

Sexual Contact Rife at Manchester Strip Clubs

Summary of Visits to Manchester Clubs

- Victoria's and Obsessions visited
- Dances from £25
- Dancers regularly touching their breasts and buttocks, anus and genitals
- Dancers masturbating
- Sexual contact of punters: breasts in face, rubbing of crotch (with hands and feet)
- Dancers' feet routinely on bench by Investigators to bring their genitals close to their face
- Dancers straddling Investigators
- Use of sexual language
- One dancer drugged or drunk seeking to prostitute herself (Obsessions)
- High ratio of dancers to punters
- Carpet at one of these 'Gentlemen's Clubs' reeked of damp (Victoria's)

Full details in Appendix 1

Manchester's Strip Clubs Rules

- There shall be no intentional physical contact between performers and customers at any time, before, during or after the performance
- Performers may not simulate any sexual act during a performance.
- Performers must not use any inappropriate, lewd, suggestive or sexually graphic language
- Performers must not touch the breasts or genitalia of another performer, at any time
- Performers shall not arrange to meet, or have further contact with, customers outside of the premises

Background

The only real licensing condition strip clubs across the UK must abide by is 'no sexual contact', although usually dancers *are* allowed to get within a hair's breadth of touching.

Undercover investigators visited 2 of Manchester's 5 strip clubs – Victoria's and Obsessions. They evidenced sexual contact as routine even in a standard £25 'dance'. This is despite the Council being deemed a model of good practice ¹ for its 'stringent regulation' of the strip trade.

It is inconceivable that sexual contact (and possibly more) is not also happening in the City's other 3 clubs – no customers would go if all they can get is a 'clean' dance, when much more is on offer at the 2 clubs visited.

¹ <https://www.notbuyingit.org.uk/sites/default/files/Teela%20Sanders%20Gold%20Standards.pdf>

Furthermore, sexual contact, along with assaults, drugs, pimping and more has already been documented in close to 100 incidences in over 60 clubs (at least 1/3 of the entire UK strip industry) ². *This is how the entire strip industry operates.*

Undercover investigations recently exposed wholesale sexual contact at Sheffield's Spearmint Rhino ³. And, in the previous year, at Westminster's The Windmill Theatre ⁴ and Ealing's LA Confidential ⁵. This legally obtained information was not only reported in graphic detail in the press but used in court cases which ultimately lead to the closure of both clubs.

The industry is also synonymous with the harassment, coercion, intimidation, abuse and assault of lap dancers. This has been evidenced by dozens of testimonies from women who have left the industry ⁶ and 2 major UK research studies (with over 200 participants) ⁷. And was reiterated in 2018 by a journalist working undercover as a lap dancer ⁸.

Manchester has 5 strip clubs, despite a policy that none are appropriate anywhere in the city. It continually licenses its clubs despite a long history of brawls, stabbings and even a murder ⁹. Yet the Council, like every other, could easily to refuse to license all of its clubs on the grounds of their inappropriate location ¹⁰ and the clubs *cannot* legally challenge this ¹¹.

Rather than 'lap dancing keeping women out of prostitution', it is nothing more than a feeder for it. It is notable that a sauna has recently opened next to one of Manchester's strip clubs (Long Legs, not visited by the investigators).

We Call For

Women's groups are calling for Manchester City Council to close its clubs, create a genuine 'zero policy' toward the entire industry and support all performers into safe, alternative employment.

We also call for all Councils to receive training over the reality of the strip trade and impossibility of regulating it. And for the press to expose the inherent harm of the strip trade rather than glamourising it. Ultimately the entire industry needs to be shut down with performers supported out, where necessary

Sign the petition here: www.notbuyingit.org.uk/Petition

² www.notbuyingit.org.uk/StripSleaze

³ www.notbuyingit.org.uk/SheffieldPI

⁴ <https://www.standard.co.uk/news/london/historic-soho-lapdancing-club-the-windmill-theatre-faces-closure-after-sting-finds-performers-flout-a3736546.html>

⁵ <https://www.ftbchambers.co.uk/news/ealing's-la-confidential-loses-its-sev-licence>

⁶ www.notbuyingit.org.uk/Publications#Performers

⁷ www.notbuyingit.org.uk/Publications#Research

⁸ www.notbuyingit.org.uk/Publications#SamRea

⁹ www.notbuyingit.org.uk/Publications#PressManchester

¹⁰ www.notbuyingit.org.uk/StripLaw

¹¹ www.notbuyingit.org.uk/intheDocks

Appendix 1

Victoria's

Summary

- Dancers regularly touching their breasts and buttocks, anus and genitals
- Dancers masturbating
- Sexual Contact of punters: breasts in face, rubbing of crotch
- Dancers feet routinely on bench by men so genitals close to their faces
- Use of sexual language
- Extremely damp, foul smelling carpet on dance floor
- High ratio of dancers (8) to customers (10)

Investigator 1

On entering the club we could see approximately 8 dancers. There were approximately 4 customers at that time. We went to the bar and were then approached by two lap dancers.

I spoke with one, Dancer P, who asked if I were interested in a dance and was shown a menu on the bar. It had details of drinks on one side and a tariff for dances on the other. I said I was interested in a standard dance of £25.

Dancer P - £25

Dancer P took me to the dance area, asked me to sit down and then commenced dancing.

- She removed her bra and pants and using her hands she fondled her breasts and rubbed her stomach area, backside and thighs.
- She used her fingers to rub her anus and genitals.
- She rubbed her genitals briefly but slowly simulating masturbation.
- She danced both standing up facing me and facing away from me, she also lay on the floor.
- She rubbed her breasts across my face intentionally contacting with my skin
- She also moved her nipples along the line of my lips.
- She sat on my lap and moved her backside whilst it was in contact with my crotch.
- She lay across me facing the floor, with her feet off the ground and her genitals in the vicinity of my crotch and moved with the music.

- She routinely used the area of the bench beside me to position her feet so that her genitals were very close to me.
- Whilst standing she used her shin to slowly rub my genitals through my trousers.
- She also rubbed my genitals with her foot whilst performing on the ground. At the conclusion of the dance I thanked her and returned to the bar as she got dressed.

Dancer Q

Upon arriving back at the bar, I spoke with my colleague and a short while later, we were approached by two further dancers. I spoke with one, Dancer Q.

She asked whether I was interested in a dance and told me that the VIP dance was much better than the standard. She told me it was in a more private room and that because it was longer it was more intimate.

I agreed to a VIP dance and was led into a room which was empty and dimly lit. She showed me to a seat, I sat down and after removing her shoes she started to dance. She removed her clothes.

- Moving to the music she fondled her breasts and backside. She slapped her buttocks.
- She used her fingers to rub her anus and her genitals.
- She rubbed her genitals regularly simulating slow masturbation.
- She danced both standing up facing and facing away from me, she also bent over facing away from me.
- She rubbed her breasts across my face intentionally making contact.
- She sat on my lap and moved her backside whilst in contact with my crotch.
- She lay across me facing the floor, with her feet off the ground and her genitals in the vicinity of my crotch and moved with the music.
- She routinely used the area of the bench beside me to position her feet so that her genitals were much closer to me.

I met my colleague in the bar and saw that there were now some additional customers, approximately 10 in total. Whilst in the club I did not see any CCTV or security in the club area. We left at about 1.30am.

Investigator 2

Dancer R – £25

I spoke with Dancer R. We negotiated a price of £25 for a one song dance and I followed Dancer R downstairs to a very dimly lit basement which smelt overwhelmingly of damp.

- I was asked to sit down and spread my legs and, at the same time, she began to strip.
- She initially rubbed her breasts and buttocks with her clothes on and danced in front of me both standing up and whilst on her knees.
- She removed her clothes and pressed her breasts towards my face and began to gyrate on the floor.
- She fondled her breasts and squeezed her nipples.
- She crouched on the floor facing away from me bouncing, causing her buttocks to shake.
- She masturbated her vagina then stood up, placed a leg to one side of me and continued masturbating.
- She continued to dance, pressing her breasts very close to my face.
- She rubbed her fingers over her clitoris.
- She then lay on the floor, opened her legs and masturbated.
- She used the bench beside me on occasions to steady her feet whilst moving her genitals much closer to me.

The dance ended and Dancer R quickly got dressed, telling me to go back upstairs where she would join me.

Dancer S – £25

I went back upstairs and was joined by another dancer. We quickly got into negotiations about prices and I agreed to another £25, one song dance.

We made our way downstairs and Dancer S began apologising for the almost overwhelming smell of damp.

- The performance was broadly the same as my first however when this Dancer removed her top she put her breasts right into my face brushing my cheeks.

- She went onto the floor but complained about how damp the floor was. I told her not to worry about going down on the floor.
- Whilst on the floor she ran her fingers over her clitoris.
- She then asked if I liked her 'pussy' as 'some blokes are worried about catching something'.
- She then began to rub her vagina against the legs of my jeans, simulating sexual intercourse, she also slapped her buttocks.
- The dance came to an end and the dancer asked me for a hug whilst she was still naked. She then began to dress and told me she would join me upstairs.

I rejoined my colleague and we left shortly after.

Obsessions

Summary

- **Sexual Contact**
- **Real and simulated masturbation**
- **Sexual Language**
- **One dancer drunk/drugged trying to prostitute herself**
- **High ratio of lap dancers (20) to customers (15-20)**

Investigator 1

We arrived at Obsessions at approximately 1.45 AM. We could see approximately 20 dancers and 15 to 20 male customers. We went to the bar and I was joined by Dancer T.

She invited me to sit down. Whilst we chatted, Dancer T sat very close to me and put her hand on my thigh. She told me she had also worked at Victoria's. After a while she asked if I wanted a dance. I confirmed that I would like a standard dance for £25.

The dancer led me to the end of the club and through a doorway. We walked past two small rooms with light nylon curtains at the entrance. There was nothing in these rooms other than a single chair in the centre. She then led me into a similar room and sat me on the chair and closed the curtain.

Dancer T – £25

During the dance she:

- Removed her bra and her knickers.
- She moved to the music and fondled her breasts and backside.
- She rubbed her genitals with her fingers.
- She danced standing up facing me and away from me, she also lay on the floor.
- She sat on my lap and moved her backside whilst it was in contact with my crotch.
- She leaned back into me arching her back and put the back of her head onto my shoulders. This resulted in greater pressure being applied to her buttocks as they were in contact with my lap.

After her dance concluded I thanked her and returned to the bar area.

Dancer U

I was subsequently joined by another dancer, Dancer U. She asked if I would like a VIP Dance. She also said that she could touch me in a VIP dance.

I paid the barman and the dancer led me to a large empty room at the end of the club. She removed her shoes and started to dance. During the dance she:

- Removed her bra and knickers.
- Using her hands, she fondled her breasts and rubbed her stomach area, backside and her legs.
- She slapped her buttocks.
- Touched her genitals with her fingers.
- She danced both standing up facing me and facing away from me
- She also bent over facing away from me.
- She also lay on the floor and opened her legs.

- She sat on my lap and moved her backside whilst it was in contact with my crotch.
- She routinely used the area of the bench beside me to position her feet so that her genitals were much closer to me.
- She routinely made intentional contact with my legs using her hands and body. She also used her hands to grab and squeeze my chest muscles.

At the end of the dance I thanked her and returned to the bar area. Dancer U returned to the bar and joined me. She said that the club was quiet and might shut early. She told me that January, February and March were slow months and the busy time of year was September through to December, with it being particularly busy in the lead up to Christmas. She told me that the club was always very busy when football was played in the city.

We spoke about the price of the dances and the system of money being paid at the bar. She told me that in some clubs dancers have to pay to dance, but in Victoria's and Obsessions the clubs took the money and then paid the dancers less the club commission. She explained that for a £25 dance, dancers received £16 and for an £80 dance, dancers received £48.

I said goodbye to Dancer U and my colleague and I departed the club at about 3 AM.

Investigator 2

On entering the bar, we saw about 15 lap dancers - all very scantily clad. Almost immediately I was grabbed by a dancer, Dancer V. We sat down in the bar. She was grabbing and pinching my nipples really hard, she was rubbing my leg and holding my hand.

She was wearing very little clothing. She asked for £300 for an hour long dance. I talked her down to a 15 minute dance.

Dancer V

We went to a back room secluded from the bar. The dancer immediately removed her shoes and began to dance:

- She lay across me and slapped her buttocks.
- She asked 'You want to see my pussy?' before removing her knickers and bending down facing away from me revealing her genitals.

- Throughout the dance she touched her breasts.
- She danced standing up facing me and facing away from me.
- She used the bench seating beside me to steady herself and to perform whilst lying down.
- She rubbed her anus with her finger and simulated masturbation on a number of occasions.
- She asked 'Do you like kissing pussy' and then talked about it being called '69'.
- She lay on the bench beside me and masturbated stating 'my pussy is wet'.
- She then took her fingers away from her genitals and rubbed them onto the palm of my hand. I felt that they were moist.
- She talked about wanting an hour, and asked where I was staying and said that next time 'I could have a beautiful night'.
- She then confirmed that the dance was over, stating that I had been given an extra minute.

I returned to the bar area and she joined me holding my hand stroking my hair telling me how special I was and for £80 we could do that again. I spoke with her for a time and I told her I did not want another dance. She acted very disappointed but left and joined two other customers who had arrived.

Dancer W

I was immediately joined by a very boisterous performer, Dancer W. She seemed quite drunk, she was straight onto business about prices for VIP and private lounges. I enquired about a £25 dance. She told me it was a waste of her time and it was £80 for 15 minutes or nothing. I agreed to a 15 minute dance. She immediately led me by the hand to the private dance area:

- She drank my drink and slapped me round the face before dancing and said 'You fucking cunt, you sit there now'.
- She danced initially in her bra and pants.
- She knelt on the floor facing away from me and wiggled her backside.
- She sat on my lap, facing away from me and whilst grinding into my lap she asked, 'Where's your fucking credit card'. I replied, 'It is in my hotel room' to which she responded 'Oh, can I come back there?'.
- She rubbed her breasts over her bra and then removed it.

- Whilst lying across me, facing me, she said that she thought that she should come back to my hotel room. She then said, 'What do you think about that?'
- I asked her if she had many boyfriends to which she responded, 'Absolutely none, that's why I can ride your cock for free'.
- She then sat on my lap facing away from me and whilst moving on my lap she moaned 'Deeper, deeper, deeper'. She repeated this a number of times.
- She then stood up and removed her pants.
- She lay on the bench beside me and opened her legs before edging much closer to me.
- She asked how rich I was and then licked her fingers before slowly rubbing them back and forth over her clitoris whilst looking at me.
- She said 'Do you like squirting?'
- She continued dancing before saying, 'I think we should take this further'.
- She then crouched in front of me, facing away from me.
- Whilst on all fours she wiggled her bottom from side to side and then moved her buttocks very close to my face.
- She again sat on my lap before leaning back into me whilst fondling her breasts.
- Whilst facing me, she knelt down in front of me and simulated oral sex whilst in the vicinity of my crotch, looking up at me.
- She then lay across me.
- During the dance her breasts touched my face and she kissed me on my face and neck. She also repeatedly whispered into my ear asking for my telephone number.

After the dance I gave her a number which I made up. We went to the bar, she put the number I had given her into her phone and said she would ring me. I spoke with my colleague and, as the club was closing, we decided to leave. Dancer W grabbed hold of me and asked me not to block her on my phone. We left the club at approximately 3 AM.