

OBJECT Press Release

HOME OFFICE MUST ACT ON LAP DANCING CLUBS

Commenting on the news that Rt. Hon. Jacqui Smith MP will launch tougher licensing of lap dancing clubs (1) Dr. Sasha Rakoff, Director of Object (2) said:

“We welcome moves to place lap dancing clubs into the same licensing category as sex shops and sex cinemas. The current system places such clubs in a ‘one size fits all’ category used for pubs and restaurants and is clearly inadequate. It has acted as a green light to lap dancing clubs, and a green light to sexism by helping to mainstream an industry which promotes seeing women as sex objects, not people. Lap dancing clubs are clearly not ordinary leisure venues, as highlighted by our campaign **Stripping the Illusion**. The Government’s inclusion of these reforms with measures to tackle prostitution reflects the fact that lap dancing clubs are the softer end of the sex industry.

Lap dancing clubs should be licensed for what they are – Sex Encounter Establishments - venues where visual entertainment designed to sexually stimulate takes place. This will give local communities greater control in the licensing of lap dancing clubs in their area and allow gender equality to be considered in licensing processes. Local councils across the country, backed by the Local Government Association, have asked for extra powers in the licensing of lap dancing clubs (3). Given their rapid expansion rate it is imperative that Rt. Hon Jacqui Smith MP include licensing reforms in the Home Office Policing and Crime Reduction Bill (4)”.

For more information please contact Sandrine Leveque at sandrine@object.org.uk

Notes to editors

(1) The Rt. Hon. Jacqui Smith has said that local communities will be given greater powers to control lap dancing clubs in their area by placing such venues in the same category as sex shops and sex cinemas:

<http://www.google.com/hostednews/ukpress/article/ALeqM5g1fXBwqYu6B8gD7CYEbRIIdX1BveA>

(2) Object is a women’s rights organisation which campaigns against the increased objectification of women in the media and popular culture. www.object.org.uk

(3) The Government undertook a consultation with Local Authorities on whether they would like enhanced powers to regulate lap dancing clubs. The consultation was coordinated by the Department of Culture, Media and Sport and saw 75% of respondents calling for more control in the licensing of lap dancing clubs, of which 90% wished these controls provided by lap dancing clubs being licensed as Sex Encounter Establishments:

http://www.culture.gov.uk/reference_library/foi_requests/5500.aspx

(4) On Tuesday 25th November Object will be handing in a petition of 6000 signatures to Number Ten, calling on the Home Office to toughen licensing of lap dancing clubs. The petition will be handed in by women formerly in lap dancing, MPs and campaign supporters.