

**STATEMENT OF WITNESS**

*(Criminal Procedure Rules, r. 27.2;  
Criminal Justice Act 1967, s. 9, Magistrates' Courts Act 1980, s.5B)*

**STATEMENT OF:** Michael Stedman

**Age of witness (if over 18, enter "over 18"):** Over 18

**Occupation:** Enforcement Officer

**This statement (consisting of 2 pages) is true to the best of my knowledge and belief and I make it knowing that, if it is tendered in evidence, I shall be liable to prosecution if I have wilfully stated in it anything which I know to be false, or do not believe to be true.**

**Signed:**  .....

**Date:** 05/07/22

I am employed by Gateshead Council as an Enforcement Officer with Trading Standards. I am an authorised officer for the purposes of enforcing the provisions of the Tobacco and Related Products Regulations 2016 and the Trade Marks Act 1994.

On Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2021 I went to Sheriffs Highway Stores at 168/170, Sheriffs Highway, Gateshead, NE9 5SD and spoke to the only staff member present, a man who I now know to be the defendant Mr Jaafar Mousa Jaafar, who informed me he is a director of the company which owns the shop. I spoke to him and gave advice regarding sales of age-restricted products including alcoholic beverages, tobacco products and electronic cigarettes. I asked him if there were any staff training records and he replied that there were not. I issued him an "Age Restricted Sales Retailer Information Pack" as supplied by Trading Standards, which contains a large amount of advice for retailers on all matters related to under-age sales, and he signed a form to confirm he had received it (produced MS1).

On the morning of Thursday 24th February 2022 I spoke to a 15-year-old child volunteer who had been provided with money and instructions to carry out a test purchase for alcohol at a number of shops and took a photograph of him standing alongside my colleague, Trading Standards officer Matthew Harman (produced MS2). Approximately 2.05pm that day we visited Sheriffs Highway Stores. Matthew Harman entered the shop and shortly after, the volunteer entered, while I remained in the street outside.

A few minutes later the volunteer came out of the shop carrying a bottle of Desperados lager, an alcoholic beverage. Matthew Harman then came out of the shop. He took the bottle from the volunteer and re-entered the shop to tell staff what had happened.

On the Wednesday 13th April 2022, after receiving intelligence that illegal tobacco products were being sold from a van linked to the business, I attended Sheriffs Highway Stores, again accompanied by Matthew Harman. Behind the counter of the shop at the time of the visit was Mr Jaafar Mousa Jaafar. Parked outside of the premises there was a white Volkswagen Crafter van reg no NC56YNM which was registered to Jaafar Mousa Jaafar.

We carried out a search of the shop followed by a search of the van. While I was searching the inside of the rear of the van, Jaafar stood in the back of the van and stood immediately in front of a carrier bag which was on the floor next to the wheel arch on the offside of the vehicle. Other than two bin liners containing clothes which were on the nearside of the vehicle this was the only item in the van. I picked up the carrier bag and saw it contained four packets of Richmond cigarettes which appeared to be counterfeit and did not carry the health warnings as required by the Tobacco and Related Products Regulations 2016. Matthew Harman seized these cigarettes.

