

**WITNESS STATEMENT**

*(Criminal Procedure Rules, r. 16.2; Criminal Justice Act 1967, s. 9)*

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Statement of Peter Spratt .....

Age if under 18 Over 18.... (If over 18 insert "over 18") Occupation: Neighbourhood Inspector .....

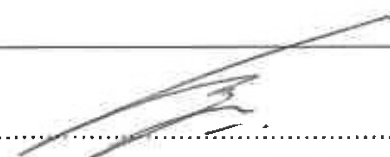
This statement (consisting of 4 page(s) each signed by me) is true to the best of my knowledge and belief and I make it knowing that, if it is tendered in evidence, I shall be liable to prosecution if I have wilfully stated in it, anything which I know to be false, or do not believe to be true

Signature .....  ..... (witness) Date: 17/11/2022

Tick if witness evidence is visually recorded  (supply witness details on rear)

I am Neighbourhood Inspector for the Barnsley Central, North and North East wards, which includes the town centre, taking an active role in matters relating to the night time economy and seeking to ensure our policing approach is proactively targeted to reduce crime and anti-social behaviour, making the town centre a safe and enjoyable environment for all. This includes engaging with Pubwatch and other forums, to work in partnership with them around matters such as Purple Flag accreditation, Best Bar None and recently running a CPD event for staff involved in the night time economy, investing in continually improving our collective approach.

I am part of the Evening and Nighttime Economy Group (ENTEG) and have worked within that group to address issues that have arisen or emerging issues are proactively addressed. An example of this includes the response to concerns around potential 'spiking' of customers in venues that recently arose, where the ENTEG group were able to swiftly agree and deliver a plan in response that included everything from the response of police to a targeted communications campaign around prevention and harm reduction. Within the communication campaign, I was able to work alongside colleagues from our communications department to ensure that venues were equipped with messages that they could use on their own social media platforms and channels.

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Continuation of Statement of: Peter Spratt.....

As part of my work within the partnership, it is also key that any emerging issues or trends identified through licensing checks or similar are fed back in and considered in relation to our response. In the weeks and months leading up to April 2022, underage drinking had been something that was a cause for concern. As such, there was a consistent message to those within venues and pubwatch around ID checks and venues maintaining consistent and acceptable standards on the checks that are made on admission to venues or in relation to the sale of alcohol. This however, did not appear to be having an impact with feedback from officers conducting licensing checks about large numbers of underage drinkers. This seemed to be particularly concentrated around the Sugar Club on Pitt Street, where I had seen previous body worn footage of customers who appeared to be very young and door staff reporting that the venue had allowed these young people in before they had come on duty.

This was a growing concern for me and when coupled with information provided that this venue particularly was allowing young people in and serving alcohol to them. I noted an increased number of young people had been located that were not from the Barnsley area. A review of the venue and its social media adverts indicated that the venue may be deliberately appealing to a younger audience. I had by this time formed sufficient concerns about the associated child protection concerns of underage drinking being so prevalent that I planned an operation to explore this concern. This operation was in effect a large-scale licensing check, in conjunction with Senior Licensing Officer Debbie Bailey and approximately 18 police officers across three public order vans, which was executed on the evening of Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> April 2022 into the early hours of Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> April 2022.

At midnight on Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> April 2022, I led all officers into the Sugar Club and conducted a check of licensable activity and to investigate if any offences under the Licensing Act were being committed. On entry to the premises there were approximately 200 customers in the venue and I gave instruction to my officers to enter and gain control of the premises, turning off music to maximise safety of officers and

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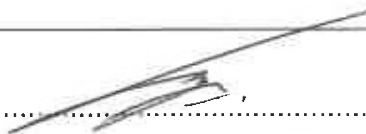
Continuation of Statement of: Peter Spratt.....

those present and allow us to communicate with those present to conduct the relevant checks. Officers were tasked to put a filter on the exits to the premises, in order for us to confirm the identification of those that were believed to be under 18. On entering the premises, I was immediately satisfied that there were a significant number of underage drinkers present. Therefore, it was necessary to identify all that we could to put in place a plan to safeguard those children who were under 18 and evidence/address this with the premises and door staff.

I allocated officers to hold those who were under 18 in a specific area of the club, within the courtyard, while we asked others to leave and therefore minimise the chance of any potential disorder while persons present were intoxicated the venue could not continue to serve alcohol while our checks were ongoing.

On entering the property, I made my way to the rear of the club, behind a bar to the rear which gave access to a kitchen and through the kitchen there was a subsequent set of stairs that then gave access to the upper floor. This upper floor has a small series of rooms that appeared to be used for storage and a toilet, but some young females were present and coming down those stairs as we arrived. Within the kitchen of the premise, Ashley Stockton was present, with two other males and a group of young females within an off-shot room in the kitchen. I explained to Stockton that I was in charge of the operation and the nature of the checks, identifying the concerns that we had quickly discovered a large number of underage drinkers in the venue. Stockton was in drink and continued to drink alcohol while he spoke with me and other officers.

Due to finding Stockton and other adult males with females who we believed may be under 18, I requested colleagues from CID attend and speak with those females present, to account for why they were in company with these males in an area of the premise which was not covered within the license.

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Continuation of Statement of: Peter Spratt.....

This was to explore and confirm that no offences were identified that may need to be dealt with.

Detectives reported back that there were no concerns of this nature.

Once my officers had completed the filter on the exits to the premises, we had identified approximately 20 young people who were confirmed as being under 18 and it was evident from their slurred speech, demeanour, behaviour and the smell of intoxicants that they were drunk or had been drinking. I tasked officers to make contact with family members of those that had been found to facilitate them being collected and once these enquiries had been exhausted, we then returned those that remained home to their addresses to confirm their safety and welfare. At around 0030 hrs, I identified a female who had got out through the filter, still with a drink in her hand and she looked about 14 years old. I returned her inside for a secondary check and it was identified that she was under 18 and had in fact only recently turned 16. I tasked TPS 3736 Crossland to check this females details and this interaction will be recorded on his body worn video.

While I was managing this operation and the deployment of the officers who were tasked, my colleague Debbie Bailey from BMBC Licensing was conducting a series of further checks in relation to how the premises were being run.

On conclusion of the operation, our concerns were communicated to the designated premises supervisor. This included the number of underage drinkers in the venue and that the venue had been accepting photographs of ID on people's phones. Licensing colleagues had identified other concerns and on leaving the venue was empty and agreed that they would not reopen that night.

During this licensing check, I wore and activated my body worn video device, capturing fully the operation. This can be produced if required.

Signature:  :..... Signature Witnessed by: .....