

0381

11/3/19

Objection to re - licensing of Spearmint Rhino, Brown Street, Sheffield -2019

Name 

Address 

Date

To: Licensing Service, Block C, Staniforth Road Depot, Staniforth Road, Sheffield S9 3HD email:
licensing@sheffield.gov.uk

Dear Madam/Sir

I am writing to object to the relicensing of Spearmint Rhino because strip and lap dancing clubs are outdated and harmful and promote inequality between women and men, which is incompatible with the Council's obligation under the Public Sector Equality Duty. Spearmint Rhino has no place in this city and its current location is particularly problematic being next to Sheffield Hallam University student's union, opposite the Site Gallery and Showroom Cinema- both used by children and families -and near Freeman College, attended by many vulnerable young people. On grounds of location listed in the council's SEV Policy the license can be declined

This council has already been subject to two judicial reviews about its failure to consider the effects on all women of licensing strip clubs. On both occasions it has lost. Strip clubs promote a message that it is acceptable to buy women's bodies for sexual gratification, thus treating women as sex objects. This at a time of greater awareness of the impact of such views on both women's sense of safety and their actual safety and no evidence that violence against women, including street harassment of women, is decreasing. Research shows that men who hold objectifying views of women are more likely to be violent to women. In licensing Spearmint Rhino Sheffield City Council gives a confusing message about its commitment to women's safety and equality.

Women have a right to employment which is safe and not exploitative nor psychologically harmful. There is information about the impact of working in such establishments, including from women who have worked in them, about sexual harassment and assault of the women performers by users and even staff and evidence suggests that this is rife.

I am also aware of information from local publicity which indicates that in a number of such establishments, including Spearmint Rhino Sheffield, there have been significant breaches of the licensing conditions which have not been picked up by the council's own inspections. This attests that regulation of an inherently unsafe and unfair working environment is impossible. In Spearmint Rhino Sheffield evidence of unlawful sexual activity is also under investigation.

Given this I can see no reason for Spearmint Rhino to retain its license. As the law permits a local authority to decide not to allow any strip and lap dancing clubs within its area, I would like the licensing hearing to refuse this license, provide support services for women who may be affected and to address this aspect of inequality between the sexes by undertaking a comprehensive overview of the links between the sex trade, female poverty and violence against women to inform future policy making.

SIGNATURE



28 MAY 2019

11:37am
0282

Objection to re - licensing of Spearmint Rhino 2019 ZERO OPTION

Name [REDACTED]

Address [REDACTED]

Date 27 MAY 2019

To Licensing Service, Sheffield

Dear Madam /Sir

I am writing to object to the relicensing of Spearmint Rhino because strip / lap clubs are outdated, harmful and promote inequality between women and men. Spearmint Rhino has no place in this city and its current location is particularly problematic.

This council has already been subject to two judicial reviews about its failure to comply with its Public Sector Equality Duty and consider the effects on all women of licensing strip clubs.

Strip clubs promote a message that is acceptable to buy women's bodies for sexual gratification thus treating women as objects. This at a time of increased awareness about the impact of such ideas on both women's sense of safety and their actual safety, and no evidence that violence against women/street harassment of women is decreasing. In licensing Spearmint Rhino SCC gives a very confusing message about its commitment to women's safety /equality.

Women have a right to employment which is safe, not exploitative nor psychologically harmful. There is information about the impact of working in such establishments, including from women who have exited. Information about sexual harassment of women in clubs by users and even staff suggests that it is rife. Working conditions for women are very different to those of male security and other staff.

I am also aware of information from local publicity/campaigns which seem to indicate that in a number of such establishments, including Spearmint Rhino Sheffield, there have been significant breaches of rules which have not been picked up by the councils own inspections. This suggests that regulation of an inherently unsafe and unfair working environment is an illusion.

In these circumstances I can see no reason for Spearmint Rhino to retain it's licence. As the law permits Councils to decides that there will be no strip and lap dancing clubs in the City, I would like the licensing hearing to refuse the licence, invest in support services for women who may be impacted and divert the cities assets more wisely.

I have / have not objected before.

Signature

[REDACTED SIGNATURE]

RECEIVED
28 MAY 2019

11:37am

0283

Objection to re - licensing of Spearmint Rhino, Brown Street, Sheffield -2019

Name [REDACTED]

Address [REDACTED]

Date 26/05/2019

To: Licensing Service, Block C, Staniforth Road Depot, Staniforth Road, Sheffield S9 3HD email: licensing@sheffield.gov.uk

Dear Madam/Sir

I am writing to object to the relicensing of Spearmint Rhino because strip and lap dancing clubs are outdated and harmful and promote inequality between women and men, which is incompatible with the Council's obligation under the Public Sector Equality Duty. Spearmint Rhino has no place in this city and its current location is particularly problematic being next to Sheffield Hallam University student's union, opposite the Site Gallery and Showroom Cinema- both used by children and families -and near Freeman College, attended by many vulnerable young people. On grounds of location listed in the council's SEV Policy the license can be declined

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I am also aware of information from local publicity which indicates that in a number of such establishments, including Spearmint Rhino Sheffield, there have been significant breaches of the licensing conditions which have not been picked up by the council's own inspections. This attests that regulation of an inherently unsafe and unfair working environment is impossible. In Spearmint Rhino Sheffield evidence of unlawful sexual activity is also under investigation.

Given this I can see no reason for Spearmint Rhino to retain its license. As the law permits a local authority to decide not to allow any strip and lap dancing clubs within its area, I would like the licensing hearing to refuse this license, provide support services for women who may be affected and to address this aspect of inequality between the sexes by undertaking a comprehensive overview of the links between the sex trade, female poverty and violence against women to inform future policy making.

SIGNATURE [REDACTED]

28 MAY 2019

11:37am

0284

Objection to re - licensing of Spearmint Rhino 2019 ZERO OPTION

Name [REDACTED]

Address [REDACTED]

Date 26/5/2019

To Licensing Service, Sheffield

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I have / ~~have not~~ objected before.

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28 MAY 2019

11:37am
0388 P1

Licensing Service
Block C, Staniforth Road Depot
Staniforth Road
Surrey Street
S9 3HD

By email to: licensing@sheffield.gov.uk

[REDACTED]

DATE

25/5/19

Dear Licensing

I refer to the application for a Sexual Entertainment Venue (SEV) licence by Spearmint Rhino, 60 Brown Street, Sheffield, S1 2BS.

This is an objection letter to the application for this licence and I call for the council to refuse it.

I believe that the Council should refuse the licence application under the Discretionary Grounds for Refusal of the current Sheffield City Council's Sexual Entertainment Venue Licensing Policy on the following grounds:

The Public Sector Equality Duty and Gender Equality

Sheffield City Council has "statutory obligations in relation to disability race and gender" (sic as the protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010 is "sex" and not "gender") ensuring that these factors are not used to discriminate against anyone. I believe that sexual entertainment venues directly discriminate against women by normalising the sexual objectification of women which contributes to their sexualisation and objectification in other areas of society. SEVs are both cause and effect of inequality between the sexes.

The Council has a fundamental and non-delegable role to give due regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED), including tackling gender inequality. This applies notwithstanding the fact that Parliament has legislated to allow the possibility for SEVs to be licensed in specific areas – subject to the choices of the local communities. Many women have voiced their concerns and fears about the presence of Spearmint Rhino in previous objections.

Philip Kolvin (2010) cites the Royal Town Planning Institute's *Gender and Spatial Planning Good Practice Note*:

"In relation to the 24-hour economy policy, ensure that the views of women are considered. Evidence shows that in certain locations, lap-dancing and exotic dancing club make women feel threatened or uncomfortable" [1]

Kolvin continues with:

"If a woman, whether objectively justified or not, fears to use part of the town centre characterised by sex establishments, this may be argued to amount to discrimination, in that her access to the public infrastructure of the town is impaired in comparison to that of men. Where relevant these considerations ought properly to be taken into account by authorities at the decision-making stage, and possibly at the policy-making stage" [2].

This is further corroborated by 2012 research published in *Criminal Justice Matters* which states that:

"... the women describe feeling frightened, disempowered, violated, embarrassed, unsafe (particularly if men are around) and avoid certain streets at night where they know there is a lap dancing club." [3]

28 MAY 2019

Not only do strip clubs appeal to a narrow sector of the community, mostly heterosexual men, they are also antithetical to fostering good relations between the sexes. In their UK study published in 2011 Sanders and Hardy [4] reported that 30% of the women performers interviewed said that as a result of doing the job they had lost respect for men; a finding echoed in many testimonies of former performers, including those who objected to last year's licence renewal where at the hearing, one former dancer stated "I was viewed and treated like a second-class citizen and not just in one club but in all, this made me hate men to an extreme level, they repulsed me." [5]

I am sure that I need not remind the the Council of its duty under the Equality Act's requirement to pay due regard to foster good relations between men and women.

Location

In its current policy, the Council states:

"Whilst the Council has not imposed a numerical limit on the number of premises that may be licensed in any area, and whilst it will treat each application upon its own merits, the Council will not licence premises that it feels are in close proximity to:-

a) a school, nursery or other premises substantially used by or for children under 16 years of age;

There are many educational establishments in the vicinity and Brown Street is also an access route to the Sheffield College Granville Road campus and UTC which provides education for children from the age of 14. It is in close proximity to Freeman College which provides education for students (16 – 25) who have a range of complex learning, mental health and behavioural needs.

The Club is also in the centre of the newly designated "Knowledge Gateway".

b) a park or other recreational area used by or for children under 16 years of age;

There is the recreational space (formerly known as Festival Square but now named as Cultural Industries Quarter Square on the map of the area which can be found on [Sheaf Square](#)) directly adjacent to the club.

d) a Hospital, Mental Incapacity or Disability Centre or similar premises;

There are a number of charities and organisations in the area which support vulnerable children and adults, many of whom will have PTSD.

f) a central gateway to the city or other city landmark, historic building or tourist attraction.

It is directly opposite the Showroom cinema, which is "one of Europe's largest independent cinemas paired with the longest-running creative business centre in the city. Housed in a converted 1930s car showroom, we're situated right next to the railway station in Sheffield's Cultural Industries Quarter." And further states that their "beautiful Art Deco environs are an ideal setting for the innovative businesses homed at the Workstation, and a perfect place for the determinedly independent and cutting edge cinema of the Showroom." The Showroom also hosts family events as well as many off the Shelf and Doc Fest events, the latter is internationally renowned.

It is also opposite the newly refurbished Site Gallery, Sheffield's international contemporary art space, specialising in moving image, new media and performance. Spearmint Rhino is not only centrally located in terms of proximity to a number of national and international events locations but it is also a direct access route, for example: Doc Fest; the children's media conference; Off the Shelf etc.

There are young students not only studying in the surrounding the area but also residing in it. The 24/7 Addsetts learning centre is in the vicinity with Brown Street and Cultural Industries Quarter Square as direct access routes from numerous student accommodation blocks. The Club is next to Sheffield Hallam Students Union (an iconic and a city landmark building) and backs directly onto student accommodation. Recent revelations about breaches within the club also make its location within the student community highly inappropriate.

Further grounds for refusal

The Council is asked to note that in the last few years Leeds City Council successfully defended a refusal to renew two SEV licenses at judicial review:

R (Bean Trading A Ltd) v Leeds City Council (2014)

It was held that a council can “take a fresh look” despite no changes to the character of locality. The Council is also asked to note the following from Philip Kolvin regarding licence renewal:

“Given that there is potential for the discretion to be exercised afresh, the renewal should not just be a rubber stamping exercise, but an opportunity, if needed, to review the principle and content of the license.”[6]

The case of *Thompson v Oxford City Council (2014)* was also supported at court of appeal, and the Council told they could “take a fresh look” at any application for renewal.

When Philip Kolvin represented residents objecting to the renewal of the strip club in Chester in 2015, it is reported that:

“Their representative Philip Kolvin QC told the meeting that 2009 legislation meant communities now had more say in where such sexual entertainment venues should be located. What Mr Grant had dubbed an ‘extraordinary campaign’, he called ‘the working of democracy’.”

It is further reported:

“But Mr Kolvin pointed out that this year’s committee was entitled to come to an opposite conclusion to last year’s committee even where nothing had changed: ‘The courts have said that you can respond to a body of feeling in the locality, merely the fact that a number of people are concerned about this justifies refusal.’” (emphasis added) [7]

Please note that the licence renewal was refused. As such, the Council is fully empowered to refuse the licence, particularly in view of the widespread breaches to conditions, recently reported in the local and national press and presented to the Council in April this year.

I look forward to hearing from you.



References

- [1] Kolvin, P (2010) *Sex Licensing*, The Institute of Licensing p.87
- [2] Patiniotis, J. & Standing, K. (2012) ‘License to cause harm? Sex entertainment venues and women’s sense of safety in inner city centres’ in *Criminal Justice Matters*, 88:1, 10-12.
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- [5] Sheffield Telegraph: ‘Why we want Sheffield to be a strip-club-free city’ April 5th 2019
<https://www.sheffieldtelegraph.co.uk/news/why-we-want-sheffield-to-be-a-strip-club-free-city-1-9695166>
- [6] Kolvin, P op cit. p. 90
- [7] Chester Live: ‘Chester Platinum Lounge lap dancing club waits for licensing decision’ July 18th 2015
<https://www.cheshire-live.co.uk/news/chester-cheshire-news/chester-platinum-lounge-lap-dancing-9610810>

0386 P1 11:37am

[REDACTED]

Licensing Service
Block C, Staniforth Road Depot
Staniforth Road
Surrey Street
S9 3HD

By email to: licensing@sheffield.gov.uk

DATE 25.5.19.

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The Council has a fundamental and non-delegable role to give due regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED), including tackling gender inequality. This applies notwithstanding the fact that Parliament has legislated to allow the possibility for SEVs to be licensed in specific areas – subject to the choices of the local communities. Many women have voiced their concerns and fears about the presence of Spearmint Rhino in previous objections.

Philip Kolvin (2010) cites the Royal Town Planning Institute's *Gender and Spatial Planning Good Practice Note*:

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Kolvin continues with:

"If a woman, whether objectively justified or not, fears to use part of the town centre characterised by sex establishments, this may be argued to amount to discrimination, in that her access to the public infrastructure of the town is impaired in comparison to that of men. Where relevant these considerations ought properly to be taken into account by authorities at the decision-making stage, and possibly at the policy-making stage" [2].

This is further corroborated by 2012 research published in *Criminal Justice Matters* which states that:

"... the women describe feeling frightened, disempowered, violated, embarrassed, unsafe (particularly if men are around) and avoid certain streets at night where they know there is a lap dancing club." [3]

Not only do strip clubs appeal to a narrow sector of the community, mostly heterosexual men, they are also antithetical to fostering good relations between the sexes. In their UK study published in 2011 Sanders and Hardy [4] reported that 30% of the women performers interviewed said that as a result of doing the job they had lost respect for men; a finding echoed in many testimonies of former performers, including those who objected to last year's licence renewal where at the hearing, one former dancer stated "I was viewed and treated like a second-class citizen and not just in one club but in all, this made me hate men to an extreme level, they repulsed me." [5]

I am sure that I need not remind the the Council of its duty under the Equality Act's requirement to pay due regard to foster good relations between men and women.

Location

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a) a school, nursery or other premises substantially used by or for children under 16 years of age;

There are many educational establishments in the vicinity and Brown Street is also an access route to the Sheffield College Granville Road campus and UTC which provides education for children from the age of 14. It is in close proximity to Freeman College which provides education for students (16 – 25) who have a range of complex learning, mental health and behavioural needs.

The Club is also in the centre of the newly designated "Knowledge Gateway".

b) a park or other recreational area used by or for children under 16 years of age;

There is the recreational space (formerly known as Festival Square but now named as Cultural Industries Quarter Square on the map of the area which can be found on [Sheaf Square](#)) directly adjacent to the club.

d) a Hospital, Mental Incapacity or Disability Centre or similar premises;

There are a number of charities and organisations in the area which support vulnerable children and adults, many of whom will have PTSD.

f) a central gateway to the city or other city landmark, historic building or tourist attraction.

It is directly opposite the Showroom cinema, which is "one of Europe's largest independent cinemas paired with the longest-running creative business centre in the city. Housed in a converted 1930s car showroom, we're situated right next to the railway station in Sheffield's Cultural Industries Quarter." And further states that their "beautiful Art Deco environs are an ideal setting for the innovative businesses homed at the Workstation, and a perfect place for the determinedly independent and cutting edge cinema of the Showroom." The Showroom also hosts family events as well as many off the Shelf and Doc Fest events, the latter is internationally renowned.

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Further grounds for refusal

The Council is asked to note that in the last few years Leeds City Council successfully defended a refusal to renew two SEV licenses at judicial review:

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0387 P1 11:11am

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Please note that the licence renewal was refused. As such, the Council is fully empowered to refuse the licence, particularly in view of the widespread breaches to conditions, recently reported in the local and national press and presented to the Council in April this year.

I look forward to hearing from you.

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0355 P1

11:07am



Licensing Service
Block C, Staniforth Road Depot
Staniforth Road
Surrey Street
S9 3HD

By email to: licensing@sheffield.gov.uk

DATE 25/5/18

Dear Licensing

I refer to the application for a Sexual Entertainment Venue (SEV) licence by Spearmint Rhino, 60 Brown Street, Sheffield, S1 2BS.

This is an objection letter to the application for this licence and I call for the council to refuse it.

I believe that the Council should refuse the licence application under the Discretionary Grounds for Refusal of the current Sheffield City Council's Sexual Entertainment Venue Licensing Policy on the following grounds:

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Sheffield City Council has "statutory obligations in relation to disability race and gender" (sic as the protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010 is "sex" and not "gender") ensuring that these factors are not used to discriminate against anyone. I believe that sexual entertainment venues directly discriminate against women by normalising the sexual objectification of women which contributes to their sexualisation and objectification in other areas of society. SEVs are both cause and effect of inequality between the sexes.

The Council has a fundamental and non-delegable role to give due regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED), including tackling gender inequality. This applies notwithstanding the fact that Parliament has legislated to allow the possibility for SEVs to be licensed in specific areas – subject to the choices of the local communities. Many women have voiced their concerns and fears about the presence of Spearmint Rhino in previous objections.

Philip Kolvin (2010) cites the Royal Town Planning Institute's *Gender and Spatial Planning Good Practice Note*:

"In relation to the 24-hour economy policy, ensure that the views of women are considered. Evidence shows that in certain locations, lap-dancing and exotic dancing club make women feel threatened or uncomfortable" [1]

Kolvin continues with:

"If a woman, whether objectively justified or not, fears to use part of the town centre characterised by sex establishments, this may be argued to amount to discrimination, in that her access to the public infrastructure of the town is impaired in comparison to that of men. Where relevant these considerations ought properly to be taken into account by authorities at the decision-making stage, and possibly at the policy-making stage" [2].

This is further corroborated by 2012 research published in *Criminal Justice Matters* which states that:

"... the women describe feeling frightened, disempowered, violated, embarrassed, unsafe (particularly if men are around) and avoid certain streets at night where they know there is a lap dancing club." [3]

Not only do strip clubs appeal to a narrow sector of the community, mostly heterosexual men, they are also antithetical to fostering good relations between the sexes. In their UK study published in 2011 Sanders and Hardy [4] reported that 30% of the women performers interviewed said that as a result of doing the job they had lost respect for men; a finding echoed in many testimonies of former performers, including those who objected to last year's licence renewal where at the hearing, one former dancer stated "I was viewed and treated like a second-class citizen and not just in one club but in all, this made me hate men to an extreme level, they repulsed me." [5]

I am sure that I need not remind the the Council of its duty under the Equality Act's requirement to pay due regard to foster good relations between men and women.

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In its current policy, the Council states:

"Whilst the Council has not imposed a numerical limit on the number of premises that may be licensed in any area, and whilst it will treat each application upon its own merits, the Council will not licence premises that it feels are in close proximity to:-

a) a school, nursery or other premises substantially used by or for children under 16 years of age;

There are many educational establishments in the vicinity and Brown Street is also an access route to the Sheffield College Granville Road campus and UTC which provides education for children from the age of 14. It is in close proximity to Freeman College which provides education for students (16 – 25) who have a range of complex learning, mental health and behavioural needs.

The Club is also in the centre of the newly designated "Knowledge Gateway".

b) a park or other recreational area used by or for children under 16 years of age;

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There are a number of charities and organisations in the area which support vulnerable children and adults, many of whom will have PTSD.

f) a central gateway to the city or other city landmark, historic building or tourist attraction.

It is directly opposite the Showroom cinema, which is "one of Europe's largest independent cinemas paired with the longest-running creative business centre in the city. Housed in a converted 1930s car showroom, we're situated right next to the railway station in Sheffield's Cultural Industries Quarter." And further states that their "beautiful Art Deco environs are an ideal setting for the innovative businesses homed at the Workstation, and a perfect place for the determinedly independent and cutting edge cinema of the Showroom." The Showroom also hosts family events as well as many off the Shelf and Doc Fest events, the latter is internationally renowned.

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There are young students not only studying in the surrounding the area but also residing in it. The 24/7 Addsetts learning centre is in the vicinity with Brown Street and Cultural Industries Quarter Square as direct access routes from numerous student accommodation blocks. The Club is next to Sheffield Hallam Students Union (an iconic and a city landmark building) and backs directly onto student accommodation. Recent revelations about breaches within the club also make its location within the student community highly inappropriate.

Further grounds for refusal

The Council is asked to note that in the last few years Leeds City Council successfully defended a refusal to renew two SEV licenses at judicial review:

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It was held that a council can “take a fresh look” despite no changes to the character of locality. The Council is also asked to note the following from Philip Kolvin regarding licence renewal:

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Licensing Service
 Block C, Staniforth Road Depot
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 S9 3HD

By email to: licensing@sheffield.gov.uk

DATE

25th May 2019

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Licensing Service
Block C, Staniforth Road Depot
Staniforth Road
Surrey Street
S9 3HD

By email to: licensing@sheffield.gov.uk

25/05/19

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The Prevention of Public Nuisance

I worked at Spearmint Rhino, Sheffield as a dancer as well as other clubs in the UK. I was touched, grabbed and assaulted – both physically and sexually - on a regular basis. The response of management was always that it was my job and I should expect it. This is despite the customers being told on arrival and throughout the club that there is a ‘no touching rule’. Management prevented us from ever reporting this to the police because it would go against the club’s licensing renewal. Because of this, it became the ‘norm’.

When I worked at Spearmint Rhino, Sheffield the atmosphere was very tense. The girls were not friendly, in fact they were very ‘bitchy’. There was a lot of ‘dirty dancing’ – in fact the entire Spearmint Rhino chain is well known for this throughout the industry. The girls often gave out their telephone numbers and met with customers. The management is very seedy and pervy with the dancers. Other dancers have also confirmed this in reviews and to me directly.

They were extortionate numbers of lap dancers on each night which makes it harder for each performer to make money. But this ensures a good income for the club, as each girl has to pay a house fee and a percentage back of whatever she earns. If you wanted to work during the more profitable weekend you had to work during the quiet week nights. There were also student nights, which meant we had to do free dances for students.

The club, like most others, takes a house fee from dancers (they have to pay for the privilege of working in the club) AND a commission from them (ie a portion of whatever they then earn). Manager, Mick Goodwin stated at last year’s hearing that men are ‘only allowed to spend a certain amount on dances’. This means the dancers are limited to earning a set amount each night. This is just one of the ways that lap dancers with no employment rights are taken advantage of by management and owners financially.

At last years’ hearing it was stated that dancers would deliberately get men drunk as a way to get much more money off them. This has been confirmed by a dancer currently working at Spearmint Rhino during a visit by independent investigators. It has also been reiterated by male customers leaving reviews about the club on social media. I would like to point out that it is an offence under s 141 Licensing Act 2003 to sell or attempts to sell alcohol to a person who is drunk, or allows alcohol to be sold to such a person. To get a person drunk and take their money is financial exploitation and also a criminal offence. A person intoxicated cannot consent. My understanding is that the Spearmint Rhino chain has had court cases taken against it and paid out cash settlements for exploiting customers financially whilst drunk.

I have also gone to Spearmint Rhino as a customer. When I went outside for a cigarette, I became surrounded by a male customers, who were very abusive towards me because they thought I was one of the dancers. They called me a slag and whore and told me my children will hate me and be ashamed of me. This gives you a clear picture of what the men who visit strip clubs think of the women there. It was so bad my friend had to escort me to a taxi to ensure I wasn’t actually attacked. Unfortunately, this happens all the time for dancers and is one reason why some use a stage name and a different exit to enter and exit the premises. I believe this would come under the licensing objective ‘prevention of public nuisance’.

There is a lot of criminal activity in strip clubs - drugs, drug dealing, prostitution, fraud, money laundering and trafficking. Some of this is going on in Spearmint Rhino, Sheffield. A man that was selling drugs there has recently contacted me after seeing the campaign on social media to confirm he was selling drugs there and that the door staff were aware of this. I

am willing to give his name and contact details to South Yorkshire Police and the council. He was also exploiting women from this club and others to commit crimes. He tried doing this to me unsuccessfully, however he exploited many other women - one was even jailed because of it.

As a dancer, I was often not paid my wages. This happened at Spearmint Rhino, Leicester with a house mum, 'Porcha' and the manager. I and other dancers were told CCTV would be deleted to make it look like we were never even on the premises. We were told we would lose our jobs if we told anyone when I threatened them with legal action. The regional manager met with us to ensure we'd handed over our money tokens. He sided with 'Porcha' and the manager. We didn't receive our wages. The regional manager is still working for Spearmint Rhino and was at last year's Sheffield hearing, I recognised him and I believe his name is Andy Foster.

Clearly there are serious issues with the Spearmint Rhino chain and these go a lot further than just the Sheffield branch.

Last year's hearing showed there have been issues over a long period of time at Spearmint Rhino Sheffield, as 3 dancers gave testimonies against the club. All 3 had worked there during different time frames.

Last year, several dancers who had worked at Spearmint Rhino, including myself, spoke out about the club and objected to it being relicensed. For doing this, we have received abuse from some staff, their partners and friends. We have been called liars and insulted. Emily Brown, the new assistant manager has even publicly called us 'old hags. This is just highly unprofessional.

I would like to express how difficult it has been for myself and other dancers both former and current to speak out against Spearmint Rhino and what we have experienced both in the club and throughout our lives. To be treated in the way we have is disgusting and appalling. We have disclosed how we got into the industry and how we have been mentally, sexually and physically abused in our lives. We spoke of being raped and how we have been exploited for crime in this and other clubs.

At last year's hearing, Spearmint Rhino management claimed I had never worked in the Sheffield club. They claimed they had checked all their records and I was not on them. I can prove - and have testimony from other staff to prove - I worked there. Besides, Spearmint Rhino staff have always sworn to the council that there 'is no sexual contact'. There is now hard evidence to show they are lying about this. There isn't just sexual contact, there is sexual contact to an extreme degree. If they have the audacity to lie about this, how can you possibly believe anything else they tell you?

I would like to also assert that Spearmint Rhino must be committing fraud as they clearly have not declared the house fees and commissions they took from me. How could they have declared my earnings if I am not on their records? I would like to know whose back pocket it has gone into?

I have seen firsthand from working at the club, from last year's hearings at the town hall and on social media how the staff have conducted themselves and it is extremely unprofessional and intimidating. I am in contact with other Rhino dancers who will not speak out because of

this. It has also been alleged that one of the managers has pressured female staff to have sex with him in order to keep their job. I have reported this as a third party to South Yorkshire Police and been told a complaint has to come directly from the complainants – who of course are too scared to speak out.

There have been multiple breaches of both the licensing policy and the law by Spearmint Rhino and its staff and this is proven not only from the testimony of former dancers, including myself, but by the evidence from independent investigators that the council now has.

They think they can break Licensing policy and laws and then claim “its women’s body, their choice” or try to turn this into an issue of “Its revenge porn”. Just because a person is taking their clothes off for a living does not mean they should not abide by policies and laws and go unpunished for doing so - unless of course that person is being forced to commit such an offence. Otherwise they should be held to account just like anyone else in the UK.

At last year’s hearing a dancer, management, door staff all lied in person to the council stating there was no sexual contact or other breaches of licenses or the law. Numerous other lap dancers and staff also signed statements to the same effect. It has now been proven this is not true. I hope you make the right decision and close down the club and support the girls out if it’s needed?.

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