Support After Rape and Sexual Violence Leeds

PO BOX

LS

Leeds

info@sarsvl.org.uk

Entertainment Licensing

Leeds City Council, Civic Hall

Leeds, LS1 1UR

Dear Sir/ Madam,

I am writing to you in regard to the review of the premises license in force at the premises known as **The Mezz Club, Unit 2, Waterloo House, Assembly Street Leeds, LS2 7DE.** This representation is being made on behalf of Support After Rape and Sexual Violence Leeds, a local charity which provides free and confidential support to women and girls who have been affected by any kind of sexual violence at any time in their lives.

In regards to this review I would like to draw Leeds Licensing Authority’s attention to the following points:

* In the summary of the notice of review, it is stated that a key reason West Yorkshire Police have requested the review is that via promotion which Mezz Club management approve “young males are being encouraged to engage in violent sexual acts against females” later the notice states that “DPS and management support these promotions and permit overly sexually themed events to take place at the premises which are likely to lead to increase in associated offences and pose a real threat to public safety”. SARSVL fully concur with both these statements, the promotion by Tequila UK of their ‘Freshers’ Violation’ club night at the Mezz club was full of language and comments which trivialised rape and sexual violence against women. This is unacceptable not just because of the risk of increased sexual offences but also because, by promoting these attitudes as acceptable, a culture is encouraged which trivialises rape, impacting on how willing victims are to seek help or report offence.
* In addition to the above, promotion of an event in such a manner is in contradiction on equalities legislation. The Equality Act 2010 places a duty on the council to exercise its functions with due regard to the need to Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited under the Equality Act 2010.
* Since the ‘Freshers’ Violation’ video was removed from Tequila UK’s Facebook page, The Mezz Club, has completely failed to take any responsibility for what occurred. On 10th October, Yorkshire Evening Post published a story on their website related to the promotion and a spokesperson from Mezz was quoted as saying that the bar did not organise the event and “it is run by an external company” (<http://www.yorkshireeveningpost.co.uk/news/latest-news/top-stories/rape-banter-in-clubnight-video-aimed-at-leeds-students-1-6131397>) . In a further Yorkshire Evening Post article, Mezz issued a statement which said that Tequila UK had “proved themselves to be very responsible promoters”. (<http://www.yorkshireeveningpost.co.uk/news/latest-news/top-stories/police-review-leeds-city-centre-bar-licence-1-6177669>) . This can be seen to show that Mezz Club have failed to grasp the unacceptability of the ‘Freshers’ Violation’ promotion or take responsibility for activities which take place on their premises. The fact that even after the promotion has come to light, they are still describing Tequila UK as a responsible promoter, casts doubt on how seriously the take their duties as a premises license holder. In fact there is evidence predating this promotion that Tequila UK are far from responsible in their actions as promoters, for example. They were banned from promoting events in Newcastle after just three weeks.

I hope that the licensing Authority will take into account the points raised above in the course of reviewing the premises license for the premises knows as The Mezz Club. I look forward to receiving a response from yourselves in regard to this matter.

Your Faithfully,

Catriona Palin

(on behalf of Support After Rape and Sexual Violence Leeds)