

BEFORE MIDDLESBROUGH COUNCIL, LICENSING SUB-COMMITTEE

IN THE MATTER OF THE LICENSING ACT 2003

AND IN THE MATTER OF LOUNGE AFRIQUE, MIDDLESBROUGH

B E T W E E N:

CLEVELAND POLICE

Applicant for Review

- and -

LOUNGE AFRIQUE MIDDLESBROUGH

Premises Licence Holder

WITNESS STATEMENT OF GLYN ERIC BAVIN

I, POLICE SERGEANT 417 GLYN ERIC BAVIN of Cleveland Police, Middlesbrough District Police Station, Bridge Street West, Middlesbrough TS2 1AB, say as follows:

1. I am a Police Sergeant in Cleveland Police presently stationed at Middlesbrough Police Station in the Licensing Support Unit. I have performed this role for approximately 4 years and during this time I have successfully completed the BIIAB level 2 National Certificate for Licensing Practitioners, and Level 4 for police alcohol licensing officers.
2. My role within the Licensing Support Unit is that of Licensing Supervisor. I supervise the Police Alcohol Licensing Officers for the four districts of the Force. The

Licensing Support Unit aims to work in partnership with licensing authorities, other responsible authorities, and stakeholders to ensure the initiative-taking promotion of the licensing objectives within the Force's area.

The application for summary review

3. On Monday 27th July 2026, Cleveland Police applied for a summary review of premises licence MBRO / PR0086/083647 ("**the Licence**") relating to Lounge Afrique 25 Corporation Road Middlesbrough TS1 1LP ("**the Premises**"). The holder of the Licence is Mr Percy QUARCOO ("**the PLH**"). At the time of the application, the designated premises supervisor ("**DPS**") was Mr Jerry QUARCOO.
4. The application for a summary review was accompanied by a certificate signed by Detective Chief Superintendent Helen Barker 0287 that in her opinion the Premises were associated with both serious crime and serious disorder.
5. The trigger incident for the application for summary review was an incidence which occurred at the Premises between the hours of 23:58 hours on Friday 17th July 2026 and 02:18 hours on Saturday 18th July 2026. Police receive information from the parent of a female under sixteen stating that her daughter had left home without permission and attended Lounge Afrique in Middlesbrough town centre. Whilst at, or following her attendance at, the premises, the child is alleged to have become the victim of a serious sexual offence, namely rape.
6. Cleveland Police have significant safeguarding concerns arising from this incident. The victim is classed as vulnerable because of her age and witnesses who were present with her are also reported to be of the same age. Information obtained during the investigation indicates that these children were able to gain entry to the licensed premises and served alcohol without being challenged. (A clear breach of the licensed conditions).
7. A Male has subsequently been arrested for the offence of rape SOA 2003 and his now currently on police bail.

8. The trigger incident was not an isolated incident and in addition to the current investigation, Cleveland Police are concerned by the volume and nature of previous reports linked to the premises over the preceding two years. These incidents along with this triggering incident demonstrate that this is not an isolated incident. There have been other incidents over the past 24 months involving serious crime and safeguarding concerns around the premise.

The Premises

9. The Premises is licensed and operated as a bar, restaurant, and nightclub/live entertainment venue. The property appears to be a converted Victorian town centre commercial building rather than a purpose-built nightclub. Historic commercial sales particulars describe it as Originally constructed circa 1841. A four-storey building. Comprising two traditional Victorian terraced properties combined into a single unit. Approximate floor area of 3,103 sq. ft (288 m²). Formerly marketed as the "Mink Bar" prior to its operation as Lounge Afrique.
10. As you enter the premise, this is the ground floor where the main Bar area is situated, the first floor is also licensed, there are toilets on both floors available to customers. the office is situated on the second floor, and the third floor is a private floor space not available to customers.
11. The premises occupies a prominent position on Corporation Road Middlesbrough town centre: Opposite the former Cleveland Centre/Centre Northeast development area. Close to the junction of Corporation Road and Albert Road. Adjacent to the main night-time economy area containing venues such as Turtle Bay (now closed) and other licensed premises. Within the central commercial and entertainment district of Middlesbrough town centre.

The Licence

12. The Licence was granted Licence granted: 17 August 2023. It permits the carrying on of licensable activities Alcohol sales: 09:00 to 02:30 daily, Premises opening: 09:00 to 03:00 daily.

The Premises Licence Holder

13. As stated, the PLH is Mr Percy Quarcoo the premises licence document identifies him as the holder of Premises Licence MBRO/PR0086/083647 on the licence granted on 17 August 2023. Companies House records show Percy Quarcoo becoming a director of Barwaves Ltd, registered at 25 Corporation Road, on 9 October 2023.

The Designated Premises Supervisor

14. Mr Jerry Edward Quarcoo as the Designated Premises Supervisor (DPS), Holder of Personal Licence **MBRO/PL1780/103720**, issued by Middlesbrough Council. Under the Licensing Act 2003, the DPS is the individual with day-to-day responsibility for the supply of alcohol and is expected to promote the licensing objectives. The premises licence specifically states that alcohol sales must be made or authorised by a personal licence holder and that a DPS must be in place.
15. Jerry Edward Quarcoo became a director of Barwaves Ltd on 9 October 2023. The registered office of Barwaves Ltd is 25 Corporation Road, Middlesbrough TS1 1LP. Percy Quarcoo and Jerry Quarcoo are both listed as directors and persons with significant control of that company.

Interim steps hearing

16. An interim steps hearing took place on Tuesday 28 July 2026. The Licensing Sub-Committee considered it was necessary to take the following interim steps pending the determination of the full review of the Premises under section 53B of the Act.
17. Whilst the press and public were excluded from part of this hearing due to the risk of prejudicing the ongoing investigation and disposal of the trigger incident. Lounge

Afrique, responded key aspects of their response to the summary review are as follows: - **we wish to express our deepest sympathy for the young person involved in the incident that has led to these proceedings. Any allegation involving a child is extremely distressing, and we fully recognise the seriousness of the matter, Lounge Afrique has always taken its responsibilities as a licensed premises seriously. When Cleveland Police attended the premises, we immediately provided full access to our CCTV system, we therefore respectfully dispute any suggestion that Lounge Afrique has failed to cooperate. This is the first major incident of this nature that has ever been brought to our attention. To the best of our knowledge, Cleveland Police have never previously raised concerns with us. we are fully committed to working constructively with Cleveland Police and the Licensing Authority, Lounge Afrique has proudly served the local community for several years. We have always sought to provide a safe, welcoming, and enjoyable environment for our customers. We do not take this incident lightly, and we recognise that there may be lessons to learn.**

18. Cleveland police acknowledge, that the premise license holder (Percy Quarcoo) has recognised the seriousness of the incident and the failings on the night and recognised the needs for improvement from lessons learnt. He has immediately sought to rectify the failings by We are willing to accept additional licence conditions where appropriate, including:
 - Enhanced Challenge 25 procedures.
 - Additional SIA security staff where appropriate.
 - ID scanning for customers.
 - Further staff training in safeguarding and protecting children from harm.
 - Enhanced incident recording procedures.
 - Any other reasonable conditions the Committee believes will improve public safety.

19. The decision by the licensing sub – committee was to suspend the whole of the Premises Licence, and to remove the Designated Premises Supervisor. Until the full hearing agreed date was Monday 17th August 2026.

The PLH's appeal to the interim steps.

20. At 09:30 hours on Friday 31st July 2026 the Premise license holder appealed to the licensing subcommittee requesting the interim steps be removed, the suspension of the premise license and removal of the designated premise supervisor.
21. The licensing sub-committee heard representations from the premise license holder, informed the committee that they had immediately made improvements and acted without delay: -
 - Appointed a completely new security team.
 - Ordered electronic ID scanners, which will be implemented as soon as they arrive.
 - Begun strengthening our safeguarding procedures.
 - Arranged further Challenge 25 and age verification training.
 - Reviewed staff responsibilities and management procedures.
 - Begun implementing enhanced safeguarding policies throughout the business.
 - These are not promises for the future—they are changes that are already underway because customer safety is our priority.
22. They did not challenge the removal of the DPS and sought to appoint a new DPS, and the premise licence holder was going to obtain his personal licence and become the new DPS for the premise.
23. Again, Cleveland police recognised and welcomed the steps the premise license holder was taking, however felt that removing the interim steps at this stage would not be beneficial for the safety of the public and would be insufficient time to implement the changes for them to support the licensing objectives.
24. The Committee were not satisfied that they were all implemented. The Committee note the new security team have not been fully engaged and that simply a preliminary meeting has taken place with the Owner of Alpha Security.
25. The Committee note that the Premises Licence Holder concedes the new safeguarding training has not yet been provided to staff. The Committee note the ID scanners are not yet in situ. The Committee also considered that the new proposed DPS is not yet engaged fully nor was the Premises Licence Holder certain of the proposed DPS' name.
26. The Committee, whilst they appreciate that the Premises Licence Holder has tried to remedy the issues, are not satisfied that these steps have all been actioned and have ensured the promotion of the Licensing Objectives.

27. **The Committee consider the interim steps continue to be necessary to promote the licensing objectives and do not withdraw or modify the steps taken.**

Incidents

28. Relevant Police Reports

18 July 2026 - SE26141696

Female reported as having attended the premises before being raped outside the venue by a male. Investigation ongoing for rape.

1 April 2026 - SE26060561

Female reported that a male approached her inside the premises and, after she rejected his advances, assaulted her causing injuries amounting to Actual Bodily Harm (ABH). Concerns were raised regarding the apparent lack of intervention or concern shown by security staff.

19 June 2025 - SE25111848

Female reported being assaulted by security staff at the premises, sustaining scratches and bruising to her arm.

26 May 2025 - SE25094616

Female believed that she was the victim of drink spiking whilst inside the premises. She reported unwanted sexual touching by a male despite efforts to prevent the behaviour. She subsequently awoke naked at a male's address. Investigation ongoing for rape.

1 February 2025 - SE25018464

Report alleging that the premises was being used as a brothel.

19 January 2025 - SE25010698

Information received regarding allegations circulating online that an individual alleged to be a rapist was being knowingly permitted to frequent the premises. This call was reported by the owner of the premises.

19 September 2024 - SE24181092

Anonymous report alleging that a young female may have been drink spiked and compelled to go upstairs within the premises.

19 September 2024 - SE24180980

Information received alleging inappropriate conduct involving members of staff and customers, concerns regarding safeguarding practices, suspected spiking incidents and allegations relating to activities occurring in an upstairs area of the premises.

15 June 2025 - SE25112106

Report of a suspected drink spiking involving a male. The incident was reported to door staff but was allegedly dismissed.

27 July 2024 - SE24067572

Sexual Assault by Touching. Victim reported being sexually touched by an unknown male within the premises. The victim stated that when the matter was reported to door staff, her concerns were not taken seriously and were met with laughter.

29. The content of these incidents is concerning, in relation to:

- (1) underage persons being present on the Premises, consuming alcohol.
- (2) safeguarding concerns and failures by staff or security personnel to take appropriate action.
- (3) complacency in keeping the public safe.
- (4) a lack of transparency and confusion over compliance with the Licence conditions.

Visit from responsible authorities following complaint.

30. At 10:06 hours on Friday 11 October 2024, PC 2495 Roberts and council licencing officer visited lounge Afrique, following a complaint that two incidents that had been reported to police regarding unwanted sexual attention towards females and the use of two beds on the top floor to have sex with customers. Prior to discussing what the reasons police requested that the Premise licence holder show what the top floor looks like. This confirmed there was some validation in the reports to the police. They were

also advised that police would be informing Cleveland Fire due to the beds being upstairs and the risks it poses.

31. Fire brigade finally managed to get into Lounge Afrique for an audit, as this was reported into the Responsible Authorities meeting, there were two double beds set up on the third floor. The (DPS) Mr Jerry Quarcoo admitted he sometimes slept there after a late finish, and he did indicate occasional use by his business partners when they visit. There weren't clothes stored there, so fire brigade were happy this was occasional use, rather than someone staying there. The only escape route from that area is back through the pub, so if there is a fire in the pub, anyone sleeping is at immediate risk of death or serious injury, however occasional that might be. As a result, fire brigade have served a prohibition notice stopping anyone sleeping in the premise and is still in force today. They had been advised them to remove the beds, which would help remove doubt for future checks on the prohibition, but could not force them to do that.
32. Investigating officers have further reported difficulties in obtaining information from the premises. It is alleged that members of staff, including the Designated Premises Supervisor (DPS) and/or Premises Licence Holder, have not fully cooperated with enquiries and have frustrated aspects of the ongoing investigation.
33. Clearly, it would be naïve to suggest that a licensed premises operating in the night-time economy could be completely free of incidents, especially when considering a venue of the size and operating model as this Premises, which has high numbers of members of the public attending into the early hours of the morning.
34. In order to discharge its licensing function, the Police needs to satisfy that Premises have appropriate control measures in place, and the confidence that they will be properly implemented, so that if and when an incident does occur, that incident is dealt with in a manner which minimises harm to the greatest extent reasonably achievable. Where an incident is criminal in nature, the Police further need to be confident that the venue's response will be timely and transparent, so that the Police can have the best prospect of apprehending perpetrators.

35. It is fair to say that there have been a substantial number of incidents which have been dealt with satisfactorily by the Premises. where searches have been conducted to reveal the possession of prohibited items such as drugs and weapons; where patrons have been lawfully ejected from the Premises with the use of minimal force and in accordance with policy, where reports of concerns for safety have been made by the Premises to the policy.
36. However, there are a considerable number of incidents where the response has been less than satisfactory. In addition to the current investigation, Cleveland Police are concerned by the volume and nature of previous reports linked to the premises over the preceding two years. These incidents demonstrate an apparent pattern of allegations involving sexual offences, suspected drink spiking, violence, safeguarding concerns and failures by staff or security personnel to take appropriate action.

Police position

37. The Police are cognisant of the fact that the Premises is an important part of the night-time economy in Middlesbrough and is a culturally important facility. Mr Percy Quarcoo is to be congratulated for the steps he has taken what is in prominent place of public entertainment.
38. The Police have recognised the premise licence holder has shown genuine concern for the trigger incident and recognised the failings and willingness to work with the authorities to protect his customers.
39. However, these factors, of course, do not afford the operator immunity when it comes to promotion of the licensing objectives. complacency has set in to the point where the Premises has underage drinking and violence and safeguarding concerns.
40. I should make it crystal clear that the Police does not rule out seeking *revocation* of the Licence, as public safety is paramount to the police and must be satisfied that the premise licence holder must uphold the licensing objectives and keep the public safe being at the forefront of any operating model. Failure to do this will leave Cleveland police with no option but to seek revocation.

41. However, there are other responsible authorities who have genuine concerns for the failings inside this premise, ultimately the decision for the future of this premise will be the decision of the licensing subcommittee.
42. The trigger incident for the summary review hearing is the profoundly serious incident in nature, a young child who should have not been allowed access to the premise, who allegedly was seriously sexually assaulted. Risks of this severity at a licensed premises are completely unacceptable.
43. If the Licensing Sub-Committee decides not to revoke the licence, I am putting forward these suggestions to help ensure the licensing objectives are still promoted.

Management

44. In terms of management, the Police position is that they must be satisfied with the premise license holder, and new DPS needs to take more accountability of upholding the licensing objectives and safeguarding its customers.

Door team

45. If the Premises is to continue to operate, the Police consider that the company supplying the door team should be ACS accredited. The premise licence holder has already been in talks with a new door team; this is a for the premise licence holder to manage. The associated problems with the premise can be significantly diminished by door staff being professional and executing there duties to the required SIA standards.
46. Guidance on the ACS scheme can be found on the SIA's website¹ and in various documents including "Get Approved", Entities that are ACS accredited must meet the

ACS Standard, which requires the satisfaction of seven criteria, underneath each of which sits a number of indicators of good practice.

47. Whilst an ACS accredited contractor can deploy security operatives whilst they are still going through the licence application process (known as “licence dispensation”) that is a tightly controlled right, which the SIA has plainly considered is appropriate for a company that meets the ACS Standard.
48. I would expect an ACS accredited company to conduct its own risk assessment of the Premises and produce its own constructive suggestions as to the promotion of the licensing objectives going forward. Potential matters which could – additionally – form the content of condition are:
 - (1) the provision of a uniform including – on a risk assessed basis – suitable high visibility elements.
 - (2) mandatory wearing of bodycams for *all* door supervisors, with footage being uploaded to a third-party cloud provider, with access provisions in the same format as the CCTV condition.
 - (3) provision within the entry policy for a dress code.

Risk assessments

49. In my view, it would be appropriate for this condition to be further strengthened by the addition of specific requirements that risk assessments be reviewed as and when new hazards are observed or introduced, and in any event at least annually. Risks assessments should be audited annually by an independent suitably qualified health and safety professional, and there should be annual training of managers on risk assessments.

First aid / safeguarding

50. It would be prudent to consider that the premise consider, they have a dedicated first aider on duty, and a safeguarding supervisor.

Incident policy

51. In view of the incident, consideration should be given to requiring the PLH to have in place and operate a policy on incidents. Such a policy should detail the basis on which the venue reacts to incidents (including incidents where persons suffer injuries), and shall detail steps (where appropriate) for:

- (1) provision of welfare and aftercare.
- (2) responsibility and procedure alerting the first aider, the ambulance service, the police or other emergency service.
- (3) preservation of scene.
- (4) detention of suspects.
- (5) reporting, documenting, and debriefing.

Scanning

52. The premise license holder has ordered scanning devices to withstand underage persons obtaining admittance to the premise. all customers without exception should be scanned (including those on the guest list or otherwise invited onto the premises by management). In my view this should help the management as the sophistication of fake identification is extremely hard to tell with the naked eye, however this does not preclude the fact that if the management still have doubts then they should not be admitted to the premise.

Knife detection device.

53. I would of course welcome the views of a suitably experienced ACS accredited door team on the use of appropriate searches and the use of knife detection wands or other devices to ensure the safety of the public.

Conclusion

54. In conclusion, having regard to the compressed timescales associated with the summary review process, together with the further proposals put forward by the Premises Licence Holder, Cleveland Police are satisfied to continue working with the venue, subject to the implementation of the proposed measures and licence conditions. It is considered that these measures will assist in promoting the licensing objectives and safeguarding the public. Cleveland Police will monitor compliance with the agreed conditions and expect all proposed changes to be implemented in full.

Whilst recognising the cultural importance of the venue, patron safety must remain paramount. The imposition of robust additional conditions, particularly in relation to SIA door supervision, risk assessments, and incident management, will be essential in ensuring that the venue can operate without posing an undue risk to the public.

However, should the agreed measures not be implemented, or should satisfactory proposals not be forthcoming, Cleveland Police reserve the right to seek a review of the premises licence, including revocation where appropriate.

I believe that the facts stated in this witness statement are true.

Signed Sgt 417 Bavin

Dated.

 IN PS 417 12.8.2026.