

Before a Licensing Sub-Committee of Trafford Council

In the matter of:

A Review of the Premises Licence Number PLOOO631

and

The O₂ Victoria Warehouse

Third Statement of Nicola Duckworth

1. I am Nicola Duckworth and am the Team Leader for Environmental Health and I am authorised by Trafford Council to make this statement on behalf of Environmental Health in its capacity as a responsible authority.
2. Further to my previous statement in support an application for the review of the premises licence held by Academy Music Limited in respect of the O₂ Victoria Warehouse.
3. On the 8th November 2023, a complaint was received in relation to a safe guarding issue at O2 Victoria warehouse. The allegation was that a paramedic was working at the site who was under investigation by his employer, and the concern was that the paramedic should not for this reason be working in a patient facing role.
4. An investigation was commenced immediately, on the 22nd November 2023 I informed Steve Hoyland Operations manager of Academy Music Group of the complaint, and he responded with a email which gave assurances that the person who the complaint was made against would not be working at the venue until further notice. He also sent assurance that a full audit of the medical provider would be carried out. I asked for a copy of the audit once it had been carried out. I have not yet received this.
5. On the 29th November 2023, I carried out a visit to O2 Victoria warehouse accompanied by some officers from regulatory services team. The purpose of this visit was to look at the compliance with improvement notice served by Alison Acton in relation to event specific risk assessment, it was also to check how the venue was complying with the policies and procedures which have been sent in the event management plan.
6. I reviewed the event specific risk assessment and compared it with the stewards briefing note and noticed that there were differences in the information which was contained within them. The audience demographic was different and the risk from alcohol in the event risk

assessment stated it was low to medium, but the stewards briefing stated medium to high. When I questioned Mr Taylor-Toal in relation to the discrepancies he stated that the briefing was the more up to date documents. I am concerned that these two documents do not give the same information which could lead to confusion during the management of events.

7. I requested the sign in sheet for the medical team on site, I was informed that this was held by the medical team, so went to the portacabin to speak to the team. The supervisor for Northwest Medical Event Solutions informed me that there were 8 medical personnel onsite, and gave me their names and qualifications. One of the names given was the same person who I had been assured would not be working on site, until further notice.
8. I immediately found Mr Taylor-Toal and asked him if he was aware that this gentleman was on site. He said he was and that he knew about the situation, but the person was working under supervision. I asked him if he was aware of the assurances that we had been given in relation to this person. He said he wasn't, and I asked him to get Steve Hoyland on the phone. He did not reach Steve but got the area manager on the phone instead.
9. Mr Taylor-Toal, expressed his opinion that the local authority should have shared information with him in relation to our investigation. I stated that I had felt this unnecessary at this time, as I had been given written assurance that the person was no longer employed at the venue and that a thorough investigation was being carried out by the venue, I also requested that the audit be shared with the council, I have not yet received this audit.
10. Mr Taylor Toal informed me that the paramedic in question would be leaving site, I expressed my concern that this would leave them without a paramedic for the event. He went away to make a call and then returned to inform me that the medical company would be sending a new paramedic, to the site. The new paramedic which arrived was the owner of the medical company.
11. I am deeply concerned that despite assurances given, the venue continued to use this person whilst they investigated. Despite being informed of the risks involved.
12. I left the premises and returned in time for egress of the event. I remained outside the premises with Graeme Dixon, and Max Martin. At the time of arriving there were several cars parked up directly outside the exit to the warehouse and the hotel which is adjacent to the warehouse. There was also several Hackney carriages parked up. I questioned the Deputy Manager Manos, as to why these vehicles were allowed to park up here, as

according to the transport management plan which has been provided by the Academy Music Group, there should be a road closure in place , prior to the event closing and I was confused why the taxi's had been parked there, if they were going to be able to move. Manos explained that it was difficult to stop them. This concerned me, as a simple conversation with the drivers by the stewards, would inform the drivers that a road closure would prevent them moving on.

13. At egress it became apparent very quickly that the road closure which was supposed to be in place in accordance with the transport management plan was not affective. Cars and Taxis were being allowed to travel through the closure whilst people were crossing the road and trying to leave the premises.
14. A bus was also allowed through the closure.
15. Staff who were working for academy music group were walking in the middle of the road without high vis clothing.
16. The stewards were sending people towards white city circle to get Ubers and taxi's. This is contrary to the traffic management plan which indicates they will go in the opposite direction towards Manchester United Football Ground.
17. An email was sent on the 30th of November to Russell Taylor- Toal and Steve Hoyland to identify the concerns which have at the premises following the visit.
18. The main issues identified was that there was little adherence to the documented procedures which had been supplied to Trafford Council to form the event management plan.
19. I have consulted with out Highways department to alert them of the fact that the road closures in place are not working and that there is no adherence to the agreed plan. They have no been informed that the Traffic management contract has been subcontracted out by the original provider and they are having difficulties in enforcing the plan. This had not been previously shared with Trafford Highways team, by either Academy Music group. Trafford Highways have requested an urgent review.
20. Following the email sent to the Russell Taylor Toal and Steve Hoyland on the 30th in relation to the issues raised on, we viewed CCTV footage of the egress from the venue for the 1st December, & 2nd December, similar issues were found. The road closures were in affective, and taxis and buses were allowed through.

21. The lack of management of traffic at egress puts the people attending the event at risk, from being hit from moving vehicles either accidentally or intentionally. This matter was subject to a health & safety improvement notice in 2020, and was appealed, the matter of this notice is still outstanding, and at present the venue would be seen as not complying.
22. Trafford PITPOT (persons in positions of trust) are currently still investigating the incident with the paramedic. I am concerned that the venue does not carrying out sufficient checks against the medical provider to ensure the safety of persons attending the event. I have requested audits and lists of staff members since the notification of the matter and have still not received them at the time of writing this statement.
23. Investigations into the Traffic management and other issues raised at the premises on the 29th November are still being investigated, and matters at the time of writing this statement have not been resolved.

Statement of Truth

24. I believe that the facts stated in this witness statement are true. I understand that proceedings for contempt of court may be brought against anyone who makes, or causes to be made, a false statement in a document verified by a statement of truth without an honest belief in its truth.

Dated 6th December 2023

A large black rectangular redaction box covering the signature of Nicola Jane Duckworth.

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Nicola Jane Duckworth