

Camden's Strip Industry

The Strip Industry Generally

Abuse, criminality and the inability to prevent this is universal across the strip industry as exposed by [over 2 dozen press reports](#): countless [testimonies from lap dancers](#) and several [research studies](#)

These reports also expose how [all attempts to regulate the industry are utterly futile](#) (with high levels of criminality even in clubs operating under Councils deemed 'Gold Standard' for their regulation of the industry).

We believe that Camden's current policy that explicitly treats pre-existing clubs (which were licensed as leisure venues when this policy was introduced) differently to, and preferentially to, any new license application is a breach of licensing, competition and SEV (strip club) licensing legislation.

We would like to point out that Camden is wholly within its rights not to re-license any strip club and does not need any legal grounds to refuse an existing license. This is substantiated by the fact that there has [never been a successful legal challenge](#) by a strip club operator against a Council for refusing to relicense.

Equally it is legally obliged to look at all re-applications with 'fresh eyes' and in the same manner as any new applications. Now [two successful court cases](#) against Sheffield City Council for breach of equality law in its pro-strip industry stance, give *pressing need* to look at all licensing re-applications with 'fresh eyes'.

The Council already has more than enough evidence, gathered over years, of the harm to women of its strip industry and the fact that it simply cannot be regulated and the harms thus mitigated.

For all these reasons, we urge Camden to abide by its own licensing policy that clearly states that no clubs are appropriate anywhere in the borough and to shut down the entire industry. Criminal charges should be considered against those running it and assets seized (as is being considered against clubs from Rotherham to Ealing). Most importantly, meaningful exit support must be provided for all the young women in the industry – for whose exploitation the Council is directly responsible.

Key Documents

This is Lap Dancing Slide Show:	www.notbuyingit.org.uk/SlideShow
This is Lap dancing Fact sheet:	www.notbuyingit.org.uk/ThisisLapDancing
Strip Clubs, unfit unsafe Fact Sheet:	www.notbuyingit.org.uk/UnfitUnsafe
Press exposes of the industry:	www.notbuyingit.org.uk/StripSleaze
How Councils are Breaching Equality Law:	www.notbuyingit.org.uk/13ReasonsWhyNot
In-depth analyses of the SEV and PSED:	www.notbuyingit.org.uk/ZeroOption
No Successful Cases taken by Strip Club Operators:	www.notbuyingit.org.uk/intheDocks
How Sheffield City Council breached Equality Law:	www.notbuyingit.org.uk/SheffieldShame

Camden's Strip Industry – in Summary

Camden has 7 strip clubs:

Spearmint Rhino
3 Secrets
The Griffin
Parkers
The Red Rooms

Press Reports:

Camden's clubs include the flagship [Spearmint Rhino](#), still licensed despite prostitution having been found throughout the chain; [The Griffin](#) (dubbed London's 'seediest strip club'); 3 branches of [Secrets](#) (still licensed despite sexual contact reported as rife).

Personal testimonies:

A former performer has exposed sexual contact as the norm at Euston Secrets and sex act rife in its private booths; pimps scouring inside for 'girls' to groom into prostitution and a security guard at Spearmint Rhino known for assaulting dancers (see below).

An undercover journalist (predominantly working in Camden and Westminster clubs) has exposed widespread harassment, drugs, sex acts and assault (see below).

Local residents:

Pimps tout outside Euston Secrets and The Red Rooms (see below).
Women harassed outside numerous of the Council's clubs (see below).

This gives more than sufficient cause for Camden to launch a full scale investigation into the industry – or simply to shut it down. Other Councils have investigated and shut clubs based purely on testimony from one dancer (eg LA Confidential, Ealing) or from evidence gathered by Private Detectives (The Windmill, Westminster). We would expect the same from Camden, particularly when its own policy already states that there is no locality in which a no strip club is appropriate – every club thus being situated in an inappropriate location.

We would urge, if investigations are carried out, that great care be taken to ensure it is *genuinely* anonymous. It is, again, a universal phenomenon that clubs are typically fully aware of when checks are scheduled to take place – making such investigations worse than meaningless.

Camden's Strip Industry – in Detail

We have compiled here information specific to Camden clubs – which are no different from the rest of the strip trade. This has been gathered from anonymous testimonies from former lap dancers, journalist's undercover exposés at several clubs and statements from residents and others in the vicinity of clubs.

Secrets Euston

Anonymous Testimony from X, woman formally working in lap dancing, about this club:

Harassment/Assault/Rule Breaching

“Harassment and assault **happens regularly** as does breach of the distance rule.

Security guards in Secrets Euston are directly ordered by management **not to intervene** when high paying customers assault or harass dancers. In fact a dancer was sacked for slapping a customer who sexually assaulted her. This kind of 'non intervention' is absolutely standard across the industry."

Inadequacy of Security Checks

"None of the rule breaching, harassment or assault would be seen on security checks unless conducted **genuinely undercover** because management ensure dancers abide by rules when inspectors are present.

Every time there was a check in Secrets Euston, the **club manager was fully aware/warned** of the inspection before it happened and ensured we all put on a 'clean act'. This again, is normal across the strip trade."

Changing Management to Avoid Responsibility

"I think clubs often regularly change management to avoid responsibility; to be honest management don't really have much power as the real ones pulling the strings are the crime syndicates who run the premises."

Layout

"I am not sure what the camera arrangement is here but I'm pretty certain there are deliberate blind spots:

- on the upper level giving "naughty forties" - a lap dance for £40 instead of the advertised £20 which includes the promise of a **closer proximity** eg: brushing breasts in the face of customers - some dancers took this further and allowed customers to touch them sexually. They took/take place in specific booths and it was made apparent by dancers the best booth to do "naughty forties" was situated next to the champagne lounge on the upper level.
- The champagne lounge was where **a lot of touching** took place in a discreet manner (customers expected this due to the high price tag). This was usually when dancers went alone with a customer as opposed to going in a group - it's for this reason I rarely chose to go in the champagne lounge without other dancers present as we would work together to deter/distract the customer from touching us.
- Also note that A LOT of **fraud** went on at this level as often the price for champagne lounge would be completely pulled out of the air depending on how much we thought the customer would pay. Waiters worked with management and house mums to enter very high sums of money into the card machine whilst taking the customers card out of view to do this. They would then return and move the card machine screen on to the pin entry so that the amount entered can not be seen. Often customers are drunk and trust the price quoted to be what is entered, often it is not.
- **The VIP suite** is situated on the basement level. I don't believe there to be **any CCTV** here and it is extremely dark. They did refurbish this and cease it's use for a while, apart from the occasional trusted dancer who had extra privilege who was allowed to use it. (I'm guessing because the council told them to stop using the area) I've known/heard of dancers giving **blow jobs/hand jobs** here and management turning a **blind eye** as the area is unsupervised. **Bribes** were made to waiters, house mum and management to allow dancers to work in the VIP and earn a lot more money.
- I Don't think they allowed **full sex** as this would be too obvious and I did hear of one dancer who was sacked for having sex with a customer in the VIP suite."

"All of the above is true across the industry. CCTV has countless blind spots - these are often pointed out to performers. It can also be wiped and 'go missing'. Security is often complicit in 'rule breaking' - dancers frequently bribe them to turn a blind eye (as it is only by rule breaking or performing sex acts that they can make real money) or they are commanded to by management."

Spearmint Rhino

The Spearmint Rhino strip chain has a long track record of 'rule breaking', prostitution and other criminal activity: www.notbuyingit.org.uk/Publications#SR and yet has been allowed to continue operating for years.

Serious Assault – Witness X:

"I was seriously sexually assaulted on camera at Spearmint Rhino, Heathrow by a security guard. The case went to court. This **guard had been transferred from the Tottenham Court Rd branch**, probably because he had a history of doing the same to other dancers there, I had heard.

I was also moved from Tottenham court Rd to Heathrow as they had a car that picked dancers up from TCR and transported us. They also had a limo they hired to transport dancers to **private parties/limo parties** – putting dancers at even more risk."

Numerous Camden Clubs

An undercover journalist has exposed the constant 'rule breaching', harassment, sex acts (blow jobs/hand jobs), assault, drugs and drug dealing across the industry. The clubs she reports on were predominantly in Camden and Westminster:

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

<https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/presidents-club-sexual-harassment-business-lap-dance-vip-exploitation-a8177691.html>

Harassment in the Vicinity of Clubs

The level of harassment routinely experienced by women and girls outside strip clubs is highlighted here: www.notbuyingit.org.uk/NoGoZones

Such harassment – *or the mere fear of it* – is a breach of Councils' legally binding equality duties (and no doubt the Public Order Act also). As with all other efforts to 'regulate' the industry, all measures to prevent this are futile – with security often complicit. Clubs' own CCTV often exposes the 'no go zones' clubs create.

These are just some testimonies of the harassment women routinely experience specifically outside Camden's strip clubs. The Council is also aware of numerous complaints from local residents, many of which have been reported in the press - with no doubt hundreds having being compiled over years via complaints and objections. Yet more concerns undoubtedly come to light every time a license is up for renewal:





Rachel-Ann Rees @RachelAnnRees1 · 23h
I was a student at UCL, my campus was right next 2 Spearmint Rhino. I had 2 endure vile comments from the clients on a daily basis. Not on.

Jennifer on The Griffin:

- 'I always crossed the street when passing this place'
- 'an air of real seediness and menace'
- 'the bouncers had an air of intimidation'
- 'there was a feeling that this place was a no woman's land'

www.notbuyingit.org.uk/Jennifer

Witness X:

Euston is made a no go zone for women and children after approx 8/9pm as Secrets has attracted anti-social behaviour including alcohol, drug use, street harassment, violence and I'm sure the crime stats would show this.

Pimps

Pimps Inside Clubs - Euston Secrets

Pimps regularly visit, loiter and attend secrets Euston. It is a huge problem. They are looking for dancers who are still going strong at the end of the night, particularly non-UK girls – as these are the easiest to then drag into full blown prostitution due to lack of a support network or even good English.

Pimps Touting outside Clubs - Red Rooms & Secrets Kingsway - Witness Y

This email was sent to us some time ago by a member of the public (Witness Y), which we immediately passed on to Camden Council This surely should be easy to expose, providing *genuine* undercover surveillance is carried out:

Hi,

Just thought I'd let you know that outside **Red Rooms**, there are a **number pimps/ touts** almost always present near the entrances and security never ask them to move when some are stood less than a metre from the entrance. I have heard them dicussing 'oral', prices, & times & have video evidence of one walking a punter to a flat a few minutes walk away.

When security turn a blind-eye to what they are doing, seem friendly towards the pimps, one pimp even calling security by his name. It makes me wonder if the pimps could be tipping the club?

They also are friendly with Westminster quiet streets staff. The pimps mostly walk along **Kingsway** where a minute walk away **Secrets** the other strip club is. Their pretty good front is that they are minicab drivers and 'minicab' seems to be code for inticing men who want to buy sex. A pimp then leads the man to follow him to a flat, not a minicab. When men actually want a minicab they point then to a black cab in the road. It is quite a good front and I didn't see it for a few years.

There is a big sign warning punters not to use unlicensed minicabs outside secrets. However, the men posing as unlicensed minicab drivers are never told to move & constintantly there all the time the club is open.

On Kingsway at the entrace of **Secrets** in a dead end road, there can be up to **12 touts at a time just standing there and talking to punters as they exit and Secrets** security do nothing about it either.

My concern is if the clubs are getting money from these pimps or the clubs themselves are linked to these brothels a few minutes walk away.

Thanks.

Trafficking – Red Rooms

In addition to pimps touting outside, Red Rooms also has a reputation for trafficking inside.

Other Illegal Activity

There are numerous online testimonies of punters being exploited, through credit card scams and even drink spiking. Credit card scams are readily testified to by women who have left the industry such as Witness X at Secrets, Euston. The serving of alcohol to intoxicated customers is also commonplace across the industry (and a breach of any club's liquor license).

Numerous Camden strip clubs have flagrantly beached Council's 'no private areas' rule – often for years. This includes Spearmint Rhino, Red Rooms and Secrets, Euston.