# Bar manager awarded £10,000 after unfair dismissal over CCTV investigation into drink spiking



In a significant ruling, bar manager Sophie Marsh from Mauchline has been awarded nearly £10,000 following her unfair dismissal from Saltcoats Labour Club. The employment tribunal in Glasgow determined that her termination was unjust after she revisited CCTV footage to investigate a customer's claim of suspected drink spiking during a karaoke session. The tribunal found that the club's management acted without conducting appropriate preliminary investigations or allowing Sophie the opportunity to defend herself.

On October 11, the club's bosses dismissed Sophie without warning, citing alleged violations of General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). However, during tribunal proceedings, the management struggled to substantiate their claims, with no clear explanation provided for the supposed data breach. Emergent evidence suggested that Sophie's dismissal may also relate to her previous grievance against a club committee member. Although Judge E Mannion acknowledged this context, he clarified that it was not the sole reason for the termination. Furthermore, the judge remarked on the broader implications of the case, stating, "While it is appreciated that the respondent is a small organisation, I cannot think of a more egregious breach of the Acas Code of Practice than this case."

Sophie's experience is part of a troubling trend in handling serious allegations such as drink spiking, which has garnered increasing attention. In recent months, heightened awareness of drink spiking incidents has prompted various establishments, including the Strangers' Bar in Parliament, to enhance their security measures. Following a reported incident where a parliamentary researcher claimed her drink was tampered with, the House of Commons Commission endorsed the installation of CCTV cameras to safeguard patrons. Such measures reflect a broader commitment to ensure patrons' safety, especially in environments prone to potential misconduct.

The circumstances surrounding Sophie’s case resonate with other recent legal decisions highlighting the critical importance of procedural fairness in employment dismissals. For instance, a security guard in Dublin overturned an unfair dismissal ruling after the court found procedural failings in his case regarding access to CCTV footage. This scenario underscores the necessity for clearly defined protocols in situations where allegations of misconduct arise, particularly when those allegations can have serious implications for the employees involved.

In parallel, an ongoing issue concerns the inadequate response from police to the troubling incidence of drink spiking in nightlife venues. Reports indicate that since 2016, there have been hundreds of drink-spiking incidents recorded without effective follow-up actions, raising alarm over the effectiveness of law enforcement in addressing such serious complaints. As clubs and bars like those in Manchester step up their security measures—to include staff training on recognising and responding to signs of drink spiking—the need for a cohesive approach involving both employers and law enforcement has become increasingly apparent.

Sophie Marsh’s ruling serves as a stark reminder of the importance of fair treatment in the workplace, especially when navigating issues that combine the complexities of legal compliance, personal responsibility, and public safety.

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

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.express.co.uk/news/uk/2062477/bar-manager-wins-10k-payout> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://news.sky.com/story/cctv-to-be-installed-in-parliament-bar-as-it-reopens-after-drink-spiking-allegation-13307324> - Parliament's Strangers' Bar is set to reopen with enhanced security measures, including the installation of CCTV cameras, following a drink-spiking allegation. The House of Commons Commission has endorsed these changes to ensure the safety of all patrons. The bar, a popular venue for MPs and their guests, was closed in January after a parliamentary researcher reported her drink had been tampered with. The new security measures aim to prevent future incidents and enhance the overall safety of the establishment.
3. <https://www.irishtimes.com/business/work/security-guard-who-allowed-hotel-guest-view-cctv-of-sex-act-unfairly-dismissed-1.3450547> - The Citywest Hotel in Dublin has been found to have unfairly dismissed a security guard who permitted a female guest to view CCTV footage of herself and a man engaged in a sexual act on the hotel premises. The Labour Court ruled that the dismissal was procedurally unfair and awarded the security guard €6,000. The court found that the hotel failed to follow proper procedures during the disciplinary process, leading to the unfair dismissal.
4. <https://www.irishnews.com/news/uk/mps-bar-to-reopen-with-enhanced-security-after-spiking-allegation-4ZO24FW6CNMPNKB5M27I24NDOM/> - Parliament's Strangers' Bar is set to reopen with enhanced security measures, including the installation of CCTV cameras, following a drink-spiking allegation. The House of Commons Commission has endorsed these changes to ensure the safety of all patrons. The bar, a popular venue for MPs and their guests, was closed in January after a parliamentary researcher reported her drink had been tampered with. The new security measures aim to prevent future incidents and enhance the overall safety of the establishment.
5. <https://www.law360.com/articles/2269815/bar-manager-unfairly-fired-over-drugs-at-work-allegations> - A bar manager has won at least £6,200 ($7,900) after convincing a tribunal that her company unfairly fired her amid unsupported allegations that she had taken illegal drugs at work. The tribunal found that the dismissal was unfair and awarded compensation to the manager. The case highlights the importance of fair procedures and evidence in employment dismissals, particularly in sensitive situations involving allegations of misconduct.
6. <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2021/oct/24/women-and-nightclubs-accuse-police-of-failing-to-act-on-reports-of-drink-spiking> - Women and nightclub owners have accused police of failing to act on reports of drink-spiking incidents. Data from Avon and Somerset police suggests that 486 drink-spiking incidents were recorded since 2016, leading to 27 arrests but no successful prosecutions. This has raised concerns about the police's response to such serious allegations and the need for more effective measures to address drink-spiking in nightlife venues.
7. <https://mancunion.com/2021/11/22/manchester-bars-respond-to-spiking-epidemic/> - Bars and nightclubs in Manchester are taking measures to address the rise in drink-spiking incidents. Venues like 256 have implemented staff training, installed body cameras, and upgraded CCTV systems to enhance security and protect patrons. These initiatives aim to combat the increasing prevalence of drink-spiking and ensure a safer environment for customers.