

What is the Strippers Union all about?

What's the strippers' union?

Trade unions are groups of workers coming together to organise for better pay and conditions. The strippers' union is looking at issues that affect dancers working in clubs, such as house fees, fines, late pay and holidays. Through working together, we can stand up to our bosses and make demands!

The strippers' union is part of United Voices of the World (UVW), a trade union representing workers across different sectors. When you sign up, you join UVW, so no one will know you are a stripper (if you're not out), and the union will never share your details with HMRC, immigration or the police. You can even sign up with your dancer name!

As a registered trade union, we can make legal representations and take exploitative bosses to court. Unionised strippers already won significant amounts in unpaid holiday and compensation for harassment. Our main aim is to prove in court that strippers are 'workers' and entitled to workers' rights.

Strippers are under attack. Can you help?

We can! We support dancers across the country when club licenses come up for renewal and help them fend off so-called 'feminist' groups who want to see all strip clubs shut down.

We are also speaking to local authorities, in order to make sure strippers are listened to when SEV licenses are considered.

How will worker status benefit strippers?

Under UK law, strippers are 'workers'. That means performing work on terms dictated by the clubs, not by us (for example, what hours to work, how much to charge and get paid, what to wear and lots of other house rules).

However, currently all UK clubs mis-classify strippers as 'independent contractors' (or self-employed), so that they don't have to give us basic rights at work, including:

- > A guaranteed income for all hours worked (never going home with no pay or, worse, losing money on a dead shift)
- > Paid annual leave pro-rata, so you are paid your average earnings while taking time off, like people in all other industries
- > The right to take maternity or sick leave without the risk of termination
- > Trade union protections for organising at work, whistle-blowing or going on strike
- > The right to trade union recognition, so strippers can negotiate collectively, without anyone being singled out as a troublemaker
- > Protection from discrimination by racist or homophobic managers
- > Protection from sexual harassment at work
- > Protection from unlawful deductions (fines for being sick are definitely unlawful)
- > Regular breaks (that's just your human right!)

My work is flexible - will I lose this benefit with worker status?

The way we work now is already hugely regulated by clubs - managers decide our hours and we often have to give our shifts weeks in advance. Having our workers' rights recognised won't change anything in terms of flexibility - we will still be able to negotiate shifts and take a break when we need it.

I make good money - will I be earning less as a worker?

No! As recognised workers, strippers will be able to collectively negotiate for better pay, including less house fees and commissions, and clubs will no longer be able to change the rules without consultation.

Most importantly, strippers have the right to be paid for all hours worked (even if no clients turn up) in addition to the money we make from dances and VIPs.

No more losing money while at work!

What can the union do about stigma?

Alongside fighting for workers' rights, we also campaign for the full decriminalisation of all other forms of sex work and an end to stigma.

We show that sex workers know their rights, that we are smart, organised and fearless.

As part of the trade union movement, we are supported by thousands of others, who stand with us and remind us that we are not alone - we are respected and valued as fellow workers.

Because sex work is work.

Why should I join the union?

Because the more of us are in the union, the harder it becomes for bosses to ignore us! Even if just half of the strippers at each club joined, we can demand the club recognises the union and negotiate together for better pay and conditions.

Won't I get sacked for joining the union?

It is illegal for a business to sack a worker for joining a union. But if they do, the union is behind you - we will speak to management on your behalf and, if necessary, take them to court. UVW recently won a number significant 'trade union victimisation' cases, where our members were awarded A LOT of money.

We know how to fight the bosses!

Don't clubs need to take a cut of our earnings to stay open?

Nope. House fees and commissions are simply extra profit, used to subsidise costs. Strip clubs can make money in the same way bars and pubs do: by selling drinks or charging an entrance fee.

Don't forget: strippers are the reason people go to strip clubs - we're the ones bringing the customers in, Surely, clubs should be paying us, not the other way around!

I've heard about what's happening in the US. We don't want that here!

British employment laws are very different from American laws. Workers in the UK have far more protections than in the US, so the changes made there aren't relevant to us. The UK 'worker' status we're pushing for means more rights (and income!), for strippers, not less.

Who makes decisions in the union?

You do! We are a members led trade union and strippers make all the decisions about our campaigns and actions.

How do I join?

Go to www.uvwunion.org.uk

Follow and contact us on @unitedstripper

Email us on strippers@uvwunion.org.uk

Or come to one of our regular London meetings.