# WITNESS STATEMENT


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement of</th>
<th>Matthew Hamid BASSIRAT</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age if under 18</td>
<td>OVER 18 (if over 18 insert ‘over 18’)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occupation</td>
<td>POLICE CONSTABLE 5118</td>
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</tbody>
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This statement (consisting of ___ page(s)) 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**  
M BASSIRAT  
**Date**  
22/06/2020

**Name / Rank / No**  
PC 5118 BASSIRAT

I am PC 5118 BASSIRAT of the Cheshire Constabulary currently stationed at Macclesfield Police Station. I am currently attached to the Beat Management Unit. My work includes reducing demand and tackling on going issues within Macclesfield Town Centre area.

I am making this statement in relation to

- A2Z Convenience Store, 39 Sunderland Street, Macclesfield, SK11 6JL

This store is a small shop serving a small selection of essentials and a large selection of alcohol and cigarettes. The shop is located in the town centre close to Macclesfield Railway Station which is a Mainline busy Railway Station.

In March 2020 I was tasked by my supervision to specifically look at Anti-Social behaviour in the town centre involving young people after we had been contacted by Security guards in the town centre who were complaining of the high volume of Anti-Social behaviour committed by the young people in the town. It was deemed to be taking up so much of the demand of local Officers, the plan was given an operation name, namely Operation Skimp. Much of the Anti-Social behaviour happens on Gas Road which is often referred to as the underpass as it is a

**OFFICIAL - Sensitive**
dark secluded location underneath a dual carriageway linking the town centre with the Hurdsfield Estate. This location is less than 400 metres from the location of this shop. Much of this Anti-Social behaviour is young children congregating in the area drinking alcohol and shouting loudly which prompts residents to contact Police.

This shop has come to my attention as we have received information that they are selling alcohol to underage children in the Macclesfield area. Initially this was intelligence received to us prior to the lockdown brought in by the Government. The lockdown presented a number of challenges to both trading standards and the Police when dealing with matters such as these. A decision was made by trading standards that an operation targeting the selling of alcohol to would be difficult given the restrictions and they have told me that often these operations fail as the shops only sell to those children they know.

Trading Standards have produced 3 pieces of intelligence that they have received

- 13/01/20-Details how the store has sold cigarettes and vodka to a 15 year old female who was not asked for ID
- 22/01/20-During an Early Help meeting (a meeting held with social workers and children who have come to their attention) a child has disclosed that children under 18 years old are being sold alcohol and cigarettes.
- 22/02/20-Details that a Grandparent of a 15 year old girl has reported that his 15 year old granddaughter had purchased Vodka from the shop.

Macclesfield Police received numerous reports around January to March of kids drinking and causing Anti-Social behaviour in the Gas Road area. This ties in with the intelligence above.
On Tuesday 2nd June 2020 we received a call from a father in Macclesfield informing is that his
daughter and her friend had bought alcohol from A2Z whilst underage and that the friend had
been hospitalised as a result of consuming the alcohol. An investigation began and both girls
came to Macclesfield Police Station and provided statements where they state that they are
underage and that they know they can get served alcohol from the shop. Rather worryingly
they state that all the young people in Macclesfield know they can get served alcohol from this
shop. One of the girls bought alcohol twice on the same day from this shop being served by
two different people. It was after the second time they had been into the shop, an Ambulance
had to be called.

Following this incident I have visited the shop with Cheshire East’s Trading Standards. The
shop had a CCTV system which was password protected and the shop owner did not know the
password. He had no access to the CCTV at all. It is very uncommon for a town centre shop,
especially one which sells alcohol and cigarettes and one which is a common target for
shoplifting and burglaries, I believe that this adds further suspicion as to why they don’t have
readily accessible CCTV footage.

It is quite clear that this shop is selling alcohol to underage children. The situation has
escalated further recently with one child being hospitalised which significantly increases the risk
to other children which cannot be ignored. We have to take action to protect the children in this
town as it is clear that they will make attempts to buy alcohol.

I am seeking a closure order for this premises as I believe that this would be the most effective
way to deal with the matter. I believe that if the magistrates would grant a closure order, it
would send a strong clear message to the local children that they can no longer use the store to
buy or attempt to buy alcohol. It would also provide some reassurance to the parents in the
town that we are taking this matter seriously and give them the confidence that whilst their children are out they cannot buy alcohol. A further positive consequence of a closure order would hopefully be that once the shop reopened that the owner would be more likely to follow his licencing conditions.

If granted, a closure order would mean that the young people of Macclesfield would be unable to purchase alcohol and as such this should lead to a reduction in Anti-Social behaviour around the town. This would provide some much needed respite for the local residents.

This action is supported by Cheshire East and Trading Standards.