# Police raid uncovers £80,000 stash of counterfeit goods in Oxford Street candy store



Police carried out a significant raid on a candy store located at 399A Oxford Street, London, unearthing a concealed area leading to an underground tunnel where two staff members fled upon the police's arrival. The incident was triggered when a tourist reported being charged an extraordinary £899 for two bags of sweets.

The complaint from the dissatisfied customer, which occurred on the weekend of April 12-13, prompted Westminster Council and the Metropolitan Police to act. Following their return to the store with law enforcement officials, the tourist was able to secure a refund for the exorbitant charge.

On April 25, officers returned for the raid, which revealed a hidden section of the store accessible through a camouflaged wall, adorned with sweet bags. Bodycam footage highlighted this covert area packed with thousands of alleged counterfeit items, with an estimated street value of £80,000. Notably, two employees managed to escape through a secret tunnel, evading capture.

This operation is reportedly the largest seizure of suspected counterfeit and unsafe goods on Oxford Street to date. Among the thousands of items seized were various American foods, single-use vapes, nicotine pouches, travel adaptors, and powered banks.

The store was found to be stocked with counterfeit cigarettes that lacked the legally mandated plain packaging and graphic health warnings. Brands such as Marlboro and Benson & Hedges were identified among the pirated products, alongside "Top Gun" cigarettes—a counterfeit label increasingly prevalent in the UK market.

Furthermore, the single-use vapes included misleading claims of "zero nicotine" despite having nicotine on their ingredient lists. Some of these vapes purportedly offered puff counts of up to 20,000, with tank sizes exceeding the legal limit of 2ml.

Councillor Adam Hug, leader of Westminster City Council, commented on the situation, stating, "We have known for a long time that US candy stores rip off customers, but charging £900 for two packets of sweets is a new low, even for the unscrupulous people who run these rackets." He emphasised the council's role in protecting visitors to the West End from exploitation and noted that ongoing raids and court actions were essential to addressing issues in the US sweet shop trade.

The raid coincides with a notable decline in the number of mixed candy and souvenir stores on Oxford Street, which decreased from 40 to 18 since the pandemic, as of March 2025. Subsequent to this incident, Westminster City Council has reported seizing over £1 million worth of counterfeit and unsafe goods across the past two years, as part of its intensified regulatory efforts against rogue retail establishments in the area.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-london-64826098> - This article reports on a police raid on Oxford Street's US candy stores, where £140,000 worth of fake goods, including illegal vapes and counterfeit designer products, were seized. It also mentions customers being overcharged, with one paying £25 for a vape but finding £100 charged to their account.
2. <https://www.mylondon.news/news/west-london-news/police-raid-oxford-street-american-26365087> - This report details police raids on Oxford Street's American candy stores following a shopper's complaint about being overcharged. Officers confiscated thousands of pounds worth of fake goods and illegal vapes during these operations.
3. <https://www.standard.co.uk/news/london/westminster-council-oxford-street-us-candy-shops-raid-b1032283.html> - This article discusses a raid by Westminster Council on Oxford Street's US candy shops, resulting in the seizure of £215,000 worth of suspected fake goods. It also highlights the council's investigation into business rates evasion by these stores.
4. <https://www.cityam.com/supersize-vapes-and-fake-designer-goods-seized-in-55k-raid-on-oxford-street-candy-store/> - This piece covers a £55,000 raid on an Oxford Street candy store, where illegal supersize vapes, fake designer mobile phone covers, and sweets with banned additives were seized. It also mentions the council's efforts to combat illegal trading activities.
5. <https://www.mylondon.news/news/zone-1-news/oxford-street-shop-raids-taken-24255936> - This article reports on raids on Oxford Street shops that have seized £575,000 in counterfeit goods, including fake sweets and vapes. It also discusses the council's crackdown on candy and souvenir shops exploiting legal loopholes.
6. <https://www.timeout.com/london/news/1-million-of-illegal-goods-have-been-seized-from-oxford-street-us-sweetshops-030323> - This report highlights that over £1 million worth of illegal and counterfeit goods have been seized from Oxford Street's US sweetshops in the past 15 months, including thousands of illegal vapes and counterfeit designer products.
7. <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14667241/Oxford-Street-candy-store-raided.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490> - Please view link - unable to able to access data