

### **Written submission from Avon and Somerset Police (SPP0106)**

In Bristol we were approached by a young woman who had been sexually touched whilst out at a nightclub in the Centre of the City on a Friday night. An unknown male had touched her bottom on the dance floor.

When the woman spoke to her friends about the incident it became clear to her that most of her friends were not surprised it had happened and described similar experiences themselves.

The young woman spoke to her mother about the incident and together they decided to report it to police. Although the police were unable to identify the offender, we did agree that we would instigate some work to look at the prevalence of this type of sexual assault on women.

Over the next few months we conducted sexual touching surveys of women in the Night Time Economy and were extremely concerned to discover that over 80% of respondents had been sexually touched previously whilst out in the Centre of Bristol on the NTE.

We have created an awareness poster and had some good national press coverage to help promote our zero tolerance approach to this issue and have increased pressure on licenced premises to take responsibility for dealing with reports of touching to their staff.

Reporting of these offences remains low but we are hopeful that a multi-agency approach incorporating licensed premises and door staff can create an environment of hostility towards offenders and remove the apparent feeling of entitlement that some men have towards women's bodies when in crowded places.

In addition to this, I am concerned about historic and recent academic research which indicates the main drivers for sexual assault by men towards women to be attitudes of objectification and entitlement. These attitudes seem to be exemplified within the Sexual Entertainment Venue industry and in particular within lap dancing clubs.

In conjunction with the Police and Crime Commissioners Office, we are seeking to support a mil cap on SEV's in Bristol to fall in line with the Cities status as a White Ribbon City as one that supports women's' equality.

As the City Centre Neighbourhood Manager, I believe that the attitudes of some men around objectification and entitlement are leading to sexual assaults on women. Women are far more likely to be the victims of these types of crime than men and anything that can be done to tackle this issue should be.

The licensing of SEV's and in particular lap dancing clubs, sends a clear message that authorities support and licence activities that encourage these anachronistic attitudes.

June 2018