

What happens at a Lap Dancing Club?

This Fact Sheet has been compiled from numerous testimonies from lap dancers, 2 major research studies, undercover surveillance and press reports all of which expose the harsh reality of the strip industry.

What is SUPPOSED to Happen?

A lap dance is supposed to 'merely' involve full nudity and exposed genitals. There is normally a 'no touching rule' and a '3 foot rule' (ie there should be 3 feet between dancers and punters).

Clubs usually have 'private areas' – which can be a 'VIP' room or booth or simply a partially obscured/curtained area. Men usually pay considerably more to get a 'private lap dance'.

What REALLY Happens?

In 2011, Channel 4 Dispatches sent in undercover journalists to expose what lap dancing really involves¹.



A lap dance is basically paid-for foreplay

In the intervening years, press reports have exposed this 'paid for fore-play' in at least 2 dozen strip clubs. They also expose the widespread use of drugs, drug dealing, drink spiking, underage dancers, suspected trafficking, prostitution, sexual harassment and assaults. And this, no doubt, is not even the tip of the iceberg. Such 'rule breaking' is so rife throughout the industry it even includes the 'most respected' and longest standing strip club in the country, The Windmill² as well as clubs in councils deemed 'Gold Standard' for the strict terms and conditions they, supposedly, impose².

These are just some of the reports:

LA Confidential has operated for some 11 years. In January 2018 an anonymous letter was sent to the licensing authority by a former dancer at the club. She complained of breaches of the dancers' code of conduct, drug-taking, financial exploitation of dancers by the management, sexual acts taking place between dancers and customers out of view of the CCTV, and complicity by the door security who took bribes to turn a blind-eye.

how the woman stripped and started "rubbing herself up and down" on him. He claims he was encouraged to touch her intimately, adding: "I said I wasn't comfortable doing that." He told of a series of similar encounters with other performers.

Police licensing officer Mick Boyd, said: "It is not thought staff at the club could determine if the Romanian women [working at the club] were under age to work as lap dancers.

🏠 > News

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

Punter attacks stripper

14th January 2017

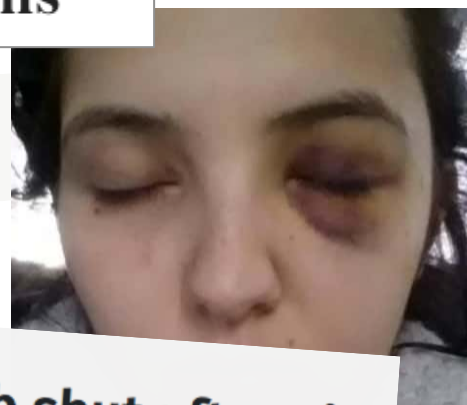
Glasgow kingpin's lap dancing club shut after girl dumped on street

Gerry Braiden [@BraidenHT](#)
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.



These press reports merely confirm what women from the industry have been saying for years, what two major UK research studies had already shown and what the CCTV and undercover surveillance conducted in many of these clubs then reveal (frequently, but shockingly not always, leading to their closure).

The 3ft rule is a joke You pay someone to get naked and then grind away on your

Lucy

2 major studies in the UK strip industry verbal abuse alongside groping and touching is the norm in the strip industry^{3 4}

Why is there so much 'Rule Breaking'?

Research and testimony from lap dancers also paints a very clear picture as to *why* there is so much 'rule breaking', harassment and assault.

One of the driving causes for this is that lap dancers are deemed 'self employed' – with absolutely no employment rights and no guarantee of even a minimum wage. Despite all the claims that 'Strippers are loaded'⁵, 70% of dancers say they don't make any money by the end of a shift. Some nights it is actually possible to lose money. In what other job do you pay to go to work?

70% of dancers MAKE NO MONEY by the end of their shift⁴
According to the largest study ever conducted of the UK industry

It is particularly telling that an industry that only *exists* because of lap dancers, treats lap dancers so poorly. It is even more telling when you consider that all other staff - bouncers, bar, management (who are overwhelmingly male) - receive proper pay and contracts.

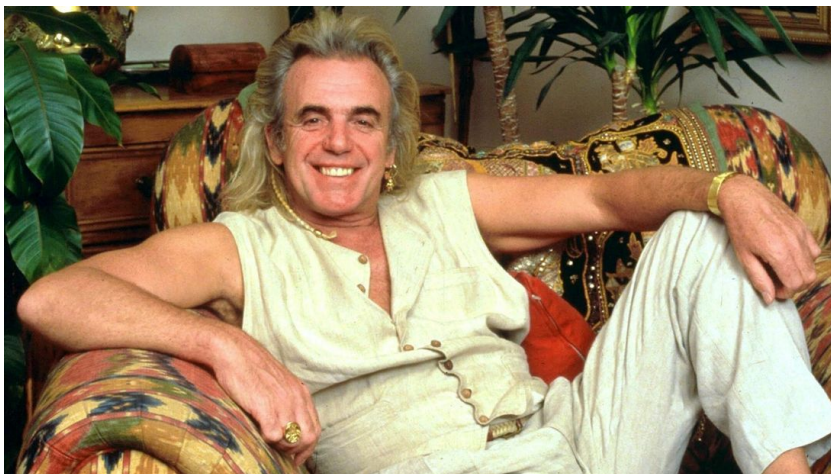
Lap dancers not only have no employment rights but are actually in debt before they even start working in a club because they have to pay to work in it. They then have many other additional fees and fines slapped on them (they have to buy expensive 'house clothes', they are fined, up to £20 a time, on the slightest of excuses - like 'not smiling enough'). Clubs even take a portion of their earnings. And, as if that wasn't enough, clubs pack in far too many performers to punters. All this then means it can be very hard for women to even make ends meet since the only way they can make any money at all is from a lap dance – at just £20 a go –with fierce competition for each one.

This financial set up puts huge pressure on young women to find other ways to make money. And the only way they can do this is either by 'rule breaking' (sexual contact, sex acts or sex) or by making sure punters are so drunk that they part with ridiculous sums of money. Or both.

If one dancer starts breaking the rules the pressure is on the others. Otherwise a bloke would think, 'Well, that dancer charged me £20 and stayed 3 feet away, but that one charged me just the same and she put her breasts in my mouth and sat on my crotch'

Elena

The industry is well aware that its financial power over lap dancers is a key way to *control* lap dancers *and* to ensure 'rule breaking'. Peter Stringfellow, lauded in his death as 'the Sheffield boy made good', went to court no fewer than three times to make absolutely certain lap dancers had *no employment rights* ⁶.



The pressure on lap dancers to 'rule break' is made even worse by clubs culturing an atmosphere that sex is readily available to sexually aroused, drunk men who already expect much more than a 'dance' especially when they can buy foreplay for a mere couple of tenners. No wonder verbal, physical and sexual assault, constant propositioning for sex, sexual contact, sexual acts and sex are part and parcel of the job.

I have lost count of how many times I was touched, grabbed, assaulted physically and sexually

Sammy

it wasn't unusual for customers to make it clear that if they paid for VIP, they'd expect sex or a blow job at the end of it

Samantha 2

Drugs and alcohol are also rife, consumed by customers and performers alike - making women even more vulnerable.

These clubs allow drug dealers and gang members to come in.
This is because of the money they spend

Anon 1

At the same time, when more does happen, clubs turn a blind eye, threaten performers to keep quiet or blame the dancer and have her fired and black listed at other clubs. In fact, a great many dancers talk about the harassment, intimidation and even assault they receive from management if they ever think of reporting any misconduct or unfair treatment.

I have been assaulted by staff .. in order not to report issues within the clubs

Sammy

On one occasion a door supervisor had brought his trained attack dogs and threatened myself and my colleague

Anon 2

Aren't There Measures in Place to Stop All This?

Yes. A great many measures have been introduced to try and prevent anything 'untoward' going on. These include CCTV inside and outside of clubs, 'chaperones', 'House mums' to 'look after the girls' and even panic buttons in private areas.

"You can touch yourself, but don't insert any fingers," says 'House Mum' Debbie,

But given the sheer scale of 'rule breaking' rife throughout the industry, these measures are clearly meaningless. CCTV can be, and seemingly often is, wiped. It has numerous 'blind spots' as performers well know (or even have pointed out to them by management). It requires uncorruptable staff to be diligently monitoring and surveilling a huge bank of video monitors and stepping in every time it is necessary. Equally exterior CCTV has done absolutely nothing to stop the virtual 'no go zones' created outside many clubs where performers and other women are routinely harassed and intimidated⁷.

I do everything that I possibly can to avoid going near Spearmint Rhino .. I often get back late and feel unsafe

Sheffield Resident

Management and bouncers collude in 'rule breaking' (dancers at clubs quite often tip bouncers to 'turn a blind eye') or staff routinely ignore complaints about abusive customers. They are often themselves the abusers - expecting sexual services from the dancers themselves or threatening dancers who say they will make a report against the club. Clubs attract an 'underworld' of drug dealers and pimps both inside and out. Some would argue clubs are run by criminals.

All the other girls are sucking the manager's dick .. because then you get treated better, with shifts and holidays

Samantha

Ultimately, all these 'protective' measures actually do is give a veneer of respectability to the industry and allow Councils to wipe their hands of the highly abusive, exploitative sex trade.

Because the bottom line is, this way of operating suits clubs very well.

What better way to maximise profit (and ensure customers come back time and time again) than if drugs and sexual services are available on site (or in nearby hotels)? Or if intoxicated customers (who clubs illegally continue to ply with alcohol) part with huge sums of cash? On top of this they know that they no one is going to find out. Punters are hardly going to complain. They have the dancers under their total control. And of course, they have a range of 'regulations' in place which they use to claim 'nothing untoward goes on'.

See our FAQ
Lap Dancing
Unfit, Unsafe

It is no exaggeration to say the strip industry provides an unfit and unsafe environment for the women, including teenage girls, working in it.

Read More

¹ Segment from Channel 4 Dispatches Exposing Lap Dancing [note: sexual imagery although dimly] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XgixL_6lVs8

² New Rules, Same Old Rule Breaking <http://www.notbuyingit.org.uk/StripSleazeRecent>

³ Bindel 'Profitable Exploits: Lap Dancing in the UK' : <http://www.glasgow.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=8107&>

⁴ Sanders et al 'The Regulatory Dance: Sexual consumption in the night time economy' [Initial Findings: http://www.notbuyingit.org.uk/sites/default/files/Sanders%20Initial%20Findings.pdf](http://www.notbuyingit.org.uk/sites/default/files/Sanders%20Initial%20Findings.pdf)

⁵ Myth 'Strippers Are Loaded' www.notbuyingit.org.uk/StrippersLoaded

⁶ Court of Appeal overturns ruling on Stringfellows dancer <https://www.michelmores.com/news-views/news/court-appeal-overturns-ruling-stringfellows-dancer>

⁷ Strip Clubs Create No Go Zones www.notbuyingit.org.uk/NoGoZones

Sammy, Elena, Samantha and all other lap dancer testimonies: <http://www.notbuyingit.org.uk/strip-publications#Strip>