

# Draft Guidance: Sheffield Nil Cap Public Consultation

*Added on from K's guidance and previous Union resources from Edinburgh and Bristol Union consultations. Collated and expanded by Gemma.*

## **Background**

Sheffield council have put forward a newly drafted SEV policy which entails enforcing a nil cap. The public consultation is open for responses until 1st July 2024.

We have put guidance together on how to best answer the public consultation survey in order to stop a strip club ban locally.

The current status of Sheffield is that there are no strip clubs; Spearmint Rhino decided to end business in 2020 during the pandemic and had experienced near-yearly objections to licence renewals, predominantly headed by Not Buying It. This same Sex Work Exclusionary Radical Feminist Group still has a core strong-hold in Sheffield and wishes to see the implementation of a nil cap locally in Sheffield and nationwide.

## **Survey Questions & Guidance**

1. Based on the results of the consultation undertaken in 2019 and having regard to the character of each of the areas, we are proposing a 'nil limit' on Sexual Entertainment Venues in Sheffield.  
Do you agree with this limit?

### **We recommend: Definitely disagree**

2. We think it would not be acceptable to locate a sexual entertainment venue in the following areas; what do you think?

### **We recommend: Definitely disagree to all**

3. Is there an area(s) in Sheffield that you think would be suitable to licence a sexual entertainment venue?

**You could answer with the following (*please adapt slightly to make the answer unique to you and not glanced over as a repeat*):**

- There is no reliable evidence to suggest sexual entertainment venues cause any disruption to public life, or that licensing a sexual entertainment venue has any correlation with VAWG, these venues could be placed anywhere.
  - SEV's should be placed in areas where they can reliably conduct business, as a key part of night time economy.
  - SEV's should be placed where the workers of the clubs are able to access safe, good transport links to get home at late hours.
  - SEV's are part of the nighttime economy, and their advertising is heavily curtailed under the licensing scheme, so would have no impact being in proximity to schools/places of worship etc.
4. The proximity of the following types of premises should be taken into account when considering an application for a sexual entertainment venue licence.

**We recommend: Definitely disagree to all**

5. Are there any other types of premises that we should take into account when considering proximity?

**You could answer with the following (*please adapt slightly to make the answer unique to you and not glanced over as a repeat*):**

- SEV's are part of the nighttime economy, and their advertising is heavily curtailed under the licensing scheme, so would have no impact being in proximity to schools/places of worship etc.
  - SEV's should be placed in areas where they can reliably conduct business, as a key part of night time economy.
  - They should be in close proximity to reliable transport links for workers in SEV's.
6. We are not proposing to place any limit on the number of sex shops in Sheffield, provided they meet the policy.  
Do you agree?

**We recommend: Definitely agree**

7. We are not proposing to place any limit on the number of sex cinemas in Sheffield, provided they meet the policy.  
Do you agree?

**We recommend: Definitely agree**

8. Do you think the draft policy is easy to understand?

**Personal preference.**

9. Please tell us if there are any other comments you would like to submit.

**You could answer with the following (*please adapt slightly to make the answer unique to you and not glanced over as a repeat. Add your own responses to make your answer even stronger*):**

- There is no evidence that strip clubs directly correlate with, nor cause, instances of violence, particularly violence against women. Studies such as the Lilith Report that indicate there is a link between the two have since been debunked by academics for a number of issues, including numerous statistical inaccuracies. See more here:  
<https://www.scribd.com/document/47185652/Green-Paper-Camden-Lilith-rape-stats>
- Stating that sex work/stripping is a form of violence against women and girls completely disregards the agency, and human and work rights of the workers.
- Enforcing a nil-cap does not eradicate stripping, but pushes workers to rely on exploitative third parties without access to workplace rights, trade union representation and basic safety (security and CCTV).
- It removes workers ability to open up their own SEV, where they get to set the terms of their working conditions.
- A nil cap constitutes indirect gender discrimination, as the majority of the workers in SEV's are women. The council does not have a mandate to decide where women should or should not work. If women's safety is in question, the answer is not to remove their ability to access work in SEV's but to strengthen their rights as workers in those workplaces.
- A nil cap ban is a policy that seeks to blame workers for the systemic problems of gender based violence. Moreover a nil-cap policy reinforces violence against women by forcing women into poverty, precarity and underground workplaces where there is no access to workers' rights.

- Rejecting a nil cap policy would allow safe and legal establishments to open, meaning the local authority can have more control over the environment's conditions and how these specifically impact workers. This can only have a positive effect on public safety.
- The current system of strip club licensing and regulations are harmful, as they were made without any direct consultation with workers themselves, and actively impede workers' from accessing basic rights. Any change to SEV policy should be made in conjunction with workers themselves, with their voices and expertise leading the process.
- The lack of worker input into the draft policy is concerning and evident. The council should be consulting with the people that this policy would affect the most.
- It is extreme to propose a nil cap when there are no current strip clubs- imposing this based on hypotheticals is draconian.
- The draft policy, nil cap rationale and equality impact assessment seem very heavily weighted in favour of a nil cap without balance or consideration advocating for the other side.
- The nil cap rationale is extreme. It seems inaccurate to deem every part of Sheffield completely unsuitable to allow for a strip club. A strip club licence should be an option to apply for and that specific premise's circumstances should be considered, rather than implementing a blanket ban.
- The Equality Impact Assessment is unbalanced, subjective and only provides evidence which is in favour of the nil cap. Despite there being plenty of research, there is no evidence cited around the negative impact of a nil cap on sex workers.
- There is no evidence that trafficking is a problem within the UK strip club industry. Indeed, it is far more likely to become an issue if the industry is unlicensed and pushed underground as a result of a zero cap.

10-22. Answer according to your details.

**Fill out the survey here**

<https://haveyoursay.sheffield.gov.uk/sex-establishment-licensing-policy-consultation/surveys/sex-establishment-licensing-policy-survey>

**Read the Sexual Establishment Venue Licensing Consultation here**

<https://haveyoursay.sheffield.gov.uk/sex-establishment-licensing-policy-consultation>