

Witness Contact Details

Name of Witness:

Home Address:.....

.....

Email Address:

Home Telephone No:.....

Business Telephone No:.....

*Male/Female

DOB:..... Place of Birth:.....

Dates to be avoided

Delete Dates of Non-availability of witness

Month:							Month:							Month:						
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31					29	30	31					29	30	31				
Month:							Month:							Month:						
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31					29	30	31					29	30	31				

Contact point, if different from above.....

Address:.....

.....

Telephone No:.....

STATEMENT TAKEN BY (print name).....

Time statement taken:.....

Place taken:

STATEMENT OF WITNESS

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

STATEMENT OF: Matthew Harman

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

Occupation: Trading Standards 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:....08/07/2022.....

I am Matthew Harman. I am employed by Gateshead Metropolitan Borough Council as a Trading Standards Officer. I am authorised for the purposes of enforcing the Licensing Act 2003 and the Tobacco and Related Products Regulations 2016.

On the 24th February 2022, at approximately 14:05, I visited a retail premises at 168 Sheriffs Highway, Gateshead, NE9 5SD trading as Sheriff Highway Stores. I was accompanied by Michael Stedman, Enforcement Officer, as well as a 15-year-old child volunteer who had been provided with money and instructions to carry out a test purchase for alcohol at the shop.

I entered the shop first and began browsing the shelves of the store without introducing myself to the sales assistant behind the till. The sales assistant behind the till was a female who I would describe as aged between her late 30s to early 40s with brown hair. At the time of our visit, she was accompanied by a young child who was also sat behind the counter of the shop.

A few seconds later, the child volunteer entered the store and approached a fridge where alcoholic products were on display. I witnessed the child volunteer pick up a bottle of Desperados lager from the fridge and take it to the till. The sales assistant sold the child volunteer the lager without speaking to him beyond asking him for the money, charging him £2.70. The child volunteer then left the store with the alcohol.

I produce **Exhibit MAH/1** the bottle of Desperados lager purchased by the 15-year-old child volunteer.

A few minutes after the sale I returned to Sheriff Highway Stores and explained to the sales assistant what had happened. The sales assistant gave me her name as "Shelly Lee". I asked her if I could see the shop's refusals register. The only refusals register that the sales assistant could find did not appear to be in use and the last entry in it had been from the 25th May 2019.

On the 23rd March 2022, a colleague in Gateshead Council's Public Health department received an email from a local NHS worker who works close to Sheriff Highway Stores alleging that she had witnessed the supply of tobacco products from the back of a van parked outside the shop. This email was forwarded to me and I produce a redacted copy of it in evidence as **Exhibit MAH/2**. The email also had a photograph of the van involved attached, which I produce in evidence as **Exhibit MAH/3**.

Signed:..... 

08/07/2022

On the 13th April 2022, after receiving intelligence that illegal tobacco products were being sold from a van linked to the business, I attended Sheriff Highway Stores, again accompanied by Michael Stedman. Behind the counter of the shop at the time of the visit was Mr Jaafar Mousa Jaafar. Parked immediately outside of the premises, at the very top of Church Road, there was a white van which was registered to Jaafar Mousa Jaafar.

We carried out a search of the retail premises followed by a search of Mr Jaafar's van. While Michael Stedman was undertaking a search of the van, Mr Jaafar stood in the back of the van and appeared to be trying to stand in the way of, or conceal, a carrier bag which was on the floor. Inside of the bag was 4 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.

I seized these cigarettes and produce them in evidence as **Exhibit MAH/4**.

On the 5th May 2022, I interviewed Mr Farhad Jamnejad, the Director of Sheriff Highway Stores Ltd in relation to the failed alcohol test purchase described above. Mr Jamnejad initially stated during the interview that he was the Designated Premises Supervisor (DPS) for the purposes of the premise alcohol licence but when challenged about this admitted that the DPS stated on the licence was an employee who had left "a few months" ago. Mr Jamnejad admitted that he had not made a written request to Gateshead Council to have the licence varied for the change of DPS.

Mr Jamnejad stated that day to day responsibility for running the business was shared between himself and Jafaar Mouusa Jaafar.

When questioned about what training the sales assistant who made the sale had received, Mr Jamnejad advised that she had only been working at the business for around 2 weeks and had been told that she was not allowed to sell any alcohol or cigarettes while either Mr Jamnejad or Mr Jafaar were in the shop to authorise it. He admitted that there was no written record or other evidence of her being given this instruction.

I also interviewed Jaafar Mousa Jaafar under caution on the same day, in relation to the above underage sales, as well as the illegal tobacco products which had been found in the back of his van.

Mr Jafaar reiterated much of what Mr Jamnejad had said during his interview regarding the steps they had taken to avoid the sale of alcohol to under 18s from the business and the instructions given to the sales assistant who had made the sale to our child volunteer. However, he confirmed that the sales assistant's name was in fact Shireen Farrier and that "Shelly Lee" was a false name she had given me on the day in a panic at what had happened.

When asked where he was at the time of the failed test purchase Mr Jafaar confirmed that he was at his house.

Mr Jafaar advised that he had reviewed CCTV footage of the incident and had asked Shireen Farrier why she had made the underage sale but she had not been able to explain why it happened. He also confirmed that Shireen Farrier was no longer working at the business.

When questioned about the illegal tobacco found in the back of his van on the 13th April 2022, Mr Jafaar denied that they were his and claimed that they must have belonged to his ex partner.

I am currently awaiting a full transcript of these interviews, but they can be made available if necessary. To date, I have been unable to contact Shireen Farrier using the details she provided or those given to me by Jafaar Mousa Jafaar.

