

Licensing Review Submission - KISS

Submitted to: Camden Council Licensing Authority

Submitted by: Sonia De Leon

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1. Opening Statement

This response is submitted on behalf of Kiss 18–20 Highgate Road, London NW5, in response to the Police’s review application under Section 53A of the Licensing Act 2003.

Following a meeting with the Police, the Licensing Authority the on 11 November 2024, significant operational improvements have been made. A new, highly experienced DPS, Ms Sonia De Leon, was appointed on 17 January 2025 to address capability concerns under previous management. Since this date, no incidents, complaints, or further enforcement actions have been recorded.

It is respectfully submitted that:

- The allegations made do not reach the threshold of serious crime or serious disorder required under Section 53C(a) of the Licensing Act 2003 to justify the revocation or suspension of the premises licence.
- All issues raised have been addressed robustly through management changes, operational improvements, and documented compliance.

2. Actions taken

Following a thorough review of the concerns raised, we have implemented a series of decisive actions to address all the issues raised by the review. These steps demonstrate our commitment to improving operations, ensuring full compliance with licensing conditions, and maintaining a safe and responsible venue. The key actions taken are as follows:

- **Appointment of New DPS and Compliance Officer:** In end of January 2025, we appointed Sonia De Leon as the new Designated Premises Supervisor (DPS). In addition to her role as DPS, Sonia has also taken on the responsibility of Compliance Officer. Sonia’s extensive experience in health and safety management and compliance protocols positions her as an ideal candidate to lead our ongoing efforts to ensure full regulatory adherence.
- **Full Restructure of Management:** We have made significant changes to the venue’s management structure. This restructuring has been designed to strengthen operational oversight and ensure better coordination and compliance. The new management team is fully committed to upholding the highest standards of service, security, and operational effectiveness.

- Improved Staff Training and Welfare Protocols: All staff have received up-to-date training on licensing conditions, welfare procedures (including the “Ask for Angela” scheme), and customer vulnerability. We have displayed relevant welfare materials prominently across the venue, ensuring that patrons feel safe and know how to seek help if needed.
- Enhanced CCTV System: We have invested in upgrading and regularly maintaining our CCTV system to ensure it is fully operational. We have implemented a daily functionality check to ensure the system is recording and monitoring the premises effectively at all times. *Exhibit 8- CCTV log*
- Incident Logging System and Documentation Review: We introduced a comprehensive incident logging system to track all events, ensuring that staff are properly trained to record incidents. We have also conducted a review and overhaul of our documentation practices, ensuring that logs are maintained accurately and up-to-date.
- Disciplinary Actions and Operational Improvements: Following identified breaches of conditions, we have taken corrective actions, including retraining our security team, implementing more stringent entry control processes, and revising our promoter management protocols to ensure compliance.
- Proactive Engagement with Authorities: We have worked closely with the police, licensing officers, and other responsible authorities to ensure that we are fully aligned with the requirements of our license. This includes responding promptly to concerns, providing requested documentation, and working towards the resolution of any outstanding issues.

3. Response to Police engagement

a) 18 October 2024 - Police Licensing Visit

Allegation:

Referral to Immigration Enforcement and breaches of 13 licence conditions.

Response:

Immigration Allegation:

No breach took place. Full right-to-work documents were obtained and verified. Home Office records confirm that no fine or penalty was issued.

We take the allegations of employing an illegal worker very seriously, and we fully comply with all immigration laws and regulations. The individual in question was employed legally at all times, with proper right-to-work checks conducted in accordance with the law. We have documentation that confirms this, which includes evidence from the Home Office confirming that no violations occurred regarding their immigration status. The Home Office has not issued any fines or penalties related to this matter. We have also since made sure that our hiring procedures and right-to-work checks are rigorously followed and fully documented for all future employees. We categorically reject the allegation that the individual was employed illegally and assert that no legal wrongdoing occurred in this instance. *1-Employment Documentation for DA Exhibit 2- right to work employment Police Exhibit 1(1) Statement for staff member 'Gursimarat [REDACTED] Exhibit 1(2) Statement for DPS*

- CCTV Condition (16):
We accept that historic CCTV compliance was not sufficient.
Since November 2024, a new system check protocol has been implemented, with weekly audits.
(See Exhibit 8- CCTV Log.)

- SIA Door Staff (17):
Risk assessments have been completed for all events. SIA deployment is now documented for every operating day.

- Anti-Theft Devices (22):
Theft operation signage is now displayed. We do not have tables at the venue; therefore, hooks are not required. However, staff remind patrons to keep their bags close by them.

- Staff Training (24):
A comprehensive training programme has been developed covering Licensing Act 2003, fire evacuation, critical incident management, crime scene best practice, WAVE training, and conflict management.
(See Exhibit 4 – Staff Training Records.)

- Noise Limiter (26):
Noise limiter was inspected and locked by an acoustician in January 2025.

- Windows and Doors (27):
An internal policy ensures windows and doors are closed after 21:00 hours.

- Ask for Angela (33):
The Camden is now signed up and displaying Ask for Angela materials.

- Monthly Police Meetings (35):
This condition has now expired, but we have been compliant since December 2024.

- Staff Log (36):
Comprehensive staff logs are kept on site.

- As outlined above, training has been delivered and is ongoing.

b) 24 October 2024 – Meeting

Response:

Advice was given and implemented immediately after the meeting.

Substantial policy updates were introduced from November 2024 onwards

c) 11 November 2024 – Meeting

Response:

KISS presented a range of newly developed policies at this meeting. Following this, the full operational restructure began, culminating in the appointment of the new DPS in January 2025.

Those present at the meeting acknowledged and congratulated us for the vast work put into implementing processes to improve the safety and compliance management of the venue.

d) 21 December 2024 – Police Licensing Visit

Response:

Ask for Angela and WAVE materials were received and displayed at the premises.

e) 10 January 2025 – Immigration Visit

Allegation:

Further condition breaches and suspected illegal working.

Response:

- Immigration Enforcement Fines:
There is no record of any fine or penalty notice issued by the Home Office in relation to KISS
Right-to-work checks were completed and documented.
(Refer again to Exhibit 1.)
- We take the allegations of employing an illegal worker very seriously, and we fully comply with all immigration laws and regulations. The individual in question was employed legally at all times, with proper right-to-work checks conducted in accordance with the law. We have documentation that confirms this, which includes evidence from the Home Office confirming that no violations occurred regarding their immigration status. The Home Office has not issued any fines or penalties related to this matter. We have also since made sure that our hiring procedures and right-to-work checks are rigorously followed and fully documented for all future employees. We categorically reject the allegation that the individual was employed illegally and assert that no legal wrongdoing occurred in this instance. *Exhibit 1-Employment Documentation for DA Exhibit 2- right to work employment Policy.*
- SIA Door Staff (17) & Last Entry (32):
Door supervision is now managed according to updated risk assessments and policies. Last entry is strictly enforced at midnight.

- Ask for Angela (33):
As above, scheme is fully implemented.
- Staff Logs (36, 38):
Fully compliant and maintained on-site.
- Former Staff Ban (39):
Staff involved in the 18 November 2023 incident were removed and permanently barred from working at the venue.
- Training (41):
Training completed and documented.

f) 14–23 January 2025 – Email Correspondence

Response:

Following police correspondence, the venue complied with all requests relating to CCTV, layout clarification, and staff records.

Recruitment and right-to-work checking processes were fully revised and updated.

The new DPS (Ms. Sonia De Leon) transferred into post on 17 January 2025 without objection.

5. Response to grounds for review

1. Allegation of Employment of an Illegal Worker

Response:

We take the allegations of employing an illegal worker very seriously, and we fully comply with all immigration laws and regulations. The individual in question was employed legally at all times, with proper right-to-work checks conducted in accordance with the law. We have documentation that confirms this, which includes evidence from the Home Office confirming that no violations occurred regarding their immigration status. The Home Office has not issued any fines or penalties related to this matter. We have also since made sure that our hiring procedures and right-to-work checks are rigorously followed and fully documented for all future

employees. We categorically reject the allegation that the individual was employed illegally and assert that no legal wrongdoing occurred in this instance. *Exhibit 1-Employment Documentation for DA Exhibit 2- right to work employment Policy.*

2. Crime and Disorder Concerns

Response:

We are fully committed to maintaining a safe and secure environment at our venue. Regarding concerns about crime and disorder, we have consistently worked to ensure the safety of both our staff and patrons. Any incident of disorder or crime that may have occurred at the venue has been thoroughly investigated, and we have taken appropriate steps to address and prevent further occurrences. This includes retraining our security staff, improving communication and oversight, and implementing a more comprehensive incident reporting system. We understand that any potential issues must be taken seriously and have continuously updated our safety protocols to maintain compliance with all licensing conditions. We maintain a strong partnership with local authorities and police to address any issues of crime and disorder promptly. *Exhibit 3- Crime and disorder Policy*

3. Persistent Breaches of Conditions

Response:

We acknowledge that there have been instances of breaches of conditions, some of which were noted in previous reviews. However, we have taken significant steps to rectify these issues. Following the feedback from the last review, we have appointed additional management staff, including a highly qualified Compliance Officer (DPS), and have implemented a comprehensive training program for all staff. We have also set up a dedicated system for regular checks and audits to ensure compliance with all licensing conditions, particularly in areas such as incident logging, staff training, and operational procedures. We have fully addressed any previous breaches and are committed to preventing any future non-compliance. We believe these actions demonstrate our commitment to running the venue responsibly and in line with the law. *4- Training records*

4. Poor Management of the Venue

Response:

While we acknowledge that there may have been operational shortcomings in the past, these have been addressed and corrected. In end of January 2025 we have appointed a new DPS and

management team with extensive experience in running similar venues, ensuring that the venue is properly managed moving forward. Additionally, we have implemented a clear management structure, with specific roles and responsibilities assigned to ensure all tasks are completed on time and to the highest standards. We have also conducted a full review of our internal processes, leading to improvements in staff communication, customer service, and overall venue management. These changes reflect our commitment to providing a professional, safe, and well-managed environment for all patrons. *Exhibit 5- Action Plan*

5. Staff Training and Welfare Material Compliance

Response:

We fully recognise the importance of staff training, especially regarding customer welfare and vulnerability. Following the concerns raised during previous reviews, we have ensured that all staff have received appropriate training on the “Ask for Angela” scheme, as well as other relevant welfare materials. These materials have been prominently displayed throughout the venue, and staff are regularly reminded of their responsibility to protect vulnerable customers. We have also introduced regular refresher training to keep staff up to date with best practices for handling welfare-related situations. We are committed to ensuring that these systems are not only in place but are actively maintained and monitored. *Exhibit 6- WAVE certificates training emails*

6. Immigration Enforcement and Licensing Conditions

Response:

As previously stated, the allegations of illegal working are unsubstantiated, and we have cooperated fully with all relevant authorities, including Immigration Enforcement. We have complied with all immigration laws and have taken steps to ensure that future employment practices are fully aligned with these regulations. With respect to the specific licensing conditions, we continue to improve our procedures and practices to ensure full compliance with all requirements. The venue’s operational procedures now include a comprehensive system for monitoring compliance, and we conduct regular checks to ensure that all conditions are met consistently. We take our licensing obligations seriously and are committed to upholding them without exception. *Exhibit 7- Internal Audit*

7. Conclusion and Appeal to the Panel

Response:

In conclusion, while we acknowledge that there have been operational and procedural shortcomings in the past, we firmly believe that the legal allegations concerning the employment of an illegal worker are entirely unfounded and incorrect. We have taken immediate action to rectify any operational issues and ensure full compliance with licensing conditions moving forward. We have demonstrated a strong commitment to improving the management of the venue and enhancing the safety and well-being of our patrons.

We respectfully ask that the panel take into account the significant improvements we have made and the corrective actions we have implemented. We are committed to continuing to operate in a fully compliant manner and ask that the panel reconsider any proposed actions that may unnecessarily penalize a venue that is making genuine efforts to rectify past issues.

6. Exhibits / Appendices

- Exhibit 1 – Home Office letter re: employment status
- Exhibit 2 – Right to Work Policy CCTV daily checks log template
- Exhibit 3 – Crime and disorder Policy
- Exhibit 4 – Staff training records
- Exhibit 5 – Action Plan
- Exhibit 6 – WAVE
- Exhibit 7 - Staff termination records
- Exhibit 8 - CCTV Log

7. Conclusion

Conclusion

In light of the above, KISS has made substantial and documented improvements since November 2024.

There is now a fully capable management team in place and operational practices that promote the licensing objectives.

There is no evidence of ongoing serious crime or disorder at the venue.

It is respectfully submitted that revocation would be wholly disproportionate and unnecessary.

While we fully acknowledge the operational shortcomings and breaches that occurred in the past, we have taken swift and effective action to address these concerns. The legal allegations regarding the employment of an illegal worker are entirely unfounded, and we have provided evidence to demonstrate our compliance with immigration law. We have made significant strides in improving our venue's management, staff training, and compliance processes. We remain fully committed to adhering to all licensing conditions and ensuring that The Camden operates as a safe, compliant, and responsible venue.

We respectfully submit that, based on the substantial improvements we have made and the proactive steps we have taken, the licensing panel should reconsider any measures that might unduly affect the venue's continued operation. We are confident that The Camden is now well-equipped to operate in full compliance with all relevant laws and regulations and to contribute positively to the local community.

We firmly believe that the revocation of our license is disproportionate to the concerns raised.

We have full confidence that we possess the knowledge, skills, and personal commitment to manage this venue in an appropriate and responsible manner, in line with the licensing objectives.

- The prevention of crime and disorder
- Public safety
- The prevention of public nuisance
- The protection of children from harm

