

Warwickshire Trading Standards Partner Update

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Food Hygiene Campaign Targets Students

A campaign to promote food safety and hygiene amongst students living away from home is being run by the Food Standards Agency (FSA). A new website contains plenty of useful tips and advice to prevent food poisoning and keep students safe. These include encouraging good cleaning practices to keep bacteria and viruses at bay; using separate chopping boards for raw and ready-to-eat foods; getting used to checking all food labels and when eating out or ordering a takeaway, making the staff aware of your allergy, and asking for allergen information.

<https://www.food.gov.uk/safety-hygiene/student-guide-to-food-safety-and-hygiene>



Fake Glen's Vodka Warning

As Christmas approaches, the FSA has been made aware of the production and distribution of counterfeit vodka labelled as Glen's Vodka. The counterfeit vodka may have a strange smell and taste differently to genuine vodka. Products sampled were found to contain isopropyl alcohol, so they are unsafe. Isopropyl alcohol is an industrial solvent and is not intended for human consumption. Consumption of isopropyl alcohol can quickly lead to alcohol poisoning, and in severe cases death.

18 Month Suspended Sentence for Rugby Nitrous Oxide (Laughing Gas) Seller

Mr Vijayaratnam Kugathanan who runs All in One, a convenience store on Blackwood Avenue in Rugby has been sentenced for two offences of supplying Nitrous Oxide and one offence of possession with intent to supply Nitrous Oxide.



Warwickshire Trading Standards launched an investigation after Rugby Borough Council's Community Safety Wardens reported local community concerns that the store was selling Nitrous Oxide (sometimes known as laughing gas) for recreational use as a psychoactive drug.

Undercover Trading Standards Officers confirmed this by purchasing Nitrous Oxide canisters from the shop, together with balloons (used to inhale the gas) and cracker devices (used to open the canisters) on two occasions.

Trading Standards Officers and Warwickshire Police then carried out a shop inspection and seized 384 small canisters of Nitrous Oxide, seven large Fast Gas Nitrous Oxide canisters (and nozzles), 20 cracker devices and multiple packets of balloons.

At Warwick Crown Court on Wednesday 27th November 2024, Mr Vijayaratnam Kugathanan, age 48 of Columbia Street, Clifton upon Dunsmore was sentenced to an 18-month term of imprisonment, suspended for 12 months, and ordered to complete 240 hours of unpaid work. He was also required to pay £2000 towards prosecution costs and pay a victim surcharge. Mr Kugathanan had pleaded guilty to two offences of supplying a psychoactive substance and one offence of possession with intent to supply a psychoactive substance under the Psychoactive Substances Act 2016 at a previous hearing.

On sentencing HHJ Campbell, presiding, said that Mr Kugathanan had hidden the drugs under the shop counter and in bin bags and she had no doubt he knew he was selling Nitrous Oxide illegally to the public. She

More information:

<https://www.food.gov.uk/news-alerts/alert/fsa-fafa-03-2024>



Large parts of Warwickshire are now in the Bluetongue virus restricted zone, Trading Standards Animal Health Officers are warning.

Keepers of cattle, sheep, camelids and other ruminants must remain vigilant. Bluetongue is a notifiable disease and must be reported by law.

Bluetongue virus is mainly spread by adult-infected midges biting an animal susceptible to the disease. This is classed as 'vector-borne' transmission. Infected midges can spread locally and more widely in certain temperatures and wind conditions. Bluetongue does not affect humans.

More information about the virus and the latest updates are available here: <https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/farming/animal-health-advice/2>

Child Purchased Knife in Undercover Operation

In support of Warwickshire Police's Operation Sceptre targeting knife crime, Trading Standards Officers asked young people under the age of 18 to attempt to purchase a knife from shops in Nuneaton and Bedworth.

The operation involved visits to shops ranging from supermarkets to home and garden stores and DIY centres. The youngsters attempted to purchase several different knives including Stanley knives, craft knives and chef knives. Eight premises were visited, and one store sold a knife to a teenage volunteer. The sale is currently under investigation.

The sale of knives to children is a criminal offence. Traders are encouraged to keep knives out of the reach of young people, ask for age ID when selling to anyone who appears under 25-years-old and train their staff.

further stated that Nitrous Oxide is illegal to sell to the public because it is dangerous and particularly to those with respiratory issues and its use had contributed to a fatality.

Warwickshire County Councillor Andy Crump, Portfolio Holder for Community Safety said:

"I'm delighted that our Trading Standards Service acted quickly and decisively after concerns were raised by the local community that this Rugby store was selling Nitrous Oxide. This prosecution will help protect the health of Rugby people and sends a warning that the sale of Nitrous Oxide for recreational use will not be tolerated."

In mitigation, Mr Halepas, representing the defendant said that his client had both pleaded guilty and co-operated with Trading Standards by providing business records and invoices. He further stated that Mr Kugathasan had now lost his good character.

The Judge ordered forfeiture and destruction of the psychoactive substances and paraphernalia seized by Trading Standards.

Nitrous Oxide was previously controlled under the Psychoactive Substances Act 2016 - which meant production, sale or importation was illegal if the intent was to use it for its psychoactive effects. This prosecution was brought under this act.

In November 2023 Nitrous oxide was redesignated a Class C drug under the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971, making possession and sale for recreational purposes a criminal offence.

Stop Loan Sharks Christmas

Campaign 2024



Christmas is coming – a time of parties, presents, good food and family celebrations.

But it can also bring stress, worry and financial pressure. Loan sharks recognise this, and it can be a time of year when they take advantage of the most vulnerable by pretending that they are helping out in a time of need.

The England Illegal Money Lending Team (IMLT) is a national organisation, hosted by Birmingham

City Council, which investigates and prosecute illegal lenders and supports borrowers. It is better known in communities as Stop Loan Sharks.

This Christmas, it is warning people that however tempting that offer of a loan might be and however friendly someone might seem, they should be aware that there could be a loan shark lurking beneath the surface.

Borrowers often aren't aware that they have borrowed from a loan shark until it's too late. Things can quickly turn nasty as they demand repayments and issue threats of violence when you can't pay.

For more information and to report a loan shark, visit: <https://www.stoploansharks.co.uk/>

