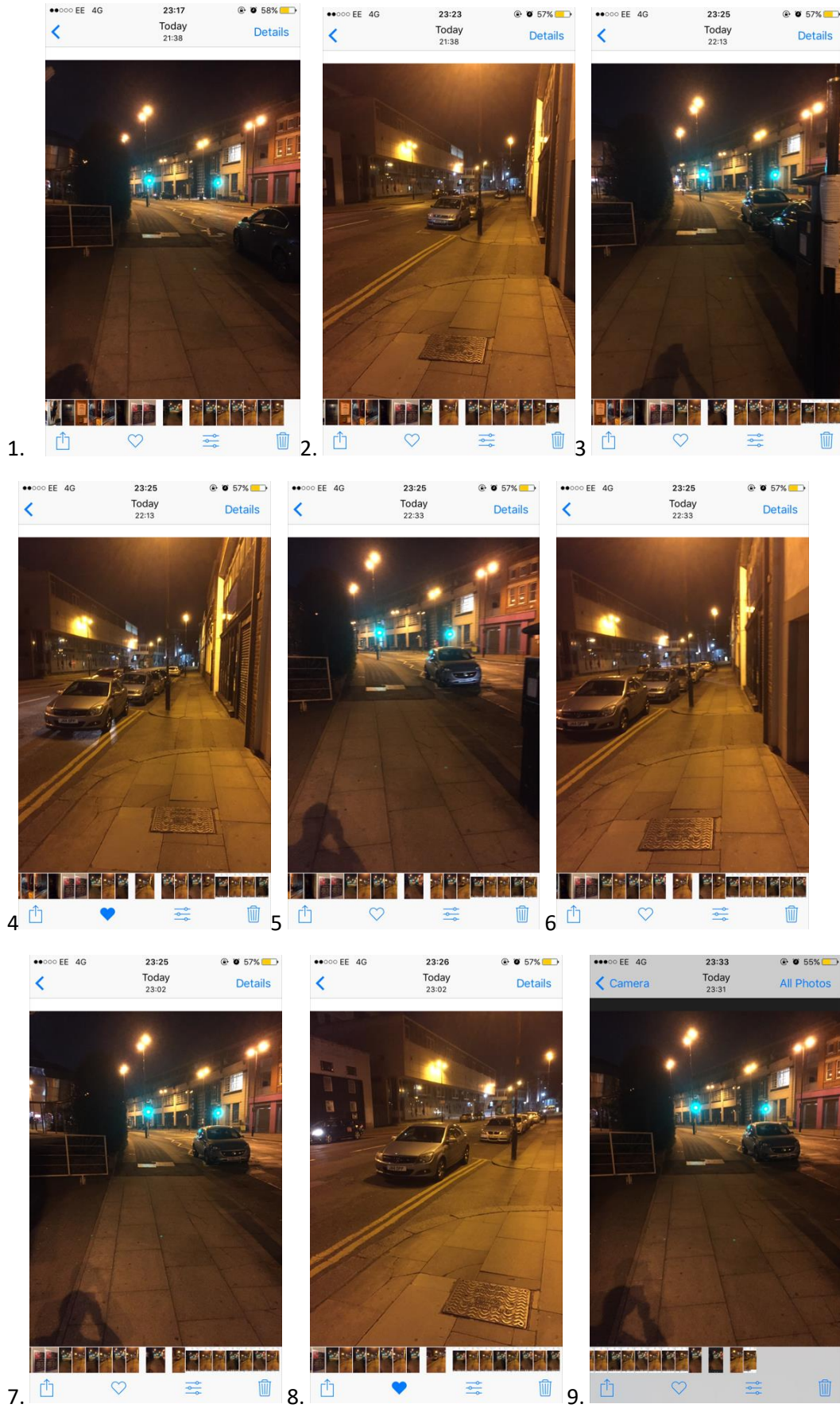
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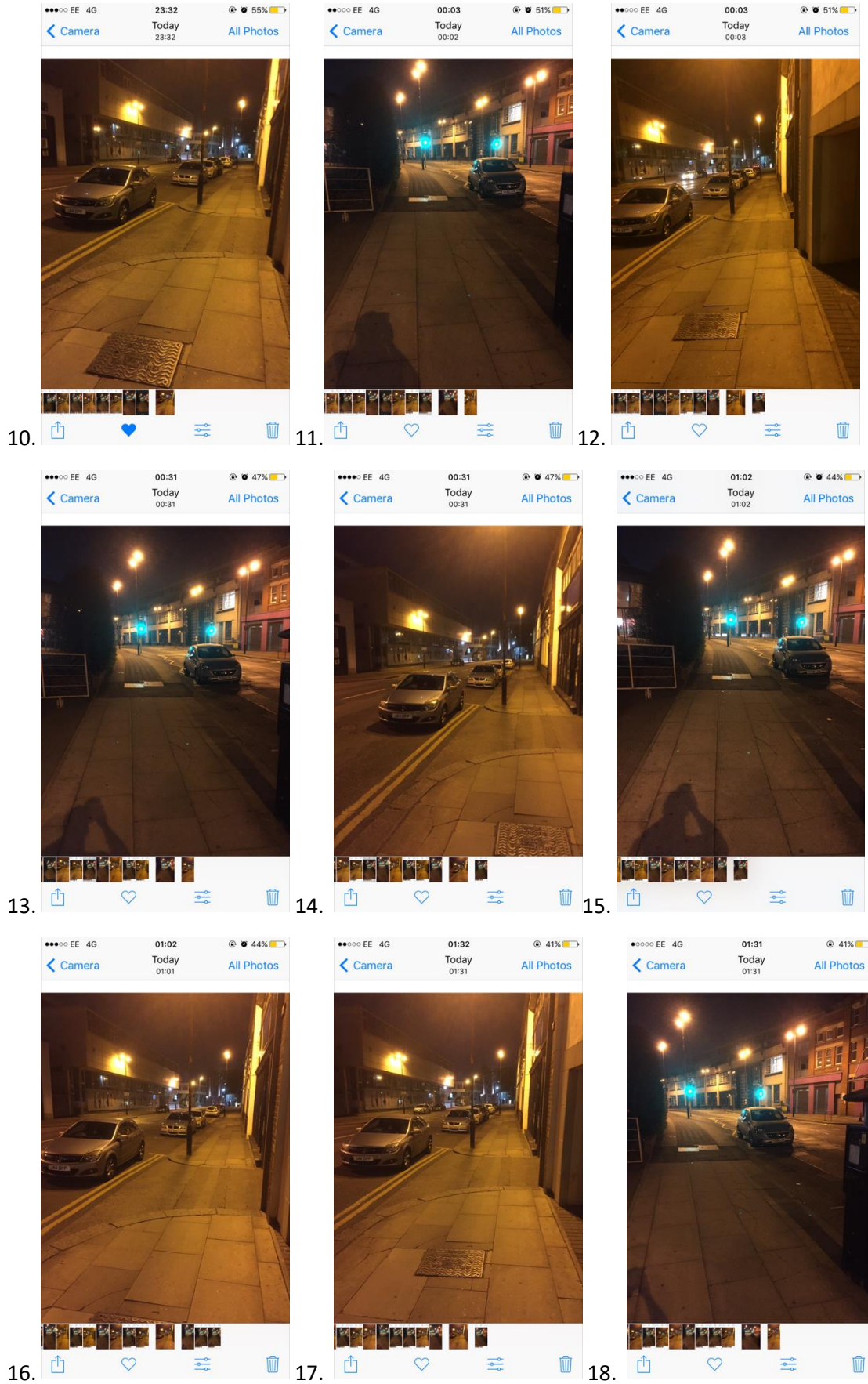


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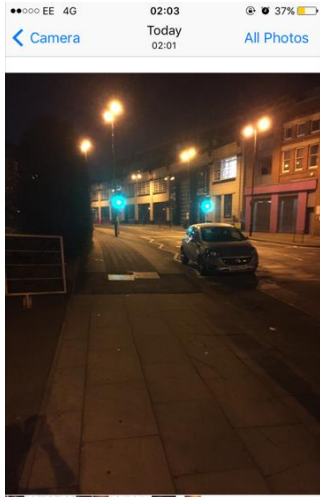




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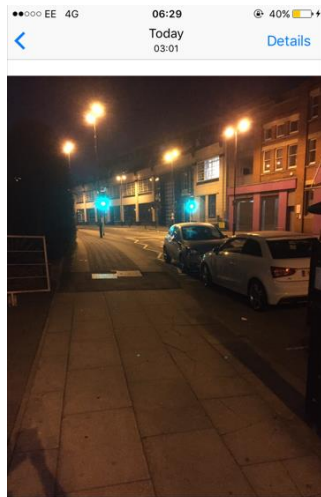
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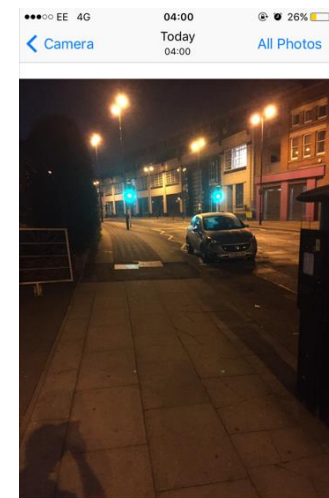
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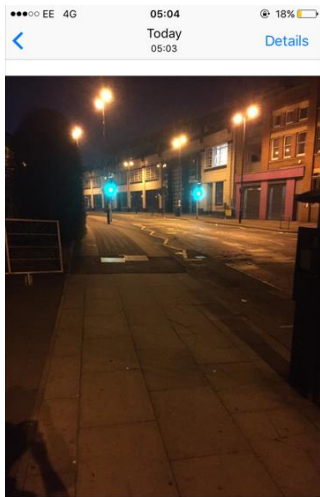
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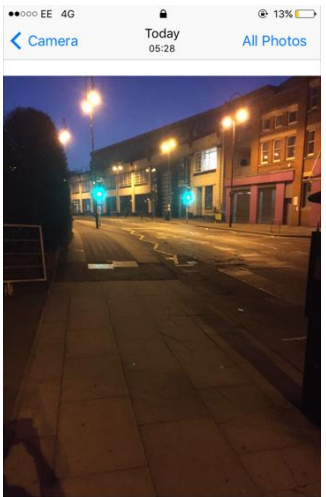
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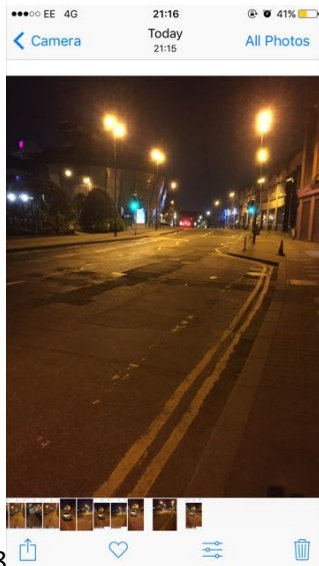
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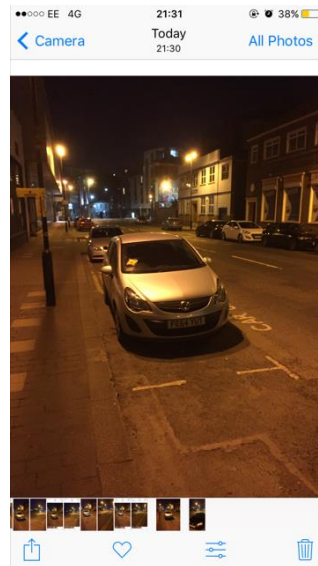
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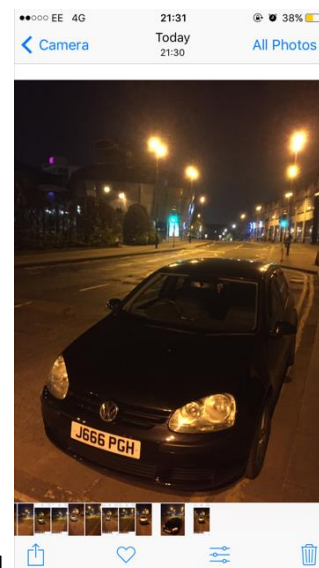
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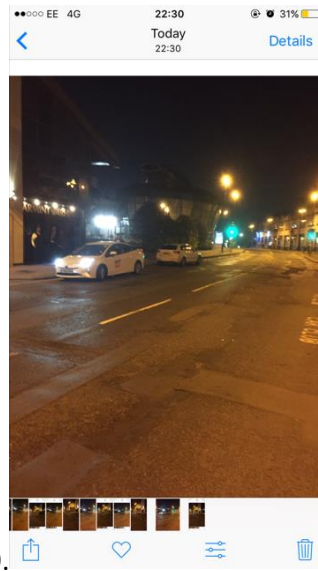
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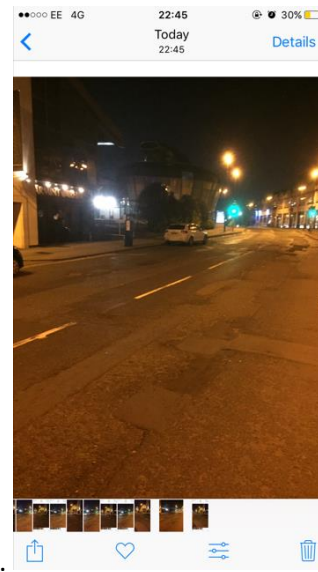
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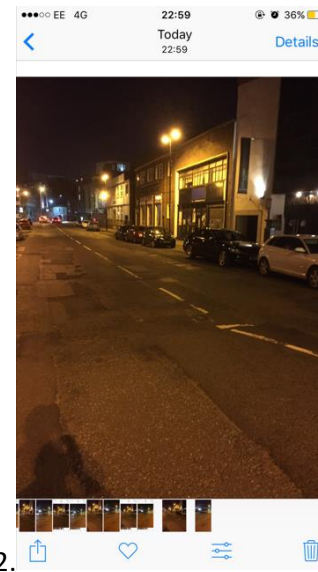
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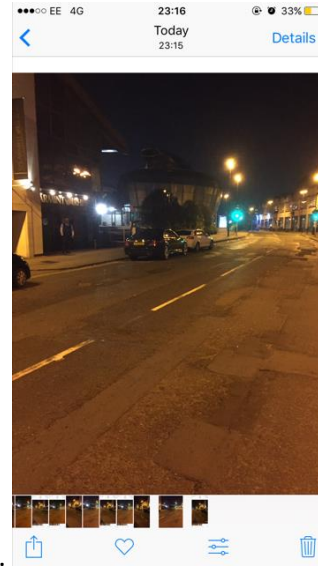
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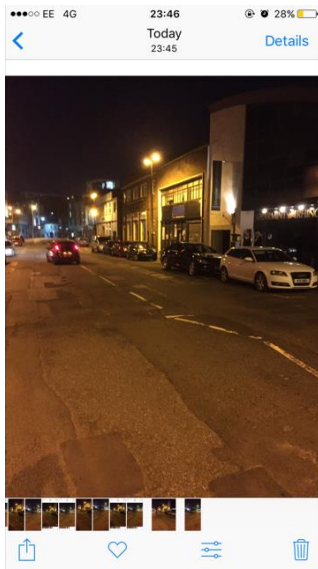
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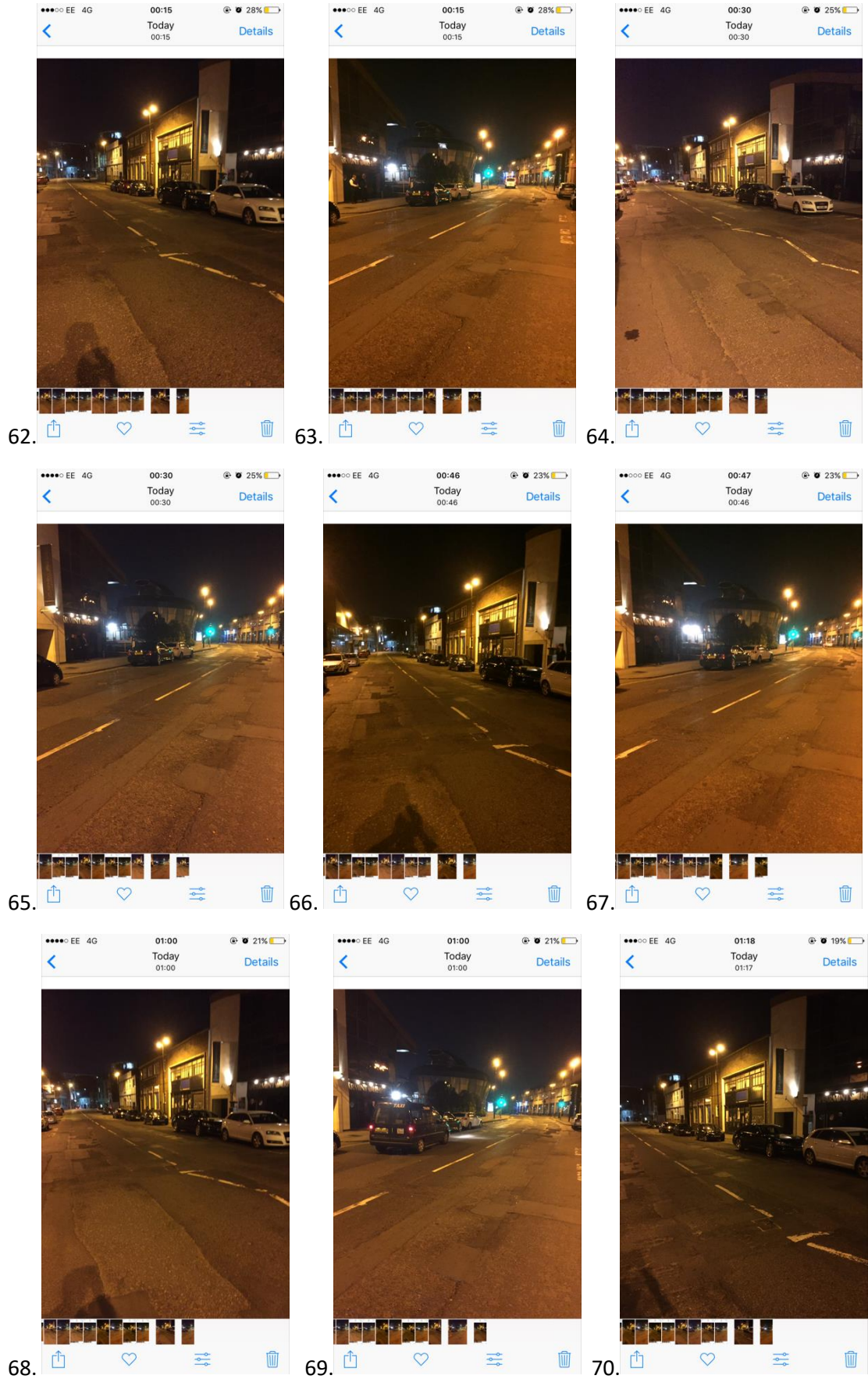
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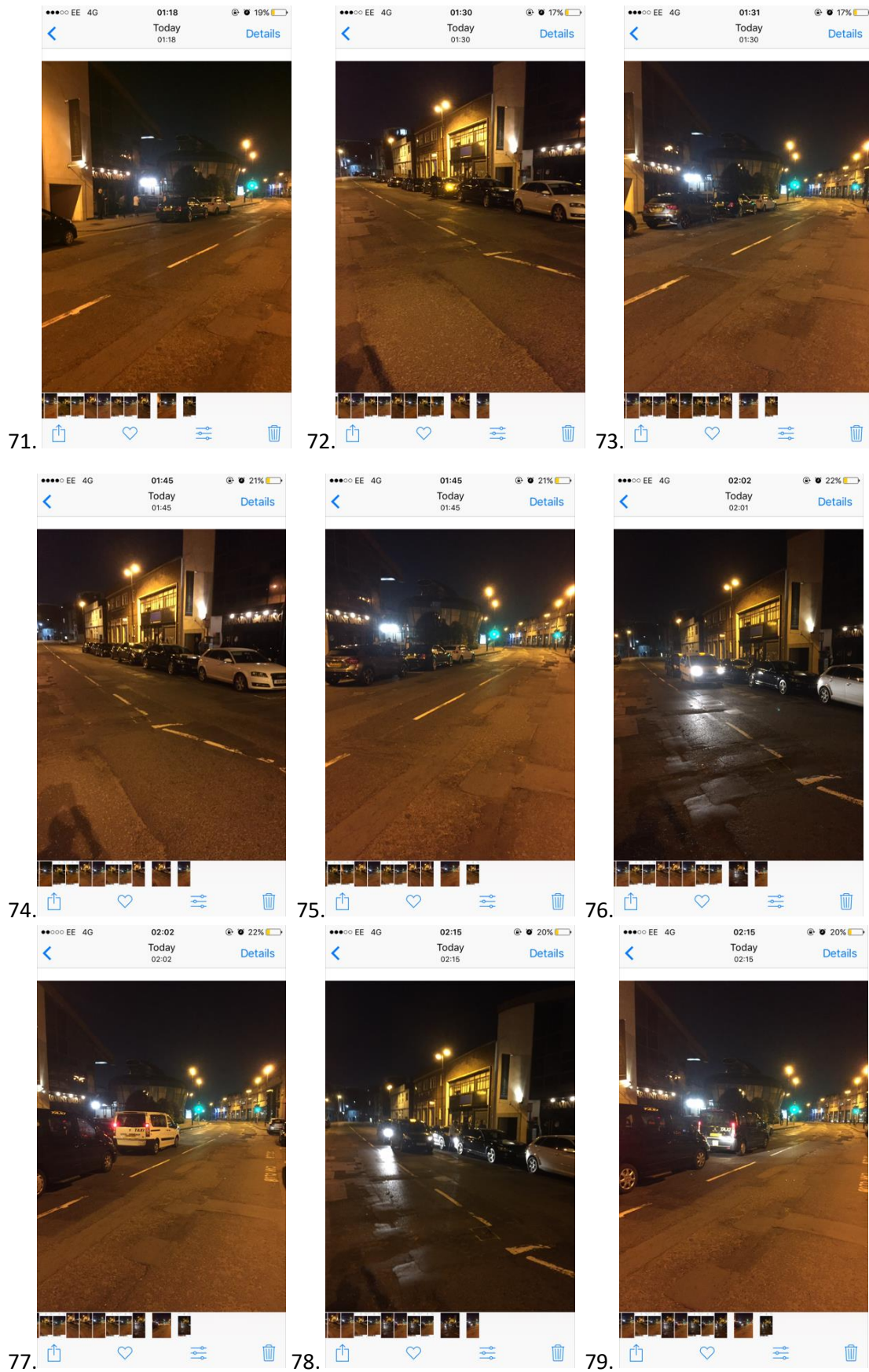
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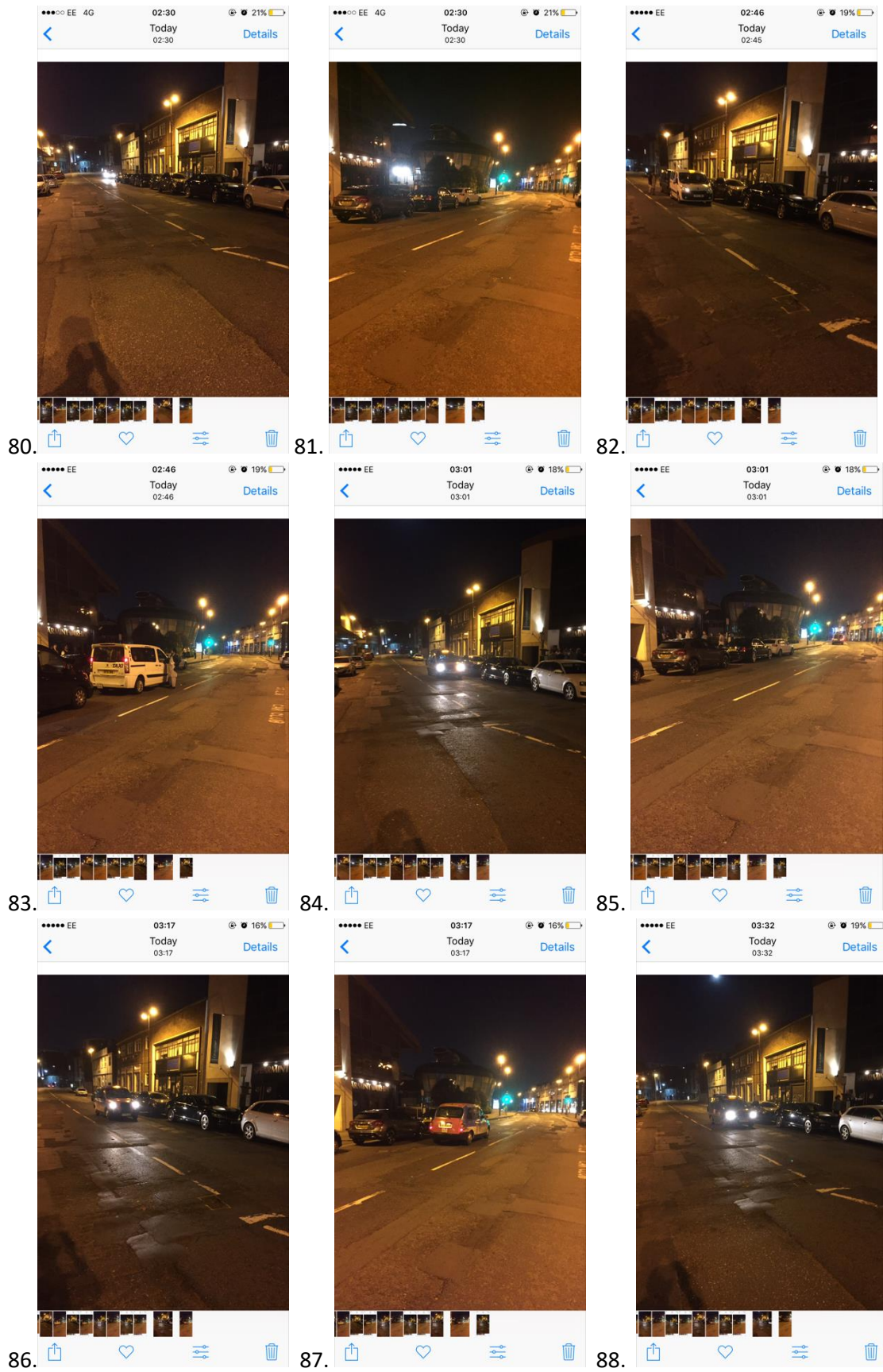


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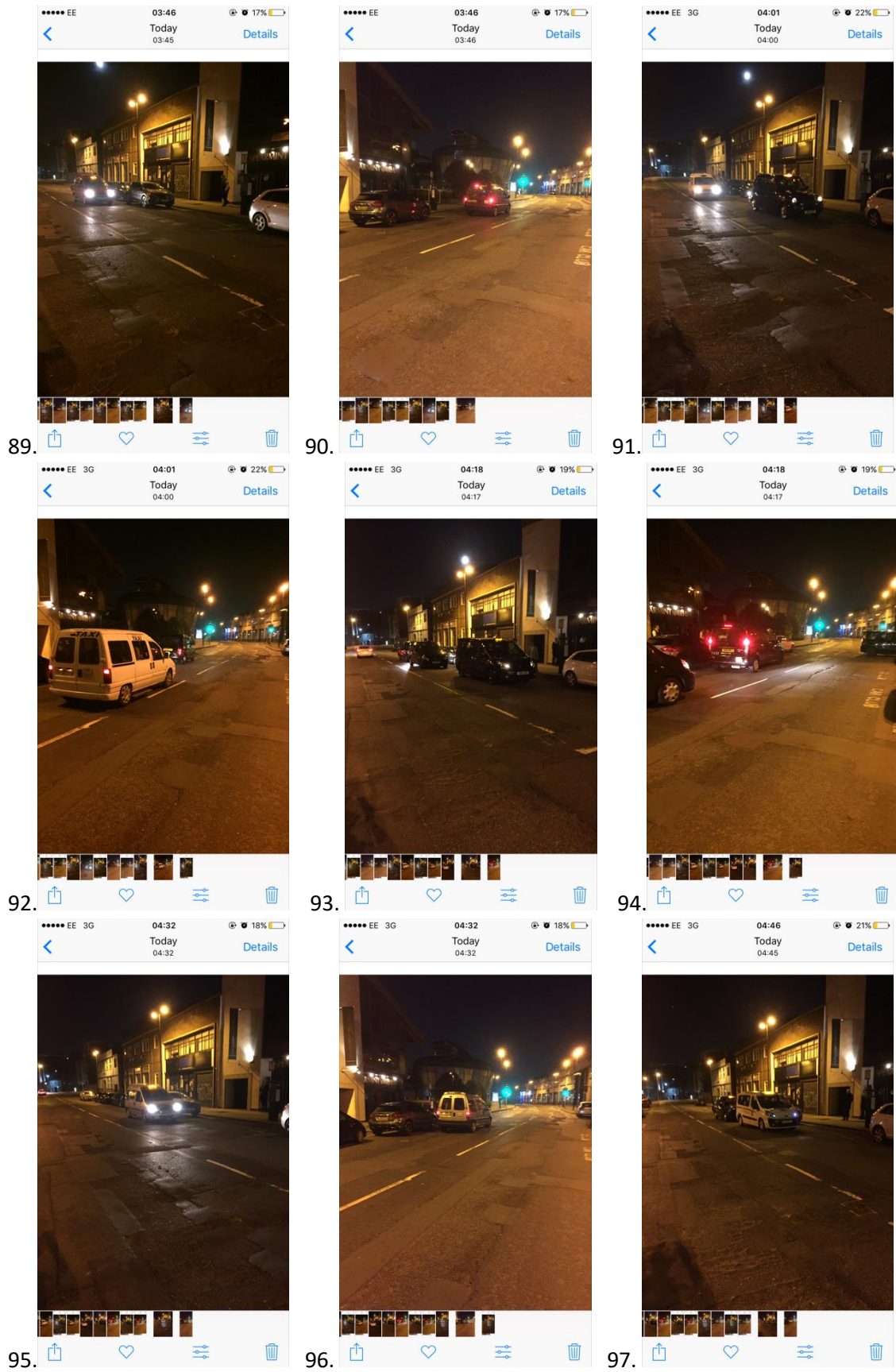




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