

WITNESS STATEMENT

**Criminal Procedure Rules, r 27.2
Criminal Justice Act 1967, S. 9
Magistrates Courts Act 1980, 5B**

Statement of:

Age of witness: (if over 18 enter 'over 18')

Occupation:

This statement (consisting of 4 pages 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.

Dated: **Signature:** 

I am an Enforcement Officer officer employed by West Yorkshire Trading Standards Service (WYTSS). I am an authorised officer for the purposes of the Trade Marks Act 1994, the Tobacco and Related Products Regulations 2016, the Standardised Packaging of Tobacco Regulations 2015 and the Consumer Rights Act 2015.

On 22nd April 2025 I was in company with Police and Licensing officers when I attended Ravensthorpe Off Licence, 618 Huddersfield Road, Ravensthorpe, Dewsbury, WF13 3HL to carry out an inspection visit. I entered the store and identified myself to the female working there [REDACTED]. She stated that she was not an employee and did not know who the owner was but was standing in for 'a friend', [REDACTED].

NOTE : *If statements are typed double spacing should be used.
One side only of this paper should be used.*

(Signed) 
Dated: 14/05/2025 Page: 1 of 3

To be completed if applicable:being unable to read the above statement I,of....., read it to him/her before he/she signed it. **Signed** **Dated**.....

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Continuation Statement of: N Akhtar

An inspection was conducted at the store and 26 x 20 illegal cigarettes were found behind the counter. There were also 115 disposable electronic cigarettes (Vapes) on display for sale behind the sales counter which had a tank capacity larger than the maximum permitted of 2ml nicotine containing liquid, making them illegal.

The packaging of the cigarettes found behind the counter is not the correct colour as required by The Standardised Packaging of Tobacco Products Regulations 2015 and the prescribed health warnings are not present in English as required by the Tobacco and Related Products Regulations 2016. From discrepancies in the packaging of some of the cigarettes and the foreign excise stamps present on others, I believe them to be a mix of counterfeit and smuggled items.

The sale of Counterfeit/Illicit Tobacco products is not a minor breach of Trading Regulations but is in fact Serious Organised Criminality. These items which cannot be legally sold in the UK are smuggled into the country on a vast scale. The Profits of this illegal trade going to criminals while the treasury is deprived of the Tax/Excise. The current yearly loss in revenue is in excess of £2.5 billion which in turn deprives public services of funding.

Smoking is the leading cause of preventable diseases in the UK and over half of long term smokers will die prematurely from smoking related diseases. Tobacco taxes are a proven strategy

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Continuation Statement of: N Akhtar

to reduce smoking and extend lives. The illegal, cheap sale of this product removes this incentive of helping people to quit and also makes cigarettes more affordable to children, making it more likely they will start.

The supply of illegal tobacco not only causes harm to people but also causes genuine businesses to lose income and potentially close. This damages local communities with reduced employment and the loss of essential services.

The regulation restricting the tank capacity of electronic cigarettes to 2ml was implemented to ensure they are used responsibly and that consumers are protected from excessive nicotine intake. By selling these illegal products sourced from an illegitimate supplier this business owner is causing a risk to public safety.

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Dated: **Signature:** **A.Woodward**

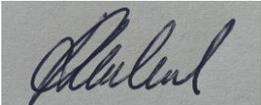
I am the above named person and I am a regulatory compliance enforcement Officer employed by West Yorkshire Trading Standards Service based in Leeds. I am an authorised officer for the purposes of the Trade Marks Act 1994, Tobacco and Related Products Regulations 2016, Standardised Packaging of Tobacco Regulations 2015 and the Consumer Rights Act 2015.

On 16th of April 2025, I was in civilian clothing when I attended the premises of Ravensthorpe Off Licence, 618 Huddersfield Road, Ravensthorpe, WF13 3HL in order to carry out a test purchase for illegal tobacco and cigarettes. I was in company with a colleague Jason Bethell who waited in our vehicle while I went to the store. As I approached the store I saw there was a male working

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behind the counter. I estimate the male to be around 30-35 years of age, and of eastern European descent.

I approached the counter and asked to purchase a packet of Richmond cigarettes. The male behind the counter then handed me a packet of Richmond cigarettes in blue packaging which I paid £3.50 for in cash, I then left the store.

The packet of cigarettes purchased did not conform to the Tobacco and Related Products Regulations 2016 and I suspect them to be counterfeit. The normal price for these cigarettes is around £14.00 or above.



X

adele woodward
regulatory compliance officer

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