

Keisha Testimony

I am objecting to the licensing of strip clubs both as a survivor of the sex trade, including lap dancing, and as a member of the public.

In reference to those still within the industry, it is impossible to give a balanced, free-of-coercion opinion on something for which your very survival depends upon. You will find the vast majority within this and many other clubs are disproportionately at high risk of homelessness, food poverty and other complications which come from a lack of economic opportunity to those within the realms of working class, poor demographics. Therefore, the argument of choice is a tainted one. What real choice is poverty or exploitation?

Also notably, the sex industry, including strip clubs are fundamentally sexist, racist, homophobic establishments who fetishize colonialist stereotypes of "exotic" BAME women by reducing them to their physical and racialised attributes.

As well as this, the forced depiction of lesbianism by heterosexual dancers for monetary gain is also a contradiction with any other work establishments adherence to equality law.

If women really were free to express their sexuality, they would choose the times they go on stage, what to wear, how much to charge and they wouldn't feel pressurised to compromise on their emotional boundaries in reference to the way in which customers speak to them on a nightly basis as well as put up with numerous episodes of sexual harassment and assault which sometimes leads to stalking from when they leave the venue.

Objectification has no concern with safe guarding because the women are not perceived as individual people by the establishment nor the clientele.

This is why we see an ever occurring record pattern of violence, because objectification breeds violence by default, it can not be reformed.

If you care at all for the welfare of these vulnerable women instead of profit - you will not licence exploitation. You will not be complicit with human traffickers who enjoy the legal loopholes of entry strip clubs, you will not licence drug dealers who profit from the custom which goes hand in hand with exploitation.

Instead, you will provide support for exit services to help aid these women out. You will provide an alternative. Because in light of the current pandemic, it is exponentially clear as day that licencing any strip club is not only a huge health and safety risk to those within the venue but to the rest of the public whom you have an obligation to protect from the spread of covid-19.