# Police uncover secret tunnel and £80,000 counterfeit haul in Oxford Street sweet shop raid



Police officials conducted a significant raid on a US-style sweet shop located at 399A Oxford Street on the weekend of April 25, following a complaint from a tourist who was charged £899 for just two bags of sweets. This incident prompted an investigation by both Westminster Council and the Metropolitan Police, who worked collaboratively throughout the operation.

The initial complaint came after the tourist returned to the shop to seek a refund, accompanied by officers. Observing the potential for wider illicit activities, authorities planned a more comprehensive raid. Upon their return, police officers were astonished to uncover a hidden area in the store, concealed behind a wall adorned with candy bags in the basement. The discovery included a secret tunnel from which two staff members fled, evading capture.

Bodycam footage from the raid revealed thousands of items purported to be counterfeit, with an estimated street value of around £80,000. These included an array of products such as American sweets, cigarettes, single-use vapes, nicotine pouches, heated tobacco items, and various electronic goods including power banks and travel adaptors.

Notably, the seized cigarettes were not packaged as required by law, lacking plain packaging and essential graphic health warnings. Among the counterfeit products were imitations of well-known brands like Marlboro and Benson & Hedges; additionally, Top Gun cigarettes, a Chinese imitation brand, were part of the haul. The single-use vapes confiscated also raised concerns, with some falsely claiming to be "zero nicotine" while actually containing nicotine, and others advertising improbably high puff counts and oversized tank capacities that exceeded legal limits.

Councillor Adam Hug, leader of Westminster City Council, remarked, “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 commitment to protecting visitors in the West End from exploitation, asserting that ongoing raids would discourage such practices in the future.

The raid constitutes the largest known seizure of suspected counterfeit and unsafe goods on Oxford Street to date. Reports indicate that the number of mixed candy and souvenir stores in the area has declined significantly since the pandemic, diminishing from 40 to just 18 as of March 2025. Over the past two years, Westminster City Council has seized over £1 million in counterfeit and unsafe goods and has pursued several successful court actions against rogue candy and souvenir establishments to recover unpaid business rates.

The Daily Mail is reporting that these enforcement actions are part of a broader effort by local authorities to combat illegal activities and protect consumers on one of London’s busiest shopping streets.

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

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.standard.co.uk/news/crime/oxford-street-american-candy-shops-london-shopping-takis-lucky-charms-cheetos-uk-b1186383.html> - This article reports on a raid of an American-style candy store on Oxford Street, where over 600 items, including Lucky Charms, Cheetos, and Takis, were seized due to containing ingredients banned in the UK. The goods were valued at over £2,800 and were set to be incinerated.
2. <https://www.standard.co.uk/news/london/oxford-street-candy-store-raid-westminster-council-trading-standards-b1136304.html> - This piece details a raid on an Oxford Street candy store where over £55,000 worth of suspected illegal goods were seized. The haul included vapes with twice the legal amount of nicotine, fake designer mobile phone covers, and sweets banned in the UK due to their ingredients.
3. <https://www.standard.co.uk/news/london/oxford-street-us-candy-shops-raid-b1032283.html> - This article discusses a raid targeting US-style candy shops on Oxford Street, where £215,000 worth of suspected fake goods were seized. The operation uncovered over 8,000 vapes with excessive nicotine levels and 25 suspected fake Rolex watches.
4. <https://www.standard.co.uk/news/crime/paddington-film-release-cinemas-london-merchandise-oxford-street-shops-b1189537.html> - This report covers raids on nine shops along Oxford Street, where almost £10,000 worth of counterfeit Paddington Bear merchandise was seized. The items included t-shirts, tote bags, fridge magnets, and shot glasses, all bearing images of Paddington Bear without authorization.
5. <https://www.standard.co.uk/news/crime/oxford-street-american-candy-shops-london-shopping-takis-lucky-charms-cheetos-uk-b1186383.html> - This article reports on a raid of an American-style candy store on Oxford Street, where over 600 items, including Lucky Charms, Cheetos, and Takis, were seized due to containing ingredients banned in the UK. The goods were valued at over £2,800 and were set to be incinerated.
6. <https://www.standard.co.uk/news/london/oxford-street-candy-store-raid-westminster-council-trading-standards-b1136304.html> - This piece details a raid on an Oxford Street candy store where over £55,000 worth of suspected illegal goods were seized. The haul included vapes with twice the legal amount of nicotine, fake designer mobile phone covers, and sweets banned in the UK due to their ingredients.
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