THE HYPNOTISM ACT 1952 (AS AMENDED)
CONDITIONS FOR HYPNOTISM ETC

Conditions for hypnotism, mesmerism or any similar act or process which produces or is intended to produce in any other person any form of induced sleep or trance in which the susceptibility of the mind of that person to suggestion or direction is increased or intended to be increased.

1. The council to be informed in writing 28 days in advance of the performance of:

    (a) The name (both real and stage, if different) and address of the person who will give the performance (hereafter referred to as the "hypnotist"), along with details of their last three performances (where and when); and

    (b) A statement as to whether, and if so giving full details thereof, the hypnotist has been previously refused or had withdrawn a consent by any licensing authority or been convicted of an offence under the Hypnotism Act 1952 or of an offence involving the breach of a condition regulating or prohibiting the giving of a performance of hypnotism on any person at any theatre or other place of public amusement or public entertainment.

2. Publicity

    (a) No poster, advertisement or programme for the performance which is likely to cause public offence shall be displayed, sold or supplied by or on behalf of the licensee either at the premises or elsewhere:

    (b) Every poster, advertisement or programme for the performance, which is displayed, sold or supplied shall include, clearly and legibly, the following statement:
    "Volunteers, who must be aged 18 or over, can refuse at any point to continue taking part in the performance"

3. Insurance

    (c) The performance shall be covered to a reasonable level of public liability insurance. The hypnotist must provide evidence of this to the local authority if requested; and it must be available for inspection at the performance;

4. Physical Arrangements

    (d) The means of access between the auditorium and the stage for participants shall be properly lit and free from obstruction;

    (e) A continuous white or yellow line shall be provided on the floor of any raised stage at a safe distance from the edge. This line shall run parallel with the edge of the stage for its whole width. The hypnotist shall inform all subjects that they must not cross the line while under hypnosis, unless specified to do so as part of the performance.

5. Treatment of Audience and Subjects

(f) Before starting the performance the hypnotist shall make a statement to the audience, in a serious manner, identifying those groups of people who should not volunteer to participate in it; explaining what volunteers might be asked to perform; informing the audience of the possible risks from embarrassment or anxiety; and emphasising that subjects may cease to participate at any time they wish. The following is a suggested statement, which might be amended as necessary to suit individual styles as long as the overall message remains the same:

"I shall be looking for volunteers aged over 18 who are willing to be hypnotised and participate in the show. Anyone who comes forward should be prepared to take part in a range of entertaining hypnotic suggestions but can be assured that they will not be asked to do anything which is indecent, offensive or harmful. Volunteers need to be in normal physical and mental health and I must ask that no one volunteers if they have a history of mental illness, or are under the influence of alcohol or other drugs or are pregnant."

(g) No form of coercion shall be used to persuade members of the audience to participate in the performance. In particular, hypnotists shall not use selection techniques which seek to identify and coerce onto the stage the most suggestible members of the audience without their prior knowledge of what is intended. Any use of such selection techniques (e.g. asking members of the audience to clasp their hands together and asking those who cannot free them again to come onto the stage) should only be used when the audience is fully aware of what is intended and that participation is entirely voluntary at every stage;

(h) If volunteers are to remain hypnotised during an interval in the performance, a reasonable number of attendants as agreed with the licensing authority shall be in attendance throughout to ensure their safety;

6. Prohibited Actions

(i) The performance shall be so conducted as not to be likely to cause offence to any person in the audience or any hypnotised subject;

(j) The performance shall be so conducted as not to be likely to cause harm, anxiety or distress to any person in the audience or any hypnotised subject. In particular, the performance shall not include:

(i) Any suggestion involving the age regression of a subject (i.e. asking the subject to revert to an earlier age in their life; this does not prohibit the hypnotist from asking subjects to act as if they were a child etc);

(ii) Any suggestion that the subject has lost something (e.g. a body part) which, if it really occurred, could cause considerable distress;

(iii) Any demonstration in which the subject is suspended between two supports (so called “catalepsy”);
(iv) The consumption of any harmful or noxious substance;
(v) Any demonstration of the power of hypnosis to block pain (e.g. pushing a needle through the skin);

(k) The performance shall not include the giving of hypnotherapy or any other form of treatment.

7. Completion

(l) All hypnotised subjects shall remain in the presence of the hypnotist and in the room where the performance takes place until all hypnotic suggestions have been removed.

(m) All hypnotic or post-hypnotic suggestions shall be completely removed from the minds of all the subjects and the audience before the performance ends. All hypnotised subjects shall have the suggestions removed both individually and collectively and the hypnotists shall confirm with each of them they feel well and relaxed (the restriction on post-hypnotic suggestions does not prevent the hypnotist telling subjects that they will feel well and relaxed after the suggestions are removed)

(n) The hypnotist shall remain available for at least 30 minutes after the show to help deal with any problems that might arise. (Such help may take the form of reassurance in the event of headaches or giddiness but this condition does not imply that the hypnotist is an appropriate person to treat anyone who is unwell)