

Witness Statement

(CJ Act 1967, s.9 MC Act 1980, s.s.5A (3a) and 5B MC Rules 1981, r.70)

Statement of **PC 246 CROSS**Age if under 18 **Over 18** (if over 18 insert "over 18"). Occupation **Police Constable**

This statement (consisting of **3** 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.

Dated the **1st** day of **April 2015**Tick if witness evidence is visually recorded
(supply witness details on rear)

Signature

I am Police Constable 246 Cross serving with Lancashire Constabulary currently attached to Team 1 OSU West Division, based at Blackpool Central Police Station. Most weekends there are a number of patrols solely dedicated to patrolling the town centre either on foot or in liveried personnel carriers, the dedicated name for this on-going operation is ASLAN. My team and I are often tasked with patrolling the town centre at the weekends as part of operation ASLAN and have sole responsibility for policing the town centre after 3am, once all other dedicated patrols have left. One of our main areas of responsibility in the town centre is the area of Dickson Road, directly at the top of Queen Street.

I have been asked to submit a statement regarding the effects of the late night economy having extended opening hours, post 3 am, in the area of Dickson Road, Blackpool immediately in the vicinity of Flamingos night club and several late night take aways. This area is often a problem for us as several roads converge on this area, there are several take ways open post 3 am, it serves as a taxi rank and Flamingos is the main nightspot that remains open after all the others have closed. These combined elements create disorder and frequent fights break out amongst the late night revellers.

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Firstly, with flamingos being open later than any other nightspot most of the revellers in left in the town centre area at normal closing time head there to end the night. Consequently you can often find people who have been drinking heavily for 12 + hours at the venue and when they leave they are extremely intoxicated. They then leave the nightspot and head to the take aways to order food or simply hang around.

Secondly, you can often find people of all ages who have not been out into town but come to the area to hang around the take aways and mix with the drinkers. This then becomes a flash point as the takeaways not only attract groups or individuals from Flamingos, but also people heading back to their hotels, locals on their way home and people waiting or queuing for a taxi. Frequent fights and disturbances are often broken up by colleagues and I before they become serious.

Thirdly, we often intervene in disturbances that occur in the road, which in itself creates public and officer safety problems and concerns as traffic does not always stop. We have also witnessed near misses as drunks hanging around the takeaways stagger in and out of the road as moving traffic goes past.

These combined elements mean that my team often solely concentrates its efforts in this area. This creates a strain of resources as it takes several officers to deal with this area effectively and so other vulnerable areas are not policed as effectively as they should be.

A reduction in the hours that these premises are licensed to open to would help alleviate the problem as it would not attract the sheer volume of people that arrive in the area post 3 to 4 am and would 'free up' resources that are needed elsewhere on busy weekends both in and out of the holiday season. It would also discourage members of the public from going to the area to mingle

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with the revellers and adding to the problem as without the takeaways there would be no attraction for them to do so. I also feel that given that there are a number of residential properties and hotels nearby that the noise and disturbances created in the area during the small hours is unacceptable. As a footnote my teams usual tour of duty ends at 6 am and this area is often still busy with people as we are leaving, further putting a strain on resources with patrols either finishing late or patrols from the early turn shift dealing with the aftermath.

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