

## Strip club ban to be reviewed in Edinburgh

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Edinburgh City Council are to review their ban on strip clubs across the capital next month due to concerns that their budget is too small to succeed [legal challenges](#) in court.

[United Sex Workers Union](#) and three sexual entertainment venues (SEVs) across the city have successfully raised £20,000 to launch a judicial review against the council's decision, which is to be trialled at the [Court of Session](#) on 1st and 2nd December.

This could overturn the council's vote in March to impose a '[nil cap](#)' on the number of SEVs in Edinburgh, which could force four venues to close and plummet hundreds of the city's sex workers into [unemployment](#) from April 2023.

Morningside Councillor [Mandy Watt](#) said: "Scotland's Equally Safe strategy for ending violence against women and girls defines commercial sexual exploitation as an activity which includes prostitution, lap dancing, stripping, pornography and trafficking. Reducing the number of venues where such activities take place is a positive step that we can take towards making Edinburgh safer for women and girls."



Burke & Hare is one of Edinburgh's famous strip clubs. (c) Rachel Kinnear

The council had originally attempted to prevent sex workers opposing the ban from attending the court hearing, whilst also contending that the union is responsible to finance the council's legal fees.

These calls have now been denied by the Court of Sessions which have permitted the union access to the court hearing and awarded them with a [Protective Expenses Order](#), which frees them of liability to fund the council's court expenses.

Those who oppose the ban have expressed concerns that the 'nil-cap' will not improve women's safety and instead force the industry underground, making it more dangerous for workers.

United Sex Workers Union said: "We have fought Edinburgh Council to even be included in the Judicial Review because, unlike the council, we believe the workers who will be the most directly impacted by the policy should be at the centre of any discussion surrounding it.

"Throughout this process, Edinburgh City Council have refused to consider the safety of the strip club workers, despite them consistently voicing their concerns about losing their livelihoods and access to safe workspaces.

"There is no evidence that strip clubs cause or have any correlation with gendered violence; yet there is a wealth of evidence from dancers in cities that have already implemented nil cap policies, that their work has only become more dangerous since."