



**Brent & Harrow Trading Standards Service**

*WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP*



***Press Release***

21<sup>st</sup> February 2012

**Alcohol Underage Sale**

On Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> February 2012, a local trader was fined £1000 by Brent Magistrates and ordered to pay a further £935 in prosecution costs to the London Boroughs of Brent & Harrow Trading Standards Service. He was also ordered to pay £15 victim surcharge.

Mr Thuvarakeswaran Thiyagarajah (aged 39) from Lisbon Avenue, Twickenham, trading as 'Alric Food and Wine' of 1A Alric Avenue, Halresden, pleaded guilty to selling two bottles of Smirnoff Ice to two 14 year old children.

The court heard that the offence arose as a result of an undercover operation by Trading Standards in the Harlesden area on 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2011. The child volunteers were able to buy the bottles of alcohol from the defendant's shop, completely unchallenged by his employee who served them.

Mr Thiyagarajah was interviewed at a later date where he explained that he had provided his staff with verbal training but they had made a mistake and he was sorry that the sale had taken place.

During Trading Standard's investigation, it was established that there were various systems and controls that Mr Thiyagarajah could have put in place to prevent sales of alcohol to young children by him and his staff. However several simple steps which could have prevented the sale were not in place.

In court, Mr Thiyagarajah said that he had since put a till prompt system in place to remind his staff to check the age of purchasers when selling alcohol. He also stated that he now carries out weekly refresher training of his staff. Mr Thiyagarajah also stated that he now utilises a refusal book, in which his staff log any refusals of alcohol made.

Bill Bilon, Head of Brent & Harrow Trading Standards Service said, “We regularly carry out undercover operations to monitor the compliance of local traders who sell alcohol and other age restricted goods. This business is located Alric Avenue, Harlesden, which is a designated Alcohol Control Area, as incidents of Anti-Social behaviour have occurred frequently around the shop in the past. It is essential that staff are trained adequately, are aware of the responsibilities, and are monitored correctly to minimise the risk of underage sales. The law rightfully places a heavy burden on licensees to ensure that they and their staff act responsibly in order to comply with legislation and prevent sales to children.”

Ends

#### Notes for Editors

1. Under The Licensing Act 2003, it is an offence to sell alcohol to anyone under the age of eighteen and carries a maximum penalty of £5,000 per offence.
2. The Children and Young Persons Act 1991 creates an offence for failing to display a tobacco warning notice in a prescribed format where tobacco is sold and carries a maximum penalty of £1,000 per offence.
3. For further information on this press release, please contact Simon Legg on 020 8937 5511.