

## Strip Club Relicensed Despite 200 Breaches



[Video: How To Stop 200 Breaches](#)

Why has a council re-licensed a strip club when its own report exposed 200 breaches – primarily of extreme sexual contact - and suggests its management is unfit?

This is the question we should all be asking when Sheffield City Council re licensed Spearmint Rhino Sheffield – at its licensing hearing on Mon 16<sup>th</sup> Sep 2019.

At this, the Council heard of resident reports of pimps outside the club and of women being harassed in its vicinity whilst its own investigation concluded that inside women have oral sex with each other, grind on customers laps, put their mouths around customers genitals, masturbate themselves and punters and give out their phone numbers.

It heard from a former lap dancer of the club who, together with at least 3 others who have provided statements in the past, testified to a catalogue of intimidation and abuse - spanning years.

It was reminded of the two court cases the Council has lost for its ongoing support of the strip industry where it was found to be in breach of equality law.

It was reminded of the strip chain's 20 year history in the UK of prostitution, pimping and fraud – ever since it opened its doors under 2 different CEOs and many different managers. But given that the American founder of the strip chain, John Gray, has a string of criminal convictions (which he vehemently denied until court records were made public), is that really any surprise?

It was given hard evidence that the industry cannot be regulated as it circumvents anything and everything that is put in place.

However, Sheffield City Council appears perfectly content to believe that the club itself has now put a 'raft of measures in place' to prevent those pesky rule breaches from ever happening again.

Many are nothing short of farcical:

- More signs with the rules on them put up around the club. They're bigger too.
- Training for Management who had 'no idea' of the 219 breaches exposed by private investigators in just 2 short visits and without any pressuring for 'extras'.
- Suspending the dancers who were caught out, although some now appear to have been 'unsuspended'.

Other regulation put in place might, on the face of it, sound reasonable, except their proven inadequacies have already been pointed out to the Council by human rights campaigners on several occasions.

These include better CCTV. However, CCTV is almost meaningless in the context of the strip trade. It will always have countless blind spots, particularly when it is often almost impossible to tell if there is actually sexual contact (*not allowed*) or just very, very close proximity (which, shockingly, *is* allowed). Besides, blind spots are often pointed out to lap dancers by management. And footage can be, and very often is, wiped or cameras are mysteriously 'not working'. The fact is, Spearmint Rhino Camden has 63 cameras which always showed the club was fully compliant, yet when private investigators went in they again found sexual contact as absolutely standard, women giving out their phone numbers and, yes, pimps outside.

But perhaps the most absurd ‘regulatory’ measure put forward by the club was their idea of ‘independent inspectors’ *hired* by the club with the Vice President of the Rhino chain *knowing when the inspections are taking place*. Of course, he states he’s never ever told anyone when they’re coming. So that’s ok then. But what reasonable person wouldn’t reach for the salt cellar when we are told that all 4 inspections carried out to date by these ‘independent inspectors’ have always been ‘perfectly clean’.

But apparently the Council is perfectly happy with these measures – and presumably any others put forward by the sex industry giant. Because it, yet again, relicensed the seemingly ‘untouchable’ Spearmint Rhino Sheffield.

## END

### Contact

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### More Information

Council’s report into evidence of extreme sexual contact (where all sexual content has been removed):

<http://democracy.sheffield.gov.uk/documents/s36185/Investigation%20Summary%20Report.pdf>

Our report of Private Investigators’ visits to the club where extreme sexual contact was found:

[www.notbuyingit.org.uk/SheffieldPIs](http://www.notbuyingit.org.uk/SheffieldPIs)

Information for the Licensing Hearing, including all objections and letters of support:

<http://democracy.sheffield.gov.uk/mgAi.aspx?ID=19818#mgDocuments>

Spearmint Rhino’s 20 year History of Abuse: <https://notbuyingit.org.uk/Publications#PressRhino>

Former Lap Dancers from Sheffield Rhino expose the truth:

<https://youtu.be/3IWqjNQtNpk>

<https://youtu.be/CLpUOYeG08c>