

(SPI0025)

**Written evidence submitted by Chloe Ward (SPI0025)**

[Note: This evidence has been redacted by the Committee. Text in square brackets has been inserted where text has been redacted.]

Statement from the morning of Sunday 31st October

1. In the early hours of Sunday 31st October I was in [a] nightclub for Halloween weekend with two friends. We entered the venue at around 12:40am and at this point I had only 2 drinks so not a lot for me at all. We were standing and waiting in the queue to go in for quite a while and when we did enter, they didn't do any security checks and no bag checks. We went straight upstairs to one of the 3 rooms they have and went to the bar to order a drink. I stood at the bar next to a few people as it is in a small space and busy. My friend ordered us a drink to which I remember holding it as soon as the barman gave it to me. I then came across a friend who I hadn't seen for 4 years so went over to the side of the bar he was at to talk to him (S). I remember drinking my drink pretty quickly whilst talking to him and a couple of his friends. The two friends I originally came into the venue with had gone so I tried to look for them in the room as I don't remember it being very busy, but they went home so I went back to stay with the old friend (S). This is all I remember from the night and from here I have no recollection of anything. I have information which friends have given me so I know roughly what happened. I was still with (S) and I found pictures on my phone that somebody had taken at 1am. They were me with (S) and his friend dancing and hugging which I have no memory of and I don't know who had my phone too. (S) has told me that we stuck together and went downstairs and outside to the smoking area and two other friends of his came over (M) and (D). The four of us then walked to another nightclub about a (0.3 mile/5 minute walk away) and (M) told me that on the walk there I did fall over and stumble but she just thought I was drunk and it was an accident, again I do not remember any of this walk. We went into Unit 17 Ipswich and upstairs to the bar. This is when I started to react badly to the substance that was injected into me. (M) stated that I was leaning on the bar with my head on it and started slurring my words. Very quickly after this I collapsed onto the floor and was unconscious. I was carried to the nightclub's medical room (which I feel is very important for a nightclub to have as it allowed me to have privacy). I was laying on the floor unresponsive with (S & M & D) in the room with me and a female security/bouncer. I have been told I was unconscious for around 3-4 hours. They hesitated phoning an ambulance as there were bouncers assuming I had just drank too much and was ok. An ambulance was called while I was unresponsive but they weren't able to come quickly due to the busy-ness of the Halloween Saturday night and how stretched they are for resources at the moment, understandably. At one point I did regain consciousness and remember seeing my friend (M) and the female bouncer talking to me. Apparently, every time a male tried to touch me or help I would then shout and become aggressive which I believe is due to myself being assaulted in the past. I lost consciousness/became unresponsive again and I don't know what happened during this time. The moment I regained consciousness I was getting pinned down onto the floor by multiple security guards and the paramedics, so all I saw were lots of legs holding me down on the floor. I didn't know where I was or what had happened but I was told I was screaming and became aggressive/violent which is why they were holding me down. As this was the first memory I have from the night I was terrified and thought I was getting attacked and waking up in a different place was horrible. This is totally out of

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character for me. I was then seen by the ambulance crew who I remember were lovely and carried out their usual observations which were fine. I then started to get emotional as I was terrified but they comforted me and stayed with me until I felt stable enough to get down the stairs. My mental health started to take over and I was feeling suicidal. They believed that there was no reason I had to go to the hospital to get checked so when I was standing and talking again they called for a taxi to take me home. I don't really have a lot of recollection of getting home but I went straight to sleep. I got home at about 7am (Sunday morning) and slept until 9pm. I got up when I woke up and had a drink but then went straight back to sleep until about 9am in the morning (Monday). I feel like it sedated me as I never sleep for that long, usually around 6-7 hours per day. When I woke up I felt a pain on the side of my leg near my hip area so I had a look and there was a bruise with a little red/pink pinprick in the middle. It felt like what your arm feels like when you have an injection, achy and hurts to touch/press. I didn't want to believe that happened as I didn't really know what to do about it and whether to say anything to somebody or not. I phoned my GP later on in the day to ask if a blood test should be done, but they said they wouldn't provide me with one as they didn't think it was necessary. As the day went on I could feel it more and sometimes it hurt to sit down. I checked the trousers I wore that night to see if there was a hole where the needle came through and if there was a small hole. I believed I was definitely spiked by a needle. I felt fatigued and tired the next day but it wasn't until Tuesday night/whole of Wednesday/Thursday morning that I felt unwell. I wasn't able to stand without nearly fainting, I couldn't keep any food up and I had to crawl around my house which I even struggled to do. I felt very nauseous and constantly dizzy. I had a blood test taken on Wednesday evening after demanding the doctors to allow me to have one, but it came back clear. I had a full blood count and tests for Hepatitis and HIV which could've been contracted by the needle. I reported the incident to the police on Tuesday morning and they came over on Wednesday evening to take a detailed statement from me. They also came over on Thursday evening to ask me for a urine sample which I did, but I haven't been notified of anything about it. They are currently still investigating the case and checking the CCTV from the nightclub.

2. My experience has traumatised me and I don't think many people realise how much of a long-term effect it has on you. I am now too scared to be in busy places as I don't feel safe or trust anybody and I don't want to go out drinking with my friend whether it be in a pub, bar or nightclub so I am missing out on enjoying myself. If I didn't have S & M & D around me I don't know where I would've ended up or what would've happened to me.

3. I believe lots of measures need to be crucial in the businesses running. I understand it is difficult to stop people bringing things into nightclubs and not being able to search everywhere, but it may be able to prevent it. There needs to be more trained security guards with training on what to do when they believe an individual has been targeted and recognise the signs, as I think they assume most people have 'drank too much' and assume it was self-inflicted so they kick them out onto the street. Other security measures could be bags and pockets checked, ID scanners, metal detectors, light pat downs of an individual, drink stop tops and have a limited number of people in the building at one time.

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