TRADE MARKS ACT 1994

IN THE MATTER OF

TRADE MARK REGISTRATION 2383090

IN THE NAME OF JAMES FRASER (MR)
OF THE FOLLOWING TRADE MARK (SERIES OF TWO) IN CLASSES 3 & 5:



AND

AN APPLICATION (NO. 500110) BY NORDIC CARE SERVICES LTD TO REVOKE THE REGISTRATION ON GROUNDS OF NON-USE

Background and pleadings

1. Mr James Fraser ("the proprietor") is the registered proprietor of trade mark registration no. 2383090 ("the registration") for a series of two marks as follows:



- 2. The trade mark was filed on 28 January 2005 and became registered on 22 July 2005 in respect of the following goods:
 - Class 3: Cleaning preparations; cleaning preparations containing sterilising substances; household detergents having disinfectant properties; soaps; disinfectant soap, disinfectant soap solutions; wipes incorporating cleaning preparations; non-medicated preparations impregnated into wipes; deodorants, anti-perspirant deodorants, body deodorants, deodorants for the feet; deodorant preparations, sprays and sticks for personal use; roll-on deodorants; deodorant soap.
 - Class 5: Disinfectants; disinfectant preparations and solutions, disinfecting agents, disinfectants impregnated into tissues and cloths, disinfectants for household purposes, disinfectants for hygiene purposes, disinfectants for industrial purposes; sterilising agents, preparations, solutions and substances; biocidal preparations; impregnated paper articles for sterilising; impregnated wipes and cloths for sterilising; sterilising preparations and solutions for use in hygiene; wipes for hygienic purposes.

Background

- 3. On 10 June 2013 Nordic Care Services Ltd ("the applicant") applied for revocation of the registration under cancellation number 500067. The application did not specify a five year period which non-use was claimed. The registry subsequently wrote to the applicant on 26 June 2013 requesting an amended form to be filed by 17 July 2013.
- 4. On 29 July 2013 the registry received Form TM8 and counterstatement from the proprietor. The registry did not receive a response from the applicant by the date given and so wrote to the parties on 30 July 2013 advising that the claim would be struck out. The applicant responded on 31 July 2013 advising that they believed a

response had been filed; nevertheless they would file a new application for revocation.

- 5. On 31 July 2013 the applicant filed a new revocation application. On 2 September 2013 the parties were advised that cancellation no. 500067 was closed, and this cancellation action (no. 500110) would proceed.
- 6. The proprietor was advised that since their TM8(N) was filed prior to the notice of revocation being served, the registry could not accept the form as filed. Therefore, a new TM8(N) and counterstatement were required from the proprietor by 4 November 2013. Neither the form TM8(N) nor counterstatement was filed. Accordingly, a decision revoking the registration was issued on 13 February 2014 with an effective date of revocation being 30 July 2013.
- 7. The decision was appealed to the Appointed Person. It became apparent from the notice of appeal that the proprietor had not received the registry emails since there was a communication service failure. Therefore, under Rule 43(3) of the Trade Marks Rules 2007 (as amended) the registry decided to set the revocation decision aside and this application for revocation will proceed.
- 8. The background is relevant since a large volume of documentation submitted for the appeal has been used in this revocation action.

Applicant's statement of grounds

9. Revocation is sought under Section 46(1)(b) of the Trade Marks Act 1994 ("the Act"). They claim that the proprietor has not made genuine use of their registration between 30 July 2008 and 29 July 2013. Therefore, under section 46(1)(b) of the Act they request revocation from 30 July 2013¹.

Proprietor's counterstatement

10. The proprietor filed a counterstatement which read as follows:

"The defendant has continued to use Steri-x orally and on the internet/web in support of its range of products, now primarily branded under steri-7, steri-x and steri-7xtra. The mark and brand steri-x is inherently linked and associated with the overall brand, established goodwill and reputation and mark steri-7 together with the full range of its products. Steri-x and steri-7xtra has always been and remains an inherent part of the brand and has been used during the relevant period."

- 11. The proprietor filed evidence in these proceedings which is summarised below. The applicant filed written submissions which mainly consisted of criticisms of the proprietor's evidence. They shall be referred to where necessary.
- 12. No hearing was requested, and so this decision is taken following a careful perusal of the papers.

¹ Section 46(6)(b) of the Act

Evidence

13. The proprietor's evidence consists of two witness statements, both in the name of Mr Keith Robert Lobo who is a solicitor of St John Legal (professional representatives for the proprietor). He does not state how long he has been in this position or the extent of which he has access to the proprietor's records and information.

Witness statement of Mr Lobo dated 11 March 2014

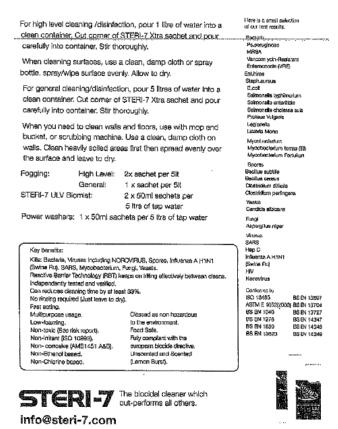
- 14. The witness statement mainly focussed on the appeal outlined above². Mr Lobo also claims that there have been instances of confusion in the marketplace, though no evidence to this effect has been provided.
- 15. Exhibit KRL1 predominantly comprises of forms and correspondence between the proprietor and the Registrar.
- 16. Mr Lobo makes the following statement regarding use of the mark:
 - "27....The marketing material relates to Steri-7's extra strength biocidal cleaner sachets utilising the Steri-x brand and the underlying Mark."
- 17. The exhibit includes the following representations:



² Paragraphs 3 - 8



High Level Multi-function Biocidal Cleaner/Disinfectant Utilising Reactive Barrier Technology



18. The exhibit also contains a quotation dated 12 July 2012 from PrimePac Solutions in Ebbw Vale, South Wales to Richard Fraser. The quotation makes no reference to Steri-X (or even Steri-7). Subsequent to this is an invoice dated 7 May 2013. The invoice is to Steri-7 Limited from Primepac Solutions Limited for 12000 "Steri-7 50ml Disinfectant Sachet". In relation to the quotation and invoice, Mr Lobo states:

28...The marketing material is for the Steri-x sachet project that began in 2012 and is developing further...Steri-x under that project was paid for in May 2013 for which the relevant invoice and original quote are attached (pages 53-54) i.e. within the relevant period now alleged under the current application. It further demonstrates the continued use of Steri-x and the associated Mark and brand."

Witness statement of Mr Lobo dated 13 November 2014

19. The witness statement makes numerous references to the Steri-7 brand and portfolio, and in paragraph 7 it is stated that:

"The Steri-x and Steri7Xtra names and branding continue to be used and marketed (page 1 of KRL2) and the Mark is an inherent part of that project. I am instructed and it has been confirmed to me that the Mark will continue to be used..."

- 20. Exhibit KRL2 consists of six pages. These are duplicated at Annex A to this decision.
 - Page one is undated and shows the mark STERI-7 XTRA. There is no reference to Steri-x.
 - Page two of the exhibit is a marketing leaflet dated 1 January 2012. It shows the mark "Steri-x" in the body of the text and on a spray bottle. The product is described as "a unique sterilizer with a zero tolerance for bacteria." It goes on to state that the steriliser "is ideal for schools and other educational establishments where it can be safely applied to all surfaces including walls, floors, tables, chairs, food trays, toilets, shower trays, doors and even curtains and fabrics. It is available in 500ml trigger spray bottles for easy application, as well as 5lt and 25 lt containers for conventional mop and bucket cleaning of larger areas." There is no indication in the witness statement (or exhibit itself) as to how many of these leaflets have been distributed and to what extent.
 - Page three is another marketing leaflet headed "Just how clean is your clean Care Home?". It is dated 16 November 2011. Further, it refers to "STERI-X, a specialist broad-spectrum biocidal cleaner"
 - Page four is undated. It is headed "Hygiene Schedule" and has STERI-X in the top left hand corner.
 - Mr Lobo states that page five of the exhibit is the "front page of a brochure used by Steri-7 during the material period". It is undated.
 - Page six is a document headed "MRSA R.I.P." and contains a picture of a spray bottle which has the mark "Steri-x" on the front. It is not dated and Mr Lobo states that "Although the date of its actual creation is uncertain I am instructed that the Steri-7 sales team and agents have undoubtedly used the document and therefore utilised the Mark during the relevant period it is alleged that non-use took place."
- 21. Mr Lobo goes on to state at paragraphs 10 and 11 the following:

"Similarly and prior to that in November 2011 and May 2010 (pages 3-6) the Steri-x name and the mark were utilised on marketing and promotional material used by the sales team and Ster-7 agents worldwide. The Steri-x "hygiene schedule" at page 4 was created in and used since May 2010. It uses the Steri-x name and branding across the products referred to.

At the same time other marketing and promotional material used by the Steri-7 sales team and its agents utilised the Mark. At page 5 is the front page of a brochure used by Steri-7 during the material period in conjunction with other promotional material. Under the heading "THE LAUNCH OF A SUPERBUG STERILISER" the Mark is utilised as the main feature of the document."

Legislation

22. Section 46(1) of the Act states that:

"The registration of a trade mark may be revoked on any of the following grounds-

- (a).....
- (b) that such use has been suspended for an uninterrupted period of five years, and there are no proper reasons for non-use;
- (c)....
- (d).....
- (2) For the purpose of subsection (1) use of a trade mark includes use in a form differing in elements which do not alter the distinctive character of the mark in the form in which it was registered, and use in the United Kingdom includes affixing the trade mark to goods or to the packaging of goods in the United Kingdom solely for export purposes.
- (3) The registration of a trade mark shall not be revoked on the ground mentioned in subsection (1)(a) or (b) if such use as is referred to in that paragraph is commenced or resumed after the expiry of the five year period and before the application for revocation is made: Provided that, any such commencement or resumption of use after the expiry of the five year period but within the period of three months before the making of the application shall be disregarded unless preparations for the commencement or resumption began before the proprietor became aware that the application might be made.
- (4) An application for revocation may be made by any person, and may be made to the registrar or to the court, except that
 - (a) if proceedings concerning the trade mark in question are pending in the court, the application must be made to the court; and
 - (b) if in any other case the application is made to the registrar, he may at any stage of the proceedings refer the application to the court.
- (5) Where grounds for revocation exist in respect of only some of the goods or services for which the trade mark is registered, revocation shall relate to those goods or services only.
- 6) Where the registration of a trade mark is revoked to any extent, the rights of the proprietor shall be deemed to have ceased to that extent as from
 - (a) the date of the application for revocation, or

(b) if the registrar or court is satisfied that the grounds for revocation existed at an earlier date, that date."

Relevant case law

- 23. In Stichting BDO v BDO Unibank, Inc., [2013] EWHC 418 (Ch), Arnold J. stated as follows:
 - "51. Genuine use. In *Pasticceria e Confetteria Sant Ambreoeus Srl v G & D Restaurant Associates Ltd* (SANT AMBROEUS Trade Mark) [2010] R.P.C. 28 at [42] Anna Carboni sitting as the Appointed Person set out the following helpful summary of the jurisprudence of the CJEU in *Ansul BV v Ajax Brandbeveiliging BV* (C-40/01) [2003] E.C.R. I-2439; [2003] R.P.C. 40; *La Mer Technology Inc v Laboratoires Goemar SA* (C-259/02) [2004] E.C.R. I-159; [2004] F.S.R. 38 and *Silberquelle GmbH v Maselli-Strickmode GmbH* (C-495/07) [2009] E.C.R. I-2759; [2009] E.T.M.R. 28 (to which I have added references to *Sunrider v Office for Harmonisation in the Internal Market (Trade Marks and Designs)* (OHIM) (C-416/04 P) [2006] E.C.R. I-4237):
 - (1) Genuine use means actual use of the mark by the proprietor or third party with authority to use the mark: *Ansul*, [35] and [37].
 - (2) The use must be more than merely token, which means in this context that it must not serve solely to preserve the rights conferred by the registration: *Ansul*, [36].
 - (3) The use must be consistent with the essential function of a trade mark, which is to guarantee the identity of the origin of the goods or services to the consumer or end-user by enabling him, without any possibility of confusion, to distinguish the goods or services from others which have another origin: *Ansul*, [36]; *Sunrider* [70]; *Silberguelle*, [17].
 - (4) The use must be by way of real commercial exploitation of the mark on the market for the relevant goods or services, i.e. exploitation that is aimed at maintaining or creating an outlet for the goods or services or a share in that market: *Ansul*, [37]-[38]; *Silberquelle*, [18].
 - (a) Example that meets this criterion: preparations to put goods or services on the market, such as advertising campaigns: *Ansul*, [37].
 - (b) Examples that do not meet this criterion: (i) internal use by the proprietor: *Ansul*, [37]; (ii) the distribution of promotional items as a reward for the purchase of other goods and to encourage the sale of the latter: *Silberquelle*, [20]-[21].
 - (5) All the relevant facts and circumstances must be taken into account in determining whether there is real commercial exploitation of the mark, including in particular, the nature of the goods or services at issue, the characteristics of the market concerned, the scale and frequency of use of the mark, whether the mark is used for the purpose of marketing all the goods

and services covered by the mark or just some of them, and the evidence that the proprietor is able to provide: *Ansul*, [38] and [39]; *La Mer*, [22] -[23]; *Sunrider*, [70]–[71].

- (6) Use of the mark need not always be quantitatively significant for it to be deemed genuine. There is no de minimis rule. Even minimal use may qualify as genuine use if it is the sort of use that is appropriate in the economic sector concerned for preserving or creating market share for the relevant goods or services. For example, use of the mark by a single client which imports the relevant goods can be sufficient to demonstrate that such use is genuine, if it appears that the import operation has a genuine commercial justification for the proprietor: *Ansul*, [39]; *La Mer*, [21], [24] and [25]; *Sunrider*, [72]^r.
- 24. Although minimal use may qualify as genuine use, the CJEU stated in Case C-141/13 P, Reber Holding GmbH & Co. KG v OHIM (in paragraph 32 of its judgment), that "not every proven commercial use may automatically be deemed to constitute genuine use of the trade mark in question". The factors identified in point (5) above must therefore be applied in order to assess whether minimal use of the mark qualifies as genuine use.
- 25. Section 100 is also relevant, which reads:

"If in any civil proceedings under this Act a question arises as to the use to which a registered trade mark has been put, it is for the proprietor to show what use has been made of it."

Decision

What has been filed by the proprietor to demonstrate use?

- 26. The vast majority of evidence filed relates to the appeal which does not assist the proprietor in proving genuine use of the mark. The only evidence filed which attempts to prove use is as follows:
 - 1) Marketing leaflets showing use of the mark in the following formats:







- 2) An invoice purchasing 12000 "Steri-7 50ml Disinfectant Sachet. Mr Lobo's witness statement states that the disinfectant sachets go into the Steri-x sprays, bottles, etc.
- 27. The proprietor has submitted pictures of the mark and made various submissions with regard to use. I am mindful that when considering the proprietor's evidence, it is a matter of viewing the picture as a whole, including whether individual exhibits corroborate each other. In Case T-415/09, New Yorker SHK Jeans GmbH & Co. KG v OHIM, in relation to the need to get a sense from the overall picture of the evidence, notwithstanding that individual pieces may not, of themselves, be compelling, the General Court ("GC") stated in paragraph 53:

"In order to examine whether use of an earlier mark is genuine, an overall assessment must be carried out which takes account of all the relevant factors in the particular case. Genuine use of a trade mark, it is true, cannot be proved by means of probabilities or suppositions, but has to be demonstrated by solid and objective evidence of effective and sufficient use of the trade mark on the market concerned (COLORIS, paragraph 24). However, it cannot be ruled out that an accumulation of items of evidence may allow the necessary facts to be established, even though each of those items of evidence, taken individually, would be insufficient to constitute proof of the accuracy of those facts (see, to that effect, judgment of the Court of Justice of 17 April 2008 in Case C-108/07 P Ferrero Deutschland v OHIM, not published in the ECR, paragraph 36)."

28. If undated evidence and submissions contribute to creating an overall picture of use, I may take them into consideration. In this instance, the marketing leaflet is not supported with any corrobatory evidence or explanation to demonstrate how many people the leaflet went to, where it was distributed or when. Therefore, it does not assist in creating a picture of overall use of the mark. With regard to the invoice, this related to "Steri-7" goods. Therefore, the exhibits do not corroborate one another. Further, the witness statement has been provided by the proprietor's representative rather than themselves. Assertions in the witness statement that the mark has been used should be considered as hearsay.

Section 4 of the Civil Evidence Act 1995 permits hearsay evidence in civil proceedings but provides the following guidance as to the weight to be accorded to such evidence:

"Considerations relevant to weighing of hearsay evidence.

- (1) In estimating the weight (if any) to be given to hearsay evidence in civil proceedings the court shall have regard to any circumstances from which any inference can reasonably be drawn as to the reliability or otherwise of the evidence.
- (2) Regard may be had, in particular, to the following -
- (a) whether it would have been reasonable and practicable for the party by whom the evidence was adduced to have produced the maker of the original statement as a witness;
- (b) whether the original statement was made contemporaneously with the occurrence or existence of the matters stated;
- (c) whether the evidence involves multiple hearsay;
- (d) whether any person involved had any motive to conceal or misrepresent matters;
- (e) whether the original statement was an edited account, or was made in collaboration with another or for a particular purpose;
- (f) whether the circumstances in which the evidence is adduced as hearsay are such as to suggest an attempt to prevent proper evaluation of its weight."
- 29. Further, in *Dosenbach-Ochsner AG Schuhe und Sport v Continental Shelf 128 Ltd* ('CATWALK'), BL O/404/13, Mr Geoffrey Hobbs QC, sitting as the appointed person, stated in paragraphs 21 and 22 that:

"The assessment of a witness statement for probative value necessarily focuses upon its sufficiency for the purpose of satisfying the decision taker with regard to whatever it is that falls to be determined, on the balance of probabilities, in the particular context of the case at hand. As Mann J. observed in *Matsushita Electric Industrial Co. v. Comptroller- General of Patents* [2008] EWHC 2071 (Pat); [2008] R.P.C. 35:

[24] As I have said, the act of being satisfied is a matter of judgment. Forming a judgment requires the weighing of evidence and other factors. The evidence required in any particular case where satisfaction is required depends on the nature of the inquiry and the nature and purpose of the decision which is to be made. For example, where a tribunal has to be satisfied as to the age of a person, it may sometimes be sufficient for that person to assert in a form or otherwise what his or her age is, or what their date of birth is; in others, more formal proof in the form of, for example, a birth certificate will be required. It all depends who is asking the question, why they are asking the question, and what is going to be done with the answer when it is given. There can be no universal rule as to what level of evidence has to be

provided in order to satisfy a decision-making body about that of which that body has to be satisfied.

When it comes to proof of use for the purpose of determining the extent (if any) to which the protection conferred by registration of a trade mark can legitimately be maintained, the decision taker must form a view as to what the evidence does and just as importantly what it does not 'show' (per Section 100 of the Act) with regard to the actuality of use in relation to goods or services covered by the registration. The evidence in question can properly be assessed for sufficiency (or the lack of it) by reference to the specificity (or lack of it) with which it addresses the actuality of use."

- 30. In view of the above, the witness statement has limited weight. Notwithstanding this, in accordance with section 100 of the Act and the relevant legislation outlined above dictates that a mere statement that the registration has been used is far from sufficient.
- 31. To summarise, the only evidence provided are leaflets and an invoice (referring to "Steri-7") together with hearsay submissions.

What has not been filed to demonstrate use?

- i) There are no turnover figures
- ii) There are no advertising figures
- iii) There are no invoices to consumers or evidence of sales to end users
- iv) No corroboratory evidence or information on the extent of which the marketing material was issued
- v) Geographical extent of use
- 32. The list of evidence which could have been filed to demonstrate use is not exhaustive. There is an array of evidence which could have been filed to support the proprietor's general contention that the registration has been put to genuine use. The proprietor has not submitted sufficient evidence or pleaded a defence of proper reasons for non-use. Accordingly, I find that the proprietor has not demonstrated genuine use of the mark in the relevant period.

Use in a differing form

33. Mr Lobo's witness statements make numerous references to "Steri-7" rather than the registration. Therefore, it appears appropriate to address whether use of "Steri-7" could be considered use of the registration. Before doing so, it is important to confirm that even if I were to consider use of "Steri-7" as being use of the registration, the evidence as a whole is far from sufficient to prove genuine use of the registration.

- 34. Nevertheless, I shall address whether use of the mark "Steri-7" should be considered as use of the registration. In *Nirvana Trade Mark*, BL O/262/06, Mr Richard Arnold Q.C. (as he then was) as the Appointed Person summarised the test under s.46(2) of the Act as follows in paragraphs 33 and 34:
 - ".... The first question [in a case of this kind] is what sign was presented as the trade mark on the goods and in the marketing materials during the relevant period...

The second question is whether that sign differs from the registered trade mark in elements which do not alter the latter's distinctive character. As can be seen from the discussion above, this second question breaks down in the sub-questions, (a) what is the distinctive character of the registered trade mark, (b) what are the differences between the mark used and the registered trade mark and (c) do the differences identified in (b) alter the distinctive character identified in (a)? An affirmative answer to the second question does not depend upon the average consumer not registering the differences at all."

- 35. See also *Remus Trade Mark* BL O/061/08 (Appointed Person) & *OAO Alfa-Bank v Alpha Bank A.E.* 2011 EWHC 2021 (Ch) and *Orient Express Trade Mark* BL O/299/08 (Appointed Person).
- 36. Although these cases were decided before the judgment of the Court of Justice of the European Union ("CJEU") in *Colloseum Holdings AG v Levi Strauss & Co.,* Case C-12/12, they remain sound law so far as the question is whether the use of a mark in a different form constitutes genuine use of the mark as registered. The later judgment of the CJEU must also be taken into account where the mark is used as registered, but as part of a composite mark.
- 37. The distinctive character of the registration is based on the combination of "STERI" and "X". Both are within an oval shaped ring, one coloured purple and the other black. The mark is registered for, *inter alia*, class 3 (cleaning preparations, etc) and class 5 (disinfectants, etc.). In my view, the average consumer for these goods is likely to view "steri" as an abbreviation of "sterilise". Therefore, the distinctive character of "steri" is at the lower end of the spectrum for the registered goods, but increased when used in conjunction with "x".
- 38. The evidence makes reference to and shows the mark as including the suffix "7" rather than "x". This difference, in my view, does alter the distinctive character of the mark to the extent that it would be recognised by the average consumer.
- 39. Therefore, I find that use of "Steri-7" in the various forms does not constitute use of the registration.
- 40. As previously stated, even if I were to conclude that "Steri-7" should be considered as use of the registration, the evidence is still far from sufficient to prove genuine use.

Outcome

41. The application for revocation succeeds. The registration is revoked from 30 July 2013 under section 46(6)(b) of the Act.

COSTS

42. The applicant for revocation has been successful and is entitled to a contribution towards its costs. In the circumstances I award the applicant for revocation the sum of £1100 as a contribution towards the cost of the proceedings. The sum is calculated as follows:

Preparing a statement and considering the other side's statement £300

Considering the other side's evidence and preparing submissions £600

Official fee £200

43. I therefore order Mr James Fraser to pay Nordic Care Services Ltd the sum of £1100. The above sum should be paid within seven days of the expiry of the appeal period or within seven days of the final determination of this case if any appeal against this decision is unsuccessful.

Dated this 29th day of April 2015

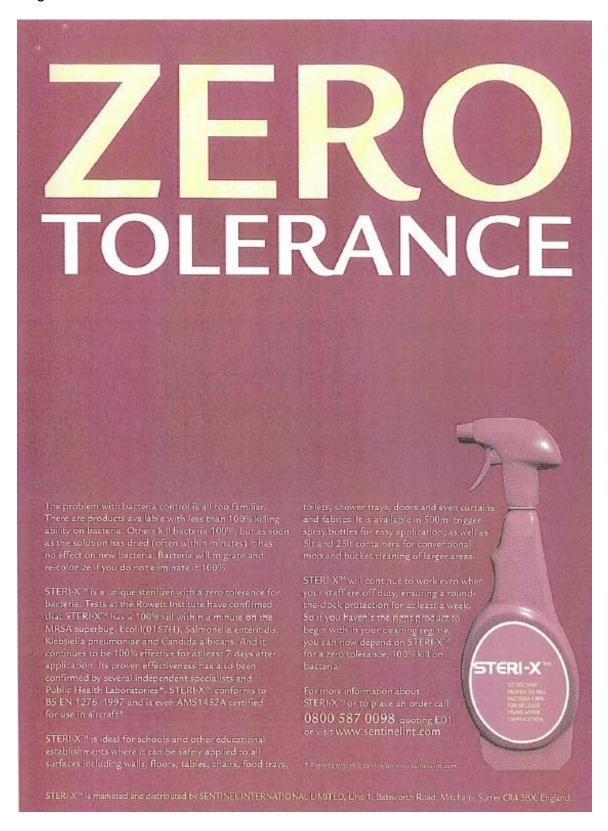
MARK KING For the Registrar, The Comptroller-General

Annex A (exhibit KRL2)

Page one



Page two



Page three

STERI-X™

Just how clean is your clean Care Home?



Swab No. 8 Cleaned Support chair Staphylococcus: Not present Streptococcus: Not present E. coli: 10 colonies contamination Aspergillus, Penicilium and unknown mould

This clean?

Swab No. 7 Clean Mattress Staphylococcus: Not present Streptococcus: Not present E. coli: 18 colonies Mould / Yeast: Penicilium and unknown mould



Swab No. 9 Cleaned Commode chair Staphylococcus: Not present E. coli: 12 colonics Mould / Yeast: Very heavy contamination 40+ colonies assorted species

These are some of swab disinfectants. tests carried out recently at Terrifying isn't it? a health care institution. Top

As a committed Care Home

almost constantly to prevent between cleans, protecting left is a support chair that had Manager, you know how vital re-infection-atime consuming floors and surfaces 24/7. earlier that day, the middle surface and piece of equipment slide shows a mattress that absolutely spotless. had been washed, wrapped Especially intoday's political keep your business from knowing that your in plastic and stored away in climate where everyone is truly clean is to use residents and staff have got a clean environment; and the watching and waiting for the STERI-X, a specialist the best blockdal protection on last is a commode chair that next outbreak of MRSA or had been given a thorough C.Diff.

"hese are some of the dousing with recommended

been cleaned and sterilized it is to keep every room, floor, and expensive process.

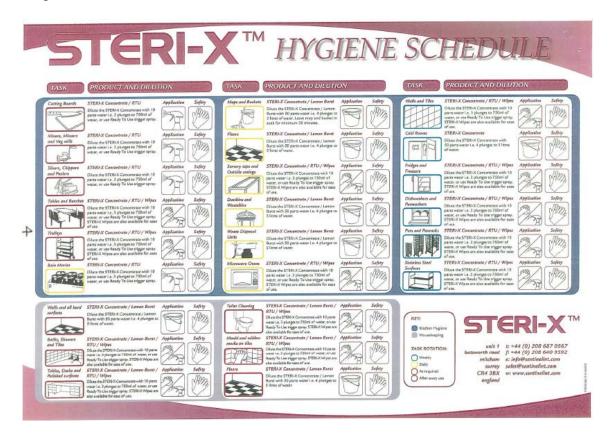
market need to be used that keeps killing pathogens

that the only way to peace of mind that comes broad-spectrum the market. biocidal cleaner.

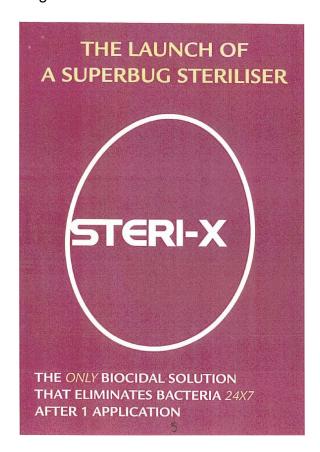
The problem is, most STERI-X uses a unique cleaning products on the Residual Barrier Technology

STERI-X helps you save At Sentinel we believe money, as well giving you the

Page four



Page five



Page six

