Dear Bristol Councillors and MPs,

I write to implore you to support the proposed nil cap licensing of Sexual Entertainment Venues (SEVs) policy in Bristol.

The closure of strip clubs would represent a significant move towards taking a stand against gender inequality and a strong acknowledgment of the links between the sex industry and a cultural acceptance and normalisation of violence against women. As a woman, I call upon you to support the nil cap so that Bristol, as the biggest city so far taking the stance, can lead the way supporting women’s safety everywhere.

Misogyny as a hate crime kills more people a year than any other hate crime and yet has received the least focus. There is an epidemic of violence against women and girls which we have seen all too clearly in the wake of the tragic murders of young women like Sabina Nessa; Julia James; Bibaa Henry; Nicole Smallwood; Sarah Everard and the three women a week killed due to male violence in this country.

As Her Majesty’s Inspector of Constabulary, Zoë Billingham, stated earlier on this year: “*Offending against women and girls is deep-rooted and pervasive in our society. Urgent action is needed to uproot and address this.”*

Bristol is committed to the elimination of violence against women and girls. As well as having a Women’s Commission and a Domestic Violence Commission, Bristol has been awarded [White Ribbon status](https://www.whiteribbon.org.uk/) for its commitment to ending violence against women. But the continued licensing of SEVs by Bristol City Council disregards the safety of women and girls and diminishes the status of Bristol as a place where both women and men can lead fulfilled lives in a safe and fair society.

There is extensive evidence about the harm these venues can cause: they condone, encourage, reinforce and *profit from* harmful gender stereotypes and normalise the objectification of women. The link between sexual violence and men’s objectification of, feelings of entitlement towards and dominance over women is well-evidenced. While not all men who hold these attitudes towards women perpetrate sexual violence, all sexual violence begins with these attitudes.

This is not about removing individual women’s rights to earn a living nor is it about making women responsible for men’s behaviour. Itfocuses on a bigger conversation around changing the behaviours of men and boys in order to make our city a safer, more equal place to live for all women and girls.

I ask you, as a public representative, to take a stand against the relicensing of strip clubs. Please support Bristol City Council in its proposal to implement a nil cap policy on SEVs to support the safety of all women and girls in the City and everywhere.

Best wishes,