

THE LICENSING ACT 2003 - REPRESENTATION FROM RESPONSIBLE AUTHORITY

LANCASHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL TRADING STANDARDS SERVICE

I am Jason Middleton, Principal Officer employed by Lancashire County Council Trading Standards Service.

I have delegated authority to exercise the County Council's powers and duties under relevant Trading Standards related Acts of Parliament and in this capacity to provide written and oral representations on behalf of the Lancashire County Council Head of Service for Trading Standards.

I make this statement using facts and matters within my own knowledge. Any facts and matters that are not within my own knowledge are true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Lancashire County Council Trading Standards Service wishes to make representations in support of the application from Lancashire Police to review the premises licence at Greenwoods Convenience Store, 88 Seymour Street, Chorley PR6 0SN.

On 17th May 2023 an underage test purchasing operation for knives was conducted by Lancashire Police and Lancashire Trading Standards. The premises failed and a trimming knife was sold to the 13- and 15-year-old test purchasers by the owner, Mr Paviter Singh. A Trading Standards Officer was present in the shop at the time and witnessed the sale take place.

Immediately after the failed test purchase the shop was revisited by Trading Standards and Police and Mr Singh was given relevant and proportionate advice. Non-compliant e-cigarettes were noticed on display and Mr Singh was advised to remove these from sale.

On 25th May 2023 an officer from the Trading Standards Service test purchased a bottle of 'Gorlovka' vodka from the shop. The same day Trading Standards, Lancashire Police and Chorley Council Licensing inspected the premises. Four bottles of Gorlovka vodka, and three bottles of Au vodka was seized from the shop due to the bottles possessing the wrong type of duty stamp on the product, indicating that they were non duty paid (smuggled). 177 non-compliant e-cigarettes were also seized (some from a box in the storeroom, and some from underneath the counter).

The Gorlovka and Au vodka have been analysed by the Public Analyst. The Au vodka was found to contain less alcohol than declared on the bottle, in contravention of the Spirit Drinks Regulations 2008.

On 2nd June 2023 a further test purchasing operation was carried out, this time for alcohol. A member of staff sold four bottles of Stella to the 16- and 17-year-old test purchasers.

On 5th June 2023 Trading Standards sent a written warning to the shop in relation to the failed knife test purchase.

Mr Singh was interviewed under caution in relation to the smuggled vodka, non-compliant e-cigarettes, and alcohol underage sale on 10th July 2023. He claimed to have purchased the Gorlovka and Au vodka from a man who turned up at the shop in a white van offering him alcohol. He obtained no business details from this man, or any receipt or invoice. He claimed he was told that he would receive a receipt by email, but this never arrived. He paid £65 for 6 bottles of Gorlovka vodka and £100 for 4 bottles of Au vodka. The items were being sold in the shop for £11.49 and £29.99 respectively. He was advised that this was not a reputable source from which to purchase alcohol for the business.

The e-cigarettes were purchased from a wholesaler in the Cheetham Hill area of Manchester. When asked whether he was aware that the products could not legally be sold in his shop he replied 'yes'. He stated that he had put the items in a box in the storeroom on 17th May 2023 in order to remove them from the shop but had not yet done this by the time officers inspected on 25th May 2023.

Mr Singh claimed to have carried out additional staff training after the failed knife test purchase. He showed officers a refusals book which he has been using in the shop. The first entry was on the 4th June 2023. He said he did have a refusal recording system prior to this, but he did not have this available to show the interviewing officers.

In the opinion of Lancashire County Council Trading Standards Service, the information presented is evidence that the prevention of crime and disorder and protection of children from harm licensing objectives have been disregarded at these premises.

I reserve the right to bring further evidence to any hearing, should any arise between now and then.

I believe the contents of this statement to be true.

Signed: 

Date: 10/07/2023

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