

In 2010, new laws meant local councils could license strip clubs/lap dancing clubs as sexual entertainment venues (SEVs) rather than leisure venue (like a café or bar).

This is a compilation of illegal activities associated with strip clubs since the new licensing came into place (from 2011).

This is based simply on Google searches of press reports. As such, it is far from an exhaustive list.

This is a dynamic document that will be regularly updated.

If you have relevant information, we'd love to hear from you!

Please contact us at no@notbuyingit.org.uk

And, of course, please feel free to use the contents of this document and share widely.

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Summary - Illegal Activities since 2011

This summarises press reports of serious illegal activity in strip clubs since new licensing came into effect in 2011. Some of these clubs were forced to close as a result. Shockingly, despite serious (and sometimes repeated) incidents, Councils also allowed many to remain open. Why?

Club	Location	Date of Incident
Various	Various London	2018
The Windmill	Westminster	2018
LA Confidential	Ealing	2018
Erotocats	Cheltenham	2018
Fantasy Nightclub	Cheltenham	2018
Bing	Bromwich	2017
Hanley's	Staffordshire	2017
Jack of Diamonds [formally Temptatons]	Bristol	2017
Temptations	Bristol	2013
Legs 11	Birmingham	2017
Bentley's	Doncaster	2017
Diamond Dolls	Glasgow	2017
Flirtz	Skegness	2017
Angels	Leicester	2016
Platinum's	Stoke	2017
Silks	Manchester	2017
Cleopatra's Lounge	Huddersfield	2016
Villa Mercedes	Harrogate	2015
X in the City	Liverpool	2015
Charlie Brown's	The City of London	2012
Red Velvet	Durham	2013
Spearmint Rhino	Bournemouth	2014
Spearmint Rhino [All Chains]	Bournemouth	2003
Wiggle	Bournemouth	2013
Halos	Newquay	2011
Divas	Newquay	n/a

Notes

IN RED: These are Clubs in councils given a 'Gold Standard' award for the high standards of their strip club policies by a leading researcher and advocate for the industry:
<http://www.notbuyingit.org.uk/sites/default/files/Teela%20Sanders%20Gold%20Standards.pdf>

It is noteworthy that an argument frequently used by advocates of the industry is **“these are not ‘cowboy’ clubs, if anything untoward was going on surely we would have heard of it by now”**. In fact these are the very words of Philip Kolvin, QC, legal representative for Spearmint Rhino Sheffield at its licensing renewal in 2018. However, the number of serious incidents puts paid to that assumption, not least at the club chain he was representing.

These are just press reports we have retrieved. There is no doubt **this is just the tip of the iceberg** as we have not located all reports and the press will only report on a small fraction of incidences, most of which club management will ensure are never exposed. This blog gives some insight into this: <https://sevlicensing.wordpress.com/2013/11/>

Just a quick Google search of press reports exposes the sheer scale of sexual harassment (including possible prostitution and trafficking) alongside other criminal activities (including organised crime) that is synonymous with strip clubs. This is despite tighter regulation introduced when lap dancing became licensed as part of the sex industry rather than as leisure venues like a bar or cafe (around 2011). This report represents just the tip of the iceberg, merely representing easily accessible press reports.

Touching, Sexual Harassment, Prostitution, Trafficking:

London, Widespread 2018

Undercover journalist reveals widespread alcohol and drug abuse, sex acts, harassment and assaults (groping, biting) and intimidation of lap dancers in numerous London clubs all with management complicit:

<https://londonist.com/london/features/this-is-what-it-s-like-being-a-lap-dancer-in-london>

Westminster, The Windmill 2018

A Private Investigator found widespread rule breaching including touching and offers of sex which was confirmed by CCTV footage. The club still appears to be in operation. Westminster has a staggering 12 strip clubs and 25 sex venues in total:

<https://www.standard.co.uk/news/london/historic-soho-lapdancing-club-the-windmill-theatre-faces-closure-after-sting-finds-performers-flout-a3736546.html>

Ealing, LA Confidential 2018

Shut after undercover trading standards reveal performers touching punters and offering sex, in CCTV 'blind spots', with bribed security 'turning a blind eye'. Investigated after tip off from former dancer of poor conditions in clubs, including performers receiving fines of up to £300:

<https://www.ftbchambers.co.uk/news/ealing's-la-confidential-loses-its-sev-licence>

<https://metro.co.uk/2018/06/23/strip-club-shut-dancers-caught-offering-spend-night-clients-extra-cash-7653652/>

Eroticats, Cheltenham 2018

This is a totally unregulated yet legal 'pop up' strip club. This takes advantage of a loophole written into legislation which allows 'occasional' stripping without the need for a license. This has turned quiet towns like Cheltenham into 'walk through brothels' during race week.

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/cheltenham-festival-hosts-royalty-by-day-galloping-sexism-by-night-v7lsmh13h>

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-5507183/Church-leads-protests-pop-strip-clubs-Cheltenham.html>

Fantasy Nightclub, Cheltenham 2018

License revoked amidst fears of 'aroused men being let loose in the streets' and the potential for dancers being 'touched, manhandled and abused' during Cheltenham race week.

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-5507183/Church-leads-protests-pop-strip-clubs-Cheltenham.html>

Bing, West Bromwich 2017

Shut down after a brawl led to GBH. Police also expressed grave concerns about prostitution, the use of possibly under age Romanian girls and the possibility that they may have been trafficked: <https://www.expressandstar.com/news/crime/2017/06/21/strip-club-has-sexual-entertainment-licence-revoked/>

Hanley, Stoke-on-Trent 2017

Shut down after years of concerns over inappropriate touching, offers of prostitution, drugs and drink spiking <http://www.signal1.co.uk/news/local/hanley-lap-dancing-club-closed-down/>

Jack of Diamonds [formerly Temptations], Bristol 2017

Closed for inappropriate touching: <http://www.bristolpost.co.uk/news/bristol-news/bristol-strip-club-closed-down-34716>

Temptations, Bristol 2013

Extensive and repeated Sexual Contact in private booths. Club fined and allowed to continue operating: <http://www.southwestbusiness.co.uk/news/22082013102851-bristol-club-t3-temptations-is-fined-after-its-lap-dancers-go-too-far/>

Legs 11, Birmingham 2017

License suspended for trafficking: <http://www.birminghammail.co.uk/news/city-lap-dance-club-licence-13282405>

Sexual contact observed and under cover trading officers offered 'sexual services' in VIP rooms: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2017/07/27/lap-dancing-club-spiked-customers-drinks-overcharged-dances/>

Both Legs 11 venues closed after slavery raid & Councillors viewing of CCTV footage: <https://www.birminghammail.co.uk/news/midlands-news/two-birmingham-legs-11-venues-13343302>

Angels, Leicester 2016

Fondling and touching viewed on CCTV. Several dancers undocumented and suspected of being underage <http://www.leicestermercury.co.uk/news/leicester-news/strippers-fondled-sexually-touched-punters-184059>

Villa Mercedes, Harrogate 2015

Shut down after repeated breach of licensing conditions including physical contact with dancers and 'audience participation'. (Appeal by operator to licensing refusal was withdrawn): <http://www.harrogate-news.co.uk/2015/11/18/refusal-to-renew-sexual-entertainment-licence-stands-as-appeal-withdrawn-for-villa-mercedes/>

Yet in 2016, Sheffield City Council still came close to granting a branch of this club a license which advertised 'VIP' packages for 'the death of your mother in law' or 'when your girlfriend's in on that time of month': <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-south-yorkshire-37319470>

Spearmint Rhino, Bournemouth 2014

Performers routinely straddling and touching customers and other dancers and simulating sex acts. Club remains open to this day with 'additional licensing conditions' in place.

http://www.suttonguardian.co.uk/news/11471476.Lap_dancing_club_investigated_after_dancers_all_egedly_breach_no_touch_rules/

Wiggle, Bournemouth 2013

Sexual contact including dancers straddling punters, touching of customers and 'sexual stimulation'. Despite objections from local residents, the police and the Council's own licensing department the club remained open after representation by Philip Kolvin, QC

http://www.bournemouthcho.co.uk/news/10786993.Lap_dancing_club_could_lose_licence_after_staff_get_too_close_to_customers/

<https://sevlicensing.wordpress.com/2013/11/06/bournemouth-wiggle-club-faces-opposition-at-sev-renewal/>

Licensing Board Agenda at which Licensing Committee are asked to consider whether license holder is 'fit': <https://sevlicensing.files.wordpress.com/2013/11/agendaandreportspackage-7november2013.pdf>

Halos, Newquay 2011

Closed after 3 foot rule consistently breached as witnessed on CCTV :

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-cornwall-15378800>

Divas, Newquay

Similarly closed: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-cornwall-15378800>

Cornwall, Police Chief 2012

Police Inspector stresses link with strip clubs and local sex assaults and rape because of the *attitudes* promoted by the industry: <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/law-and-order/9284609/Lapdancing-clubs-encourage-rape-and-sexual-assaults-claims-police-chief.html>

A view shared by the general public:



The City of London, Charlie Brown's 2012

Closed for offering 'intimate and illegal sexual activity' and breaching the 'frequency exemption rule' (this bizarrely allows for limited number of lap dancing events without any license whatsoever:

<https://www.standard.co.uk/news/london/intimate-and-illegal-sexual-activity-sees-charlies-bar-the-citys-only-lap-dancing-club-shut-8009400.html>

Attacks On or Related to Performers:

Bentley's, Doncaster 2017

Performer assaulted outside after refusing sex with punter:

<http://www.thestar.co.uk/news/punter-attacks-stripper-outside-south-yorkshire-strip-club-after-she-refused-to-sleep-with-him-1-8508457/amp>

Diamonds Dolls, Glasgow 2017

License suspended immediately when a half dressed, drunk and unconscious dancer was dragged out of the club by management and dumped onto the street (performer in question refused to speak to police, presumably out of fear of retaliation by management):

http://www.ardrossanherald.com/news/15023857.Glasgow_kingpin_s_lap_dancing_club_shut_after_girl_dumped_on_street/

Cleopatra's Lounge, Huddersfield 2016

Man smashes club window when dancer refuses to 'meet up' with him outside of the club:

<http://www.examiner.co.uk/news/west-yorkshire-news/man-smashed-lap-dance-club-11379793>

X in The City, Liverpool 2015

Punter attacks lap dancer and steals her purse after she refused to give oral sex in a private booth. Punter: "I said 'are you going to suck my **** upstairs?' and she said 'yes'. Obviously that was the whole purpose":

<http://www.liverpoolecho.co.uk/news/liverpool-news/thug-attacked-liverpool-stripper-stole-9259574>

Other Criminal Activities:

Legs 11, Birmingham 2018

In addition to prostitution and trafficking, punters claim to have been served while intoxicated (a breach of the club's alcohol license) and having their drinks spiked:

https://www.vice.com/en_uk/article/bj5m8a/the-strip-club-accused-of-drugging-and-robbing-its-customers

Flirtz, Skegness 2017

Drugs: <http://www.lincolnshirelive.co.uk/news/local-news/cocaine-regularly-being-taken-lap-351921>

Platinum's, Stoke 2017

Loses its license: 'Exploitation' of punters, including violence and drink spiking:

<https://www.ftbchambers.co.uk/news/stoke's-last-lap-dancing-club-loses-its-licences>

<http://www.signal1.co.uk/news/local/hanley-lap-dancing-club-closed-down/>

Silks, Manchester 2017

Several incidences of brawls and violent behavior:

<http://www.manchestereveningnews.co.uk/news/greater-manchester-news/silks-lap-dance-club-manchester-12877276>

Spearmint Rhino, Bournemouth 2014

Drunken customers exploited. It is illegal to sell alcohol to anyone inebriated. But the business model of strip clubs *is* to ensure customers are so drunk they will spend large sums of money:

<https://www.unlockthelaw.co.uk/News/man-claims-to-have-been-exploited-by-strip-club.html>

Red Velvet, Durham 2013

Surrenders strip club license after a drugs raid exposes Class A drugs on premises:

http://www.thenorthernecho.co.uk/news/10175030.Strip_club_surrenders_its_sex_entertainment_license/

Earlier Incidences

'Rule breaking', harassment and abuse is hardly a new phenomenon at strip clubs. It was wide spread before new legislation came into effect in and around 2011. Notorious strip chain, Spearmint Rhino being a prime example of this.

Spearmint Rhino 2003

Under cover officers found touching and offers of sex in private rooms at club throughout the Spearmint Rhino Chain. All branches continue to operate to this day:

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/lap-dancing-club-offered-sex-to-undercover-police-dthnb5xhm7d>

Technical Notes

Right to CCTV Footage

It is important to note that it has been ruled in court that Local Authorities have rights to immediate access to CCTV footage. From our conversations with licensing officers, however CCTV is frequently 'accidentally wiped' or takes many weeks to be handed over:

<https://cornerstonebarristers.com/news/close-encounters-sexual-kind/>