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**Lap dancing club spiked customers' drinks and then overcharged for dances by £93,000, report claims**

## Punter attacks stripper

14th January 2017

**Glasgow kingpin's lap dancing club shut after girl dumped on street**

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Local Government Correspondent



**Hanley gentlemen's club ST1 has been closed permanently after evidence of fraud, drink spiking, drug dealing, violence and prostitution were heard by a licensing committee.**

She said the footage also showed strippers straddling customers - another forbidden practice.

The conditions allegedly breached are those that forbid performers from sitting or straddling customers, placing both their feet on the seat, simulating a sexual act, intentionally touching another dancer and intentionally touching a customer.

## About this Report

In 2011, new laws meant local councils could license strip clubs/lap dancing clubs as sexual entertainment venues rather than leisure venue (like a café or bar) and could, in theory, properly regulate them.

This is a compilation over 2 dozen press reports of serious illegal activities associated with strip clubs since 2011. Some of the clubs reported here were forced to close as a result. Shockingly, despite serious (and sometimes repeated) incidents, Councils also allowed many to remain open.

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](mailto: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 Strip Clubs 'Properly Regulated'

Club	Location	Summary	Date
Various	London	Harassment, Coercion, Assaults	2018
The Windmill	Westminster	Sexual Contact, Prostitution	2018
LA Confidential	Ealing	Sexual Contact, Prostitution	2018
Eroticats	Cheltenham	Sexual Contact, Harassment, Assault	2018
Fantasy Nightclub	Cheltenham	Sexual Contact, Harassment, Assault	2018
Bing	Bromwich	GBH of Dancer	2017
Hanley	Staffordshire	Prostitution, Drug Dealing, Drink Spiking	2017
<b>Jack of Diamonds</b> [formally Temptatons]	<b>Bristol</b>	Sexual Contact	<b>2017</b>
<b>Temptations</b>	<b>Bristol</b>	Sexual Contact	<b>2013</b>
<b>Legs 11</b>	<b>Birmingham</b>	Sexual Contact, Prostitution, Drink Spiking	<b>2017</b>
Bentley's	Doncaster	Serious Assault of Dancer	2017
Diamond Dolls	Glasgow	Dancer dumped on street	2017
Flirtz	Skegness	Class A Drugs	2017
Platinum's	Stoke	Sexual Contact, Prostitution, Drink Spiking	2017
<b>Silks</b>	<b>Manchester</b>	Numerous Serious Brawls	<b>2017</b>
Unknown	Liverpool	Forced to Strip by Rapist boyfriend	2017
Cleopatra's Lounge	Huddersfield	Damage caused when dancer refuses sex	2016
<b>Angels</b>	<b>Leicester</b>	<b>Sexual Contact, Underage dancers</b>	<b>2016</b>
<b>Totties</b>	<b>Manchester</b>	<b>Mass brawl and Murder</b>	<b>2016</b>
Villa Mercedes	Harrogate	Sexual Contact, 'Audience Participation'	2015
X in the City	Liverpool	Dancer Assaulted	2015
Spearmint Rhino	Camden	Judge states 'touts' outside venue	2016
Spearmint Rhino	Bournemouth	Sexual Contact, Illegal Alcohol Sales	2014
Spearmint Rhino	All Chains	Sexual Contact, Prostitution	2003
<b>Red Velvet</b>	<b>Durham</b>	<b>Class A Drugs</b>	<b>2013</b>
Wiggle	Bournemouth	Sexual Contact	2013
<b>Baby Platinum</b>	<b>Manchester</b>	<b>Stabbing outside Club</b>	<b>2013</b>
Charlie Brown's	London	Sexual Contact	2012
<b>Halos</b>	<b>Newquay</b>	<b>Sexual Contact</b>	<b>2011</b>
<b>Divas</b>	<b>Newquay</b>	<b>Sexual Contact</b>	<b>n/a</b>

**RED:** Clubs in Councils deemed 'Gold Standard' for their regulation of the industry <sup>1</sup>

A Google search of press reports exposes the sheer scale of sexual harassment, coercion and assault (including prostitution and trafficking) alongside other criminal activities (including Class A drug dealing, drink spiking and organised crime) that is synonymous with the strip industry. This is despite tighter regulation supposedly being introduced when lap dancing became licensed as part of the sex trade, rather than as leisure venues like cafes (around 2011).

This report is clearly just the tip of the iceberg, merely representing easily accessible press coverage. Not all press reports will have been located and the press will only report on a small fraction of incidences, most of which club management work hard to ensure are never exposed<sup>23</sup>.

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

It is also noteworthy that the industry frequently suggests that the area outside strip clubs is safer than anywhere else because of club’s exterior CCTV and security guards. However, as these reports reveal, it is the area outside strip clubs that is some of the most unsafe in any city with touts alongside serious brawls not uncommon, not to mention the routine harassment women experience when passing by<sup>4</sup>.

### **Sexual Contact, 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>

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

#### **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 one small area of the borough:

<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-v7lsmhl3h>

<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, Camden 2016**

Judge states venue attracts 'touts' for prostitution when Spearmint Rhino launches failed court case to prevent Council immediate access to its CCTV:

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

### **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/](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:

[http://www.bournemouthcho.co.uk/news/10786993.Lap\\_dancing\\_club\\_could\\_lose\\_licence\\_after\\_staff\\_get\\_too\\_close\\_to\\_customers/](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>

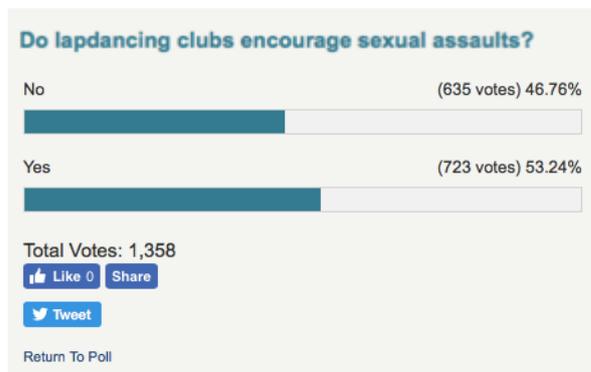
### **Divas, Newquay**

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/](http://www.ardrossanherald.com/news/15023857.Glasgow_kingpin_s_lap_dancing_club_shut_after_girl_dumped_on_street/)

### Unknown, Liverpool 2017

Convicted rapist forces his girlfriend to work as lap dancer. He was jailed for 'coercive control' of his girlfriend who has self harmed and attempted suicide:

<https://www.liverpoolecho.co.uk/news/liverpool-news/convicted-rapist-forced-girlfriend-work-12735012>

### **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 any 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](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>

License merely temporarily suspended despite Club being frequented by 'known criminals', according to the police, and 5 violent attacks in less than 6 months:

<https://www.manchestereveningnews.co.uk/news/greater-manchester-news/silks-gentlemens-club-manchester-licence-12962504>

### **Totties, Manchester 2016**

Serous 'mass' brawl outside strip club leads to murder:

[https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-manchester-](https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-manchester-38428636?ocid=socialflow_twitter&ns_mchannel=social&ns_campaign=bbcnews&ns_source=twitter#)

[38428636?ocid=socialflow\\_twitter&ns\\_mchannel=social&ns\\_campaign=bbcnews&ns\\_source=twitter#](https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-manchester-38428636?ocid=socialflow_twitter&ns_mchannel=social&ns_campaign=bbcnews&ns_source=twitter#)

### **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**

Strip club license surrendered after drugs raid reveals Class A drugs on premises:

[http://www.thenorthernecho.co.uk/news/10175030.Strip\\_club\\_surrenders\\_its\\_sex\\_entertainment\\_licence/](http://www.thenorthernecho.co.uk/news/10175030.Strip_club_surrenders_its_sex_entertainment_licence/)

### **Baby Platinum, Manchester 2013**

Fight breaks out in the club resulting in stabbing outside:

<https://www.manchestereveningnews.co.uk/news/greater-manchester-news/baby-platinum-lap-dancing-club-6389343>

## **Earlier Incidences**

'Rule breaking', harassment and abuse is hardly a new phenomenon at strip clubs. It was wide spread before new legislation came into from 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 should be noted that, that after a failed court challenge by the Spearmint Rhino chain <sup>5</sup>, it has been ruled in court that Local Authorities have right to immediate access to CCTV footage. However, from conversations with licensing officers and numerous testimonies from women from the strip industry, CCTV is frequently wiped or takes many weeks to be handed over.

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

<sup>2</sup> <https://sevlicensing.wordpress.com/2013/11/>

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.notbuyingit.org.uk/sites/default/files/UnsafeUnfit.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.notbuyingit.org.uk/sites/default/files/No%20Go%20Zones.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> <https://cornerstonebarristers.com/news/close-encounters-sexual-kind/>