
TRADING STANDARDS SUCCESSSES

**IP CRIME AND ENFORCEMENT
REPORT 2019/20**



Cover photo courtesy: **BWY Canine**

AT A GLANCE

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Disclaimer

The findings, facts and opinions in the IP Crime and Enforcement Report are those of the IP Crime Group members and not necessarily the views of the IPO or the Government. The data has not been substantiated by the IPO.

CHAPTER 1



TRADING STANDARDS SURVEY

Introduction

The reports from Trading Standards Offices offer us a chance to picture the nature of IP crime as it occurred in the UK during the last financial year. Although a great deal of IP crime occurs online, customers and vendors of counterfeit products exist in local authority areas and their actions can be monitored and prevented where they occur. Trading Standards Officers, with their specialist knowledge of crime and commerce and specific geographical contexts, are able to give us an accurate picture of IP crime, at street level, throughout the UK. The survey also provides information about the interconnected nature of the IP Crime Group, evidencing positive collaborations and productive working practices. The work of Trading Standards Officers forms the bedrock of the IP Crime Group's success, connecting the strategic agendas of the IP Crime Group with evidence, experience, knowledge and investigations.

Highlights

The data provided in this report spans the period April 2019 - March 2020. Despite the COVID-19 pandemic, 81% of local authorities responded to the survey. Cigarettes and tobacco were the most heavily reported counterfeit goods in the UK, followed closely by clothing. It is notable that authorities have demonstrated links with organised criminal groups in over 35% of submissions. Within the wide range of products characterised in the survey, online streaming services and set top boxes remain a significant area of criminal activity. The report characterises consistent levels of counterfeiting in respect of cosmetics, perfumery and rising levels in respect of toiletries and medical products. It is possible that the increase in this final category may have been caused by the arrival of COVID-19.

Big picture

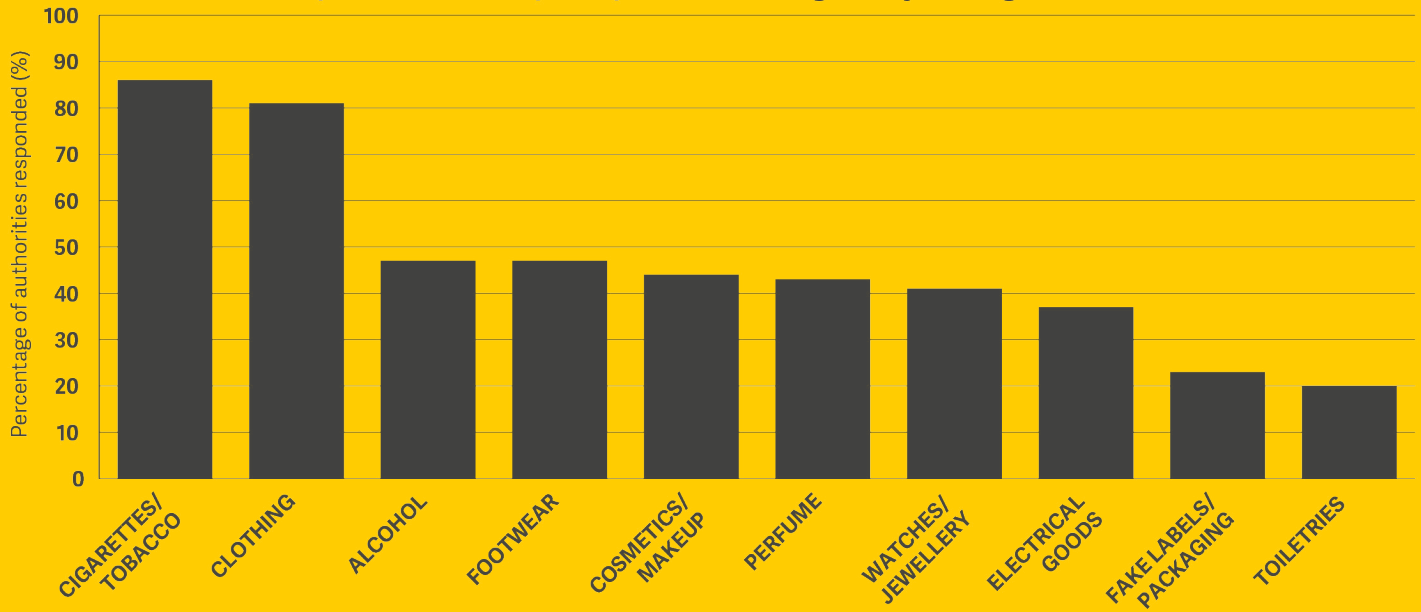
To some extent the data relating to the main vectors of trade, by implication, explore the changes in all economic activity brought on by lockdown. Streets, outdoor markets, pubs, clubs and doorstep sales, all effectively discontinued during lockdown, but reopening under new conditions, show how important physical contact was in the distribution of counterfeit products in the pre-COVID-19 environment. The online pathways identified by Trading Standards Officers demonstrate the importance of social media and online auction sites to IP crime. It is likely that in the post-COVID-19 period illegal trade through these vectors will increase.

Connectivity

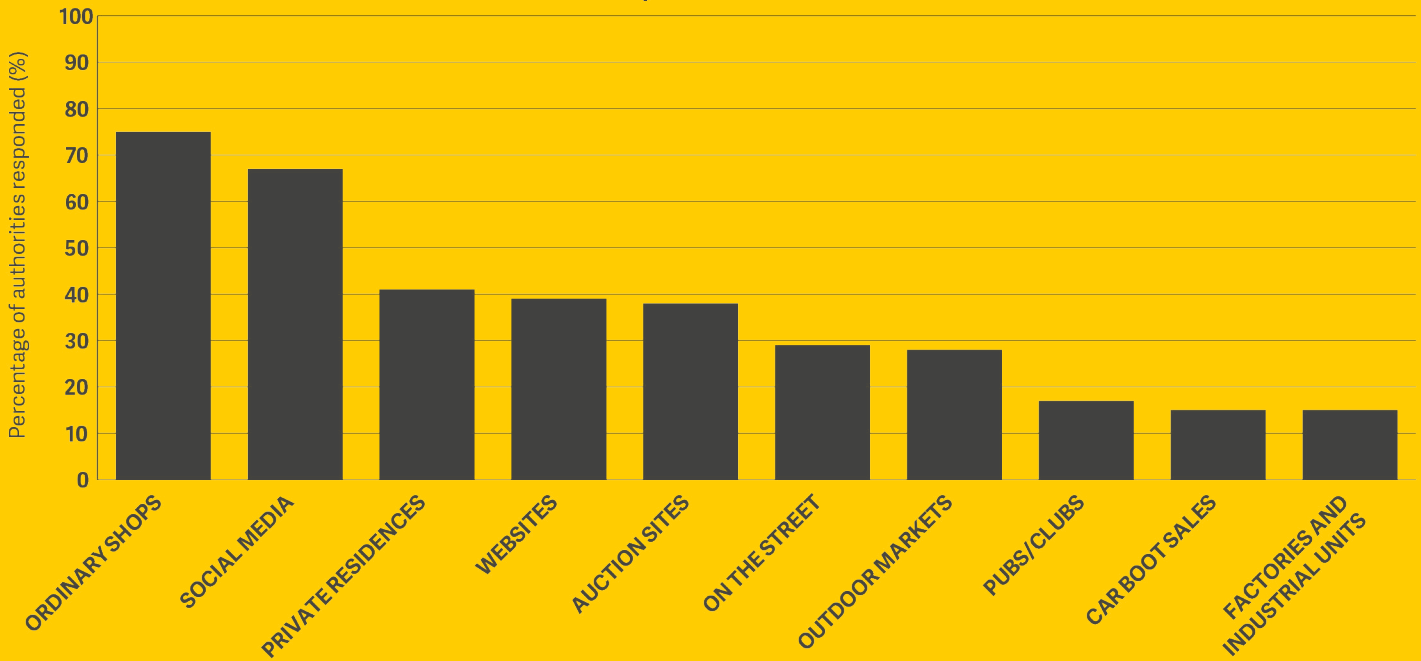
The survey provides important information on the collaborative nature of IP crime prevention. In 80% of reported cases, Trading Standards Officers worked in tandem with police and, in over 75% of reported cases, Trading Standards Officers from different authorities worked together. Significantly, over 30% of reported cases collaborated with the IPO Intelligence Hub. FACT, REACT, British Recorded Music Industry, PRS for Music, the Federation Against Software Theft, Anti Copying in Design and the Food and Drink Federation are all represented in the survey. The Anti-Counterfeiting Group remains the most consistent and significant industry body partnering with Trading Standards Officers in the fight against IP crime.

The IP Crime Group would like to thank everyone who took part in this survey for their patience and dedication.

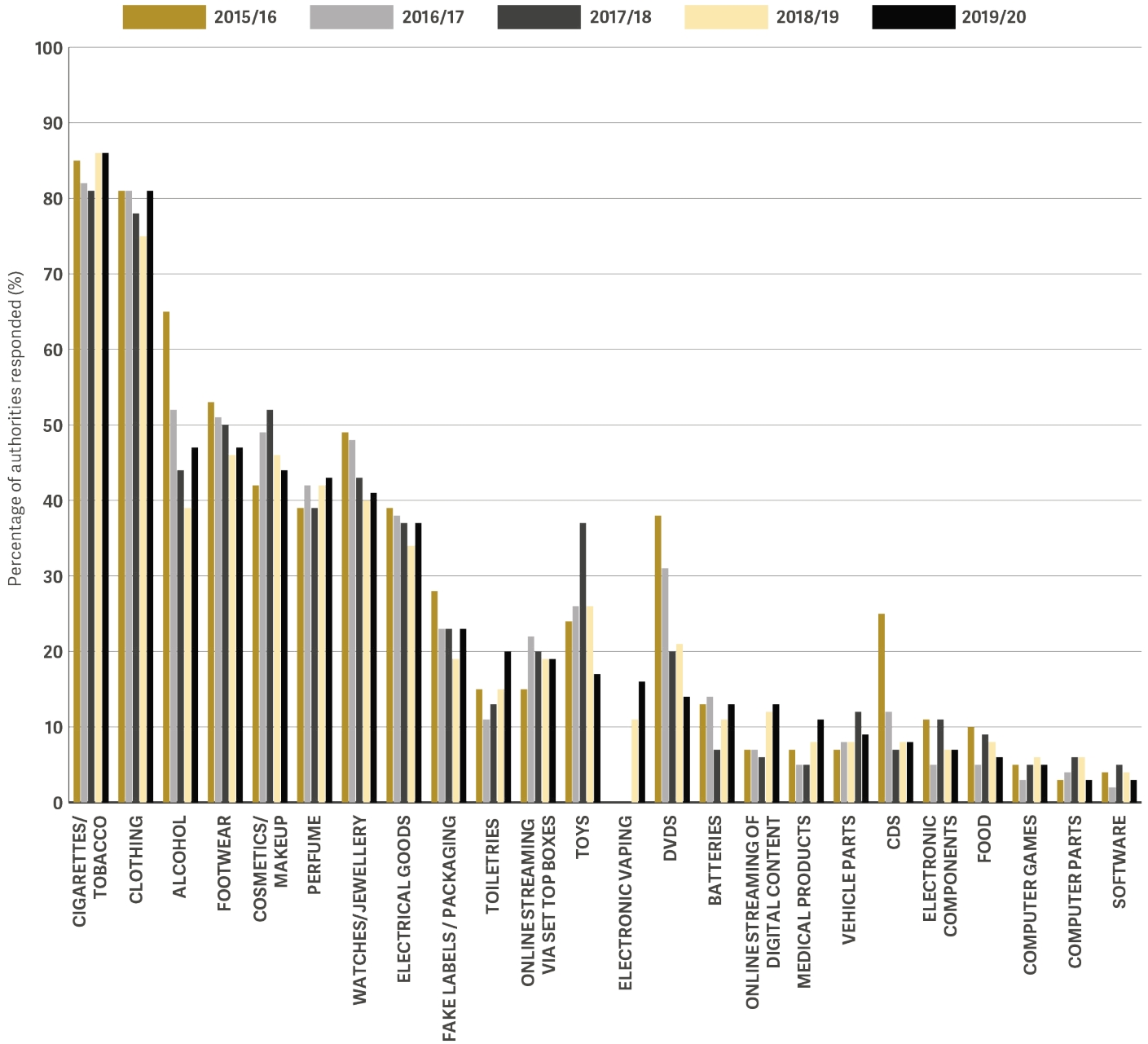
Top ten counterfeit/pirate products investigated by Trading Standards



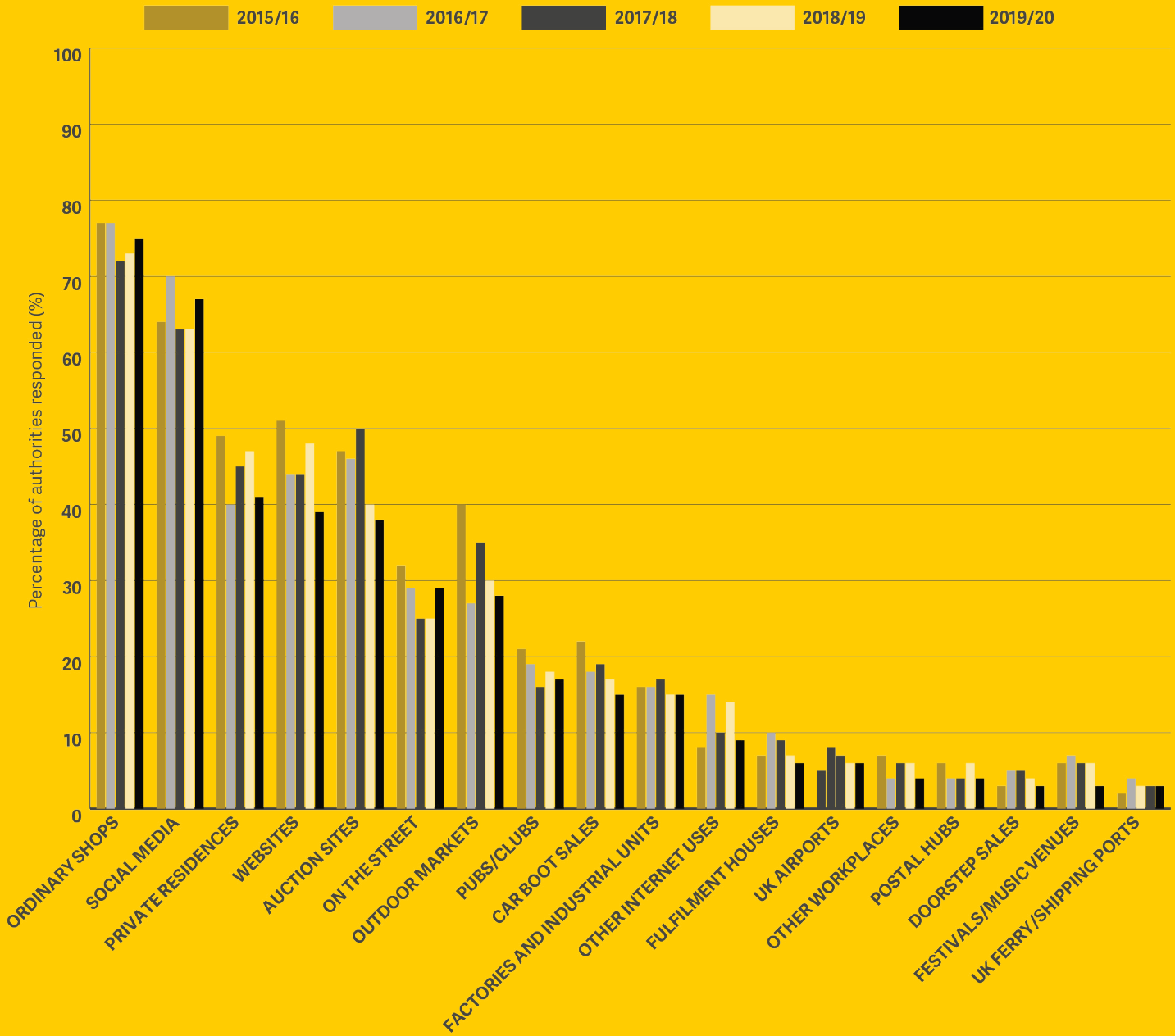
Top ten locations



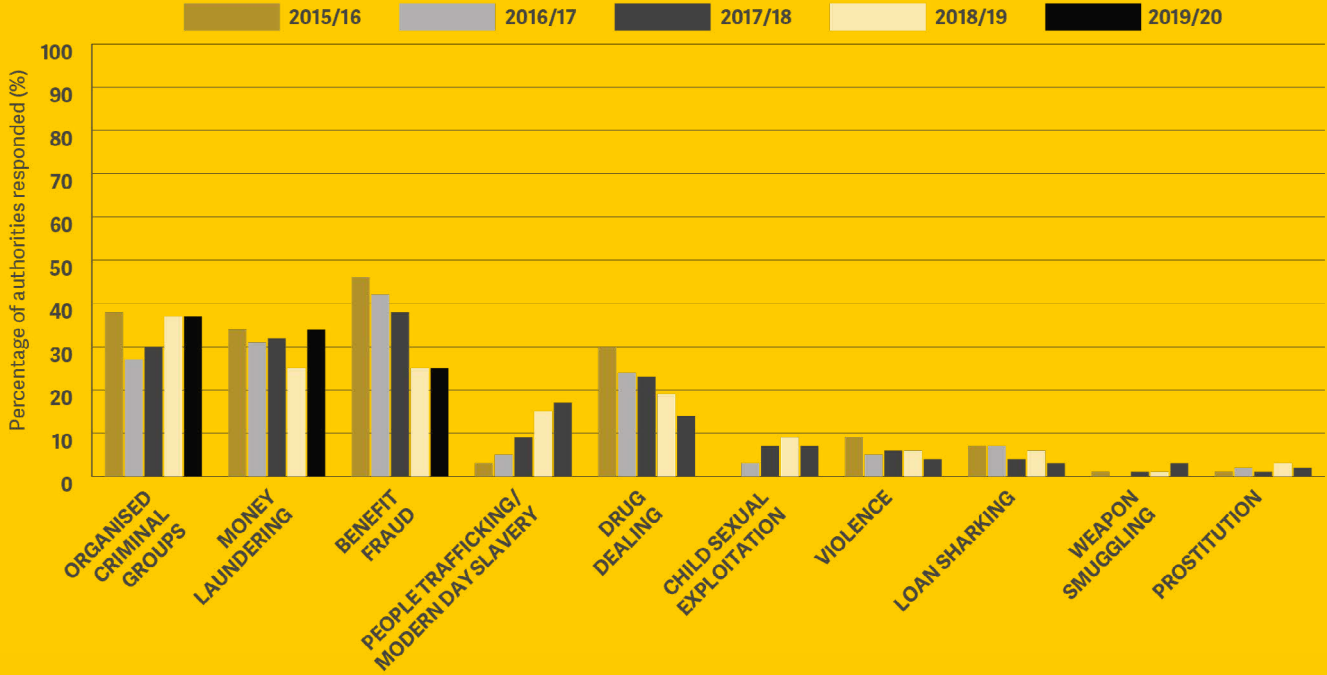
Top products investigated by Trading Standards



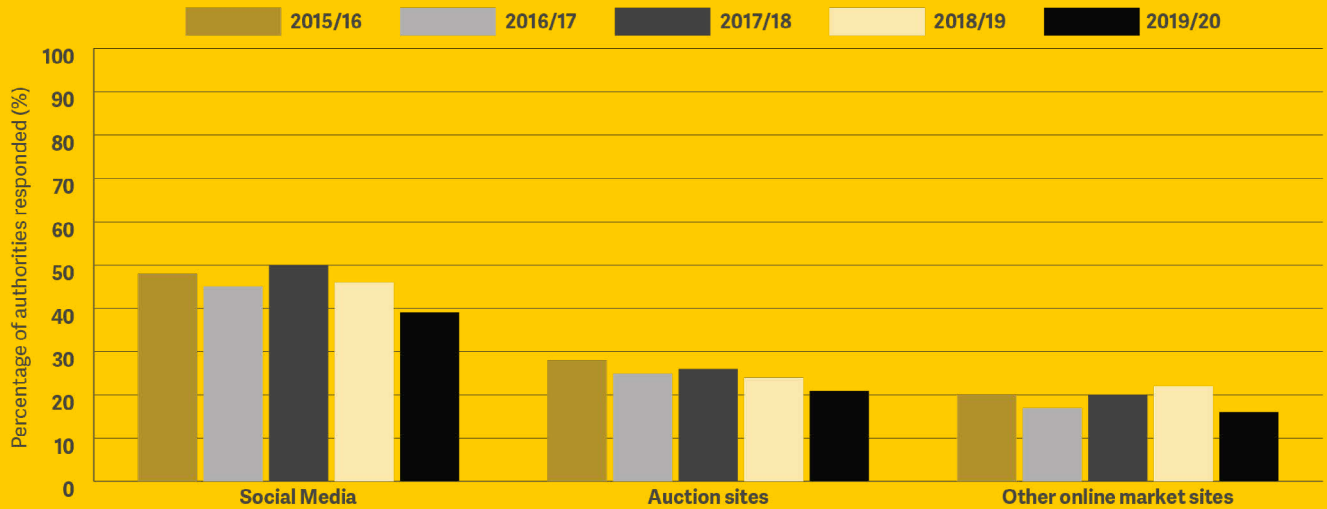
Most investigated locations



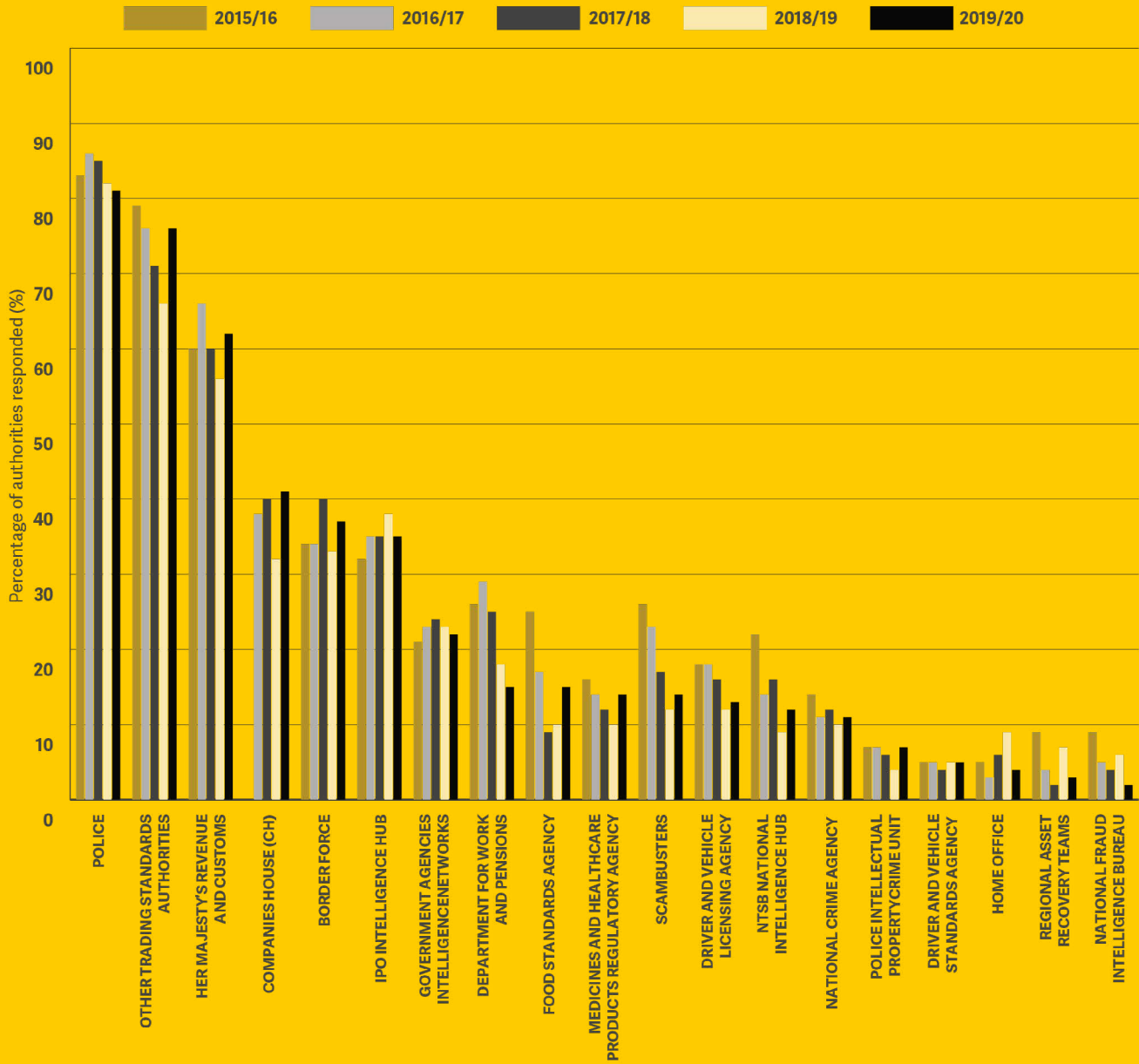
Links to other criminality



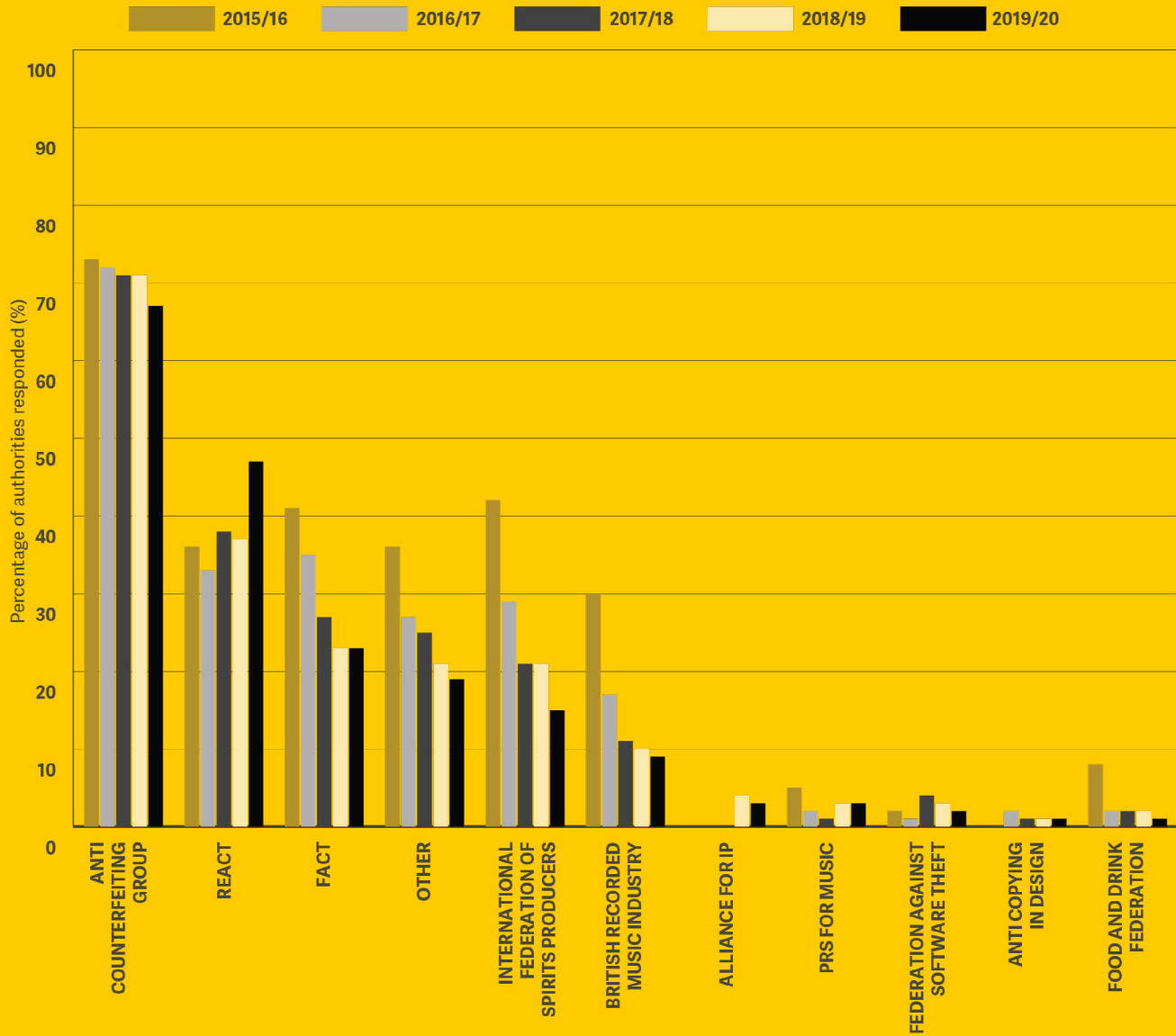
Proactive monitoring online



Working with other public sector partners



Working with industry bodies (top ten)



EXIT

CHAPTER 2



TRADING STANDARDS SUCCESSIONS

In last year's supplement we featured a report from eight Trading Standards teams from the South East of England. It described a seizure of £250,000 of counterfeit tobacco products during the winter of 2018-19, made possible with the help of a specialist detection dog. Scamp and his handler, Stuart Phillips, Managing Director of BWY Canine Limited, were delighted to be honoured at the Chartered Trading Standards Institute Hero Awards. This time Scamp's work, exposing stocks of counterfeit tobacco with Trading Standards Officers in Wolverhampton, Sandwell, Walsall and Dudley was highlighted.



Scamp, genuine, certified, non-counterfeit Trading Standards hero with Stuart Phillips, Managing Director of BWY Canine Ltd and Paul Dosaanjh, Trading Standards Manager for City of Wolverhampton. Image courtesy of BWY Canine Ltd

'For Scamp to receive the CTSI Hero Award was an absolute honour,' said Stuart. '2019 was certainly our year as we received three awards for our work assisting Trading Standards and Police around the UK to enforce and disrupt the illegal tobacco trade.' In this year's report, West Yorkshire Trading Standards, working with Wagtails UK Tobacco Dogs, have deployed another hero-in-the-making, Bradley. To date, West Yorkshire Trading Standards report the seizure of over 5 million cigarettes and over a tonne of hand rolling tobacco as part of an ongoing successful operation. In the age of organised crime, crypto currency, counterfeit online platforms, the detection, the discovery of counterfeit goods, on site, remains the best form of evidence.

In this year's feedback from Trading Standards Officers, the reality of the trends discussed in the main body of our report can be seen at community level. The vigilance demanded by Electrical Safety First is evidenced by reports from Camden Trading Standards' partnership with Border Force's Intelligence Unit, PIPCU and ACG in a seizure of counterfeit electrical equipment worth £250,000 from a self-storage unit. Brent and Harrow Trading Standard's reference to counterfeit children's costumes underlines the point that counterfeits are generically unsafe and threaten public health.

Manchester Trading Standards focus on a large, multi-agency operation in the Strangeways area, netting counterfeit products with a street value of £4m. Their submission evidences the scale of counterfeiting, the relevance of joined-up enforcement operations and it also demonstrates the presence of dangerous goods in easily accessible public markets. Salford Trading Standards, through operation Levi, explored a similar collaborative approach with Greater Manchester Police, Business Rates, HRMC and brand representatives in the Broughton area of Salford netting seizures with a street value of £800,000.

Last year's report considered the importance of well-policed supply chains in the auto industry. This year The Independent Automotive Aftermarket Federation make the same point. Here, East Sussex Trading Standards give a specific example of automotive parts fraud, showing how rebranding of substandard parts defrauds and endangers motorists. As supply chains are strained because of the COVID-19 crisis, vigilance in this market is going to become increasingly important.

At the luxury end of the spectrum, Essex Trading Standards report the 'transformation' of a \$8 hairdryer into a £300 Dyson Supersonic. This evidence supports claims made in the main body of our report, suggesting that a number of counterfeit products are being sold at premium prices. The high price, to some extent, allays suspicion of counterfeiting.

In terms of the regions of the UK, SCOTSS, representing all 32 Scottish authorities, discusses the results of a survey conducted across Scottish Trading Standards authorities to objectify their needs, and the responses to it. This cohesive policy has been effective during a period of intense pressure on resources. From Wales, Newport Trading Standards provide particularly clear guidance regarding the framing of operations so that they produce outcomes that comply with legal pathways to prosecution. Merthyr Tydfil, Newport and Rhondda Cynon Taff Trading Standards highlight specific cases in the fields of cigarette, clothing, online and offline counterfeiting, emphasising, the use of false identities to facilitate online crime and the way widespread small-scale offences reveals patterns of criminal behaviour.

The information in this report describes the commitment, skill and awareness of our Trading Standards teams as they collaborate and act creatively, on time, in situ, responding to each unique infringement. We're used to the expression 'every case must be judged according to its merits'. In this report we can learn the specific details of specific IP criminal offences, whether they occurred at the Mini Market in Tonypandy, Stanstead Airport arrivals terminal or Strangeways in Manchester, and better understand how to stop it.

“ Manchester Trading Standards focus on a large, multi-agency operation in the Strangeways area, netting counterfeit products with a street value of £4m. ”

BRENT AND HARROW

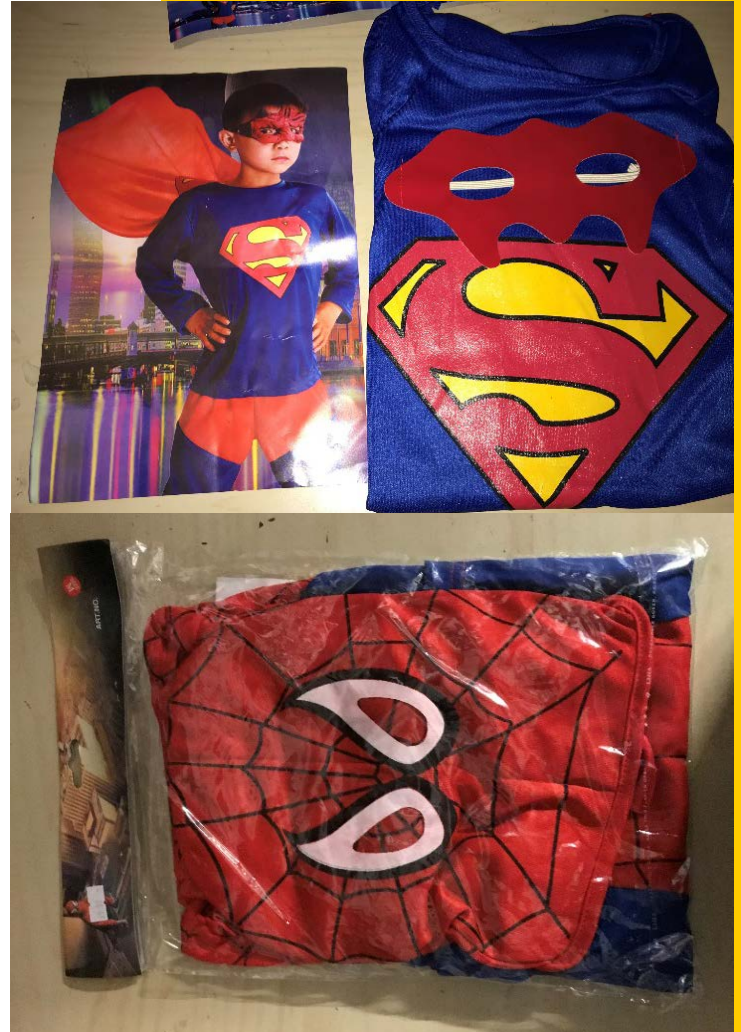
Costume drama! Flammable fancy dress lands business with £10k fine

A fancy dress business has been asked to pay almost £10,000 in fines and charges after its owner pleaded guilty to possessing and selling unsafe and counterfeit children's costumes. The prosecution follows enforcement action by Brent Council.

Batman, Spiderman, Superman and Zorro were among the rip-off character costumes Euro Accessories (UK) Limited and its owner Mr Farid Ayubi sold for just £9.99. Flammability and strangulation tests found the costumes did not meet the legal safety levels required and posed a serious danger to kids. All children's costumes are classed as toys and must meet strict safety standards in order to be sold.

Sorrow for Zorro – you can't trust counterfeit superheroes

The business and Mr Ayubi were sentenced at Willesden Magistrates Court on the 4 July 2019, after the Council's Trading Standards Officers seized over 200 costumes from the business. Euro Accessories (UK) Limited of Acton Lane, NW10 was fined £6,000 and ordered to pay £3,666 in costs. Mr Ayubi was also personally fined £500.



Dangerous fancy dress costumes seized

Cllr Muhammed Butt, Leader of Brent Council, said: "Over the past few years, we've seen stories of kids suffering horrendous burns because their fancy dress fails to meet basic standards. Cheap imported costumes might look like a bargain from the price tag, but what they don't list are the serious dangers that come with buying untested counterfeits. If the safety of children isn't motivation enough, I hope that this hefty fine at least sets an example to other organisations considering selling fake and unsafe goods. We want Brent to be a place where businesses thrive, but, be in no doubt, we will take action against traders who try and cut corners selling substandard goods to enhance their profits."

The case came to light after Trading Standards Officers received a complaint that the products were counterfeit. If you believe a business is selling counterfeit or unsafe goods, report it to Citizens Advice on 03454 04 05 06. They will pass information to the Council for investigation.

Keep your child safe! When buying fancy dress costumes:

- Only buy from reputable retailers.
- Check that the costume has a CE mark. This is a manufacturer's declaration that the product complies with essential safety requirements.
- Make sure there is a label or that its packaging contains the manufacturer/importer's name and UK/European address.
- Check there are no drawstrings or functional cords in the head, neck or upper chest area of the costume. This includes elasticated cords on face masks which wrap around the head area.
- Make sure that any capes which form part of the costume are attached by means of an easy release mechanism such as Velcro.
- Check that the product is accompanied by instructions and safety information.

CAMDEN

USP for fake USB – ‘don’t use it - it’s dangerous, illegal and wrong’

Camden Trading Standards responded to intelligence received from the Border Force Intelligence Unit about a consignment of mobile phone accessories suspected to be counterfeit and destined for a self-storage unit in London.

The team, alongside Anti-Counterfeiting Group (ACG) members, visited the unit and found a mini assembly and packaging line for counterfeit mobile phones and accessories. This evidence supports wider EUIPO Intelligence suggesting that counterfeit packaging, labels and components are being imported separately into the EU and assembled in the destination country.

The items seized included branded USB cables, earphones, air pods, travel adaptors, phone cases, whole phones and plugs. A number of invoice books were seized which listed retail addresses and suggested a wholesale supply. The items seized were valued at £250,000 in potential criminal proceeds.

Two suspects were interviewed and both identified a third offender and provided a further two self-storage companies that he uses. The premises were visited by Trading Standards and ACG members and it was established that the new lead was using false documentation to rent out self-storage units. Further counterfeit packaging was seized from one of the two self-storage units.

A photograph of the third suspect obtained from CCTV was provided to the Self-Store Association UK who sent an alert to their members requesting further information. Within the hour another self-storage company had responded to say the individual rented four units at their premises. An operation was planned to inspect this fourth self-storage premise and PIPCU were on standby to make an arrest if needed. The additional four units were inspected by Trading Standards and ACG members and another counterfeit goods assembly, packaging and wholesale distribution enterprise was discovered and a large number of infringing electrical items were seized.

The suspect did not show up and no arrest was made. Financial intel and the use of the Government Agency Intelligence Network confirmed the real identity of the third suspect, who has previous convictions for trade mark offences. The case investigation is on-going.

EAST SUSSEX

Brand theft auto

Take home points – counterfeit auto part packaging

A bogus motor parts trader from Hailsham has been ordered to pay back more than £100,000 of his ill-gotten gains.

Istvan Lorincz used his criminal activity to fund overseas trips, a flat in Budapest, a car and more than £30,000 in bank transactions. In a hearing at Hove Crown Court, the 44-year-old was ordered under the Proceeds of Crime Act to pay back the cash within three months or go to jail for 12 months. Lorincz, of George Street, is currently serving a suspended prison sentence issued in May after admitting passing off cheap motor parts as well-known brands and selling them online.

Richard Strawson, East Sussex County Council team manager for Trading Standards, said: "This individual enjoyed a comfortable lifestyle by exploiting members of the public. He not only tricked people into paying for inferior goods, his actions also had a detrimental effect on genuine traders and the manufacturers whose products he claimed to be selling. This ruling should send out a clear message that offenders will not only receive a criminal conviction but will also have to pay back the cash they earned by breaking the law."

'My darling wife' arouses suspicion

The Court heard Lorincz had benefited to the tune of £102,492.93 from his criminal lifestyle, some of which he used to make bank transfers of over £30,000 to his spouse with the description 'my darling wife'. He also gifted her more than £8,500 towards a Mazda 3 car and spent more than £5,000 on foreign travel and almost £1,200 in household items.

The investigation found Lorincz had assets including more than £40,000 in four bank accounts in the UK and Hungary and a one-bedroom apartment in Budapest valued at almost £65,000.

In May 2019, he was handed a four-month prison sentence, suspended for 18 months, and ordered to carry out 125 hours of unpaid work after admitting 25 breaches of the Trade Marks Act 1994. Almost £40,000 worth of motor parts was found at his home, to which he had affixed home-printed labels to pass them off as superior branded products.

ESSEX

Cut and blow up

Essex Trading Standards carry out regular examinations of goods coming into Stansted Airport in their role as Border Sheriffs under EU Safety legislation. A routine examination of a consignment of hairdryers turned out to be more than the Essex Border Sheriffs had bargained for. These were no ordinary hairdryers but very good-looking copies of the Dyson Supersonic hairdryer, a premium product which in its genuine form retails for around £300 in the UK.

The fake Dyson hairdryers were imported through Stansted Airport by a home-based ecommerce trader in Buckinghamshire who said he had believed the 'dryers were brand-less, only paying \$8 for each one.' The invoice had no mention of Dyson on it.

Suspicious about the provenance of the products were immediately aroused by their origin (China), given that Sir James Dyson's manufacturing base is in Malaysia. The high-quality printed packaging for the hairdryers stated "Made in Malaysia". The Essex officer in charge of the exam contacted Dyson's UK head office for confirmations on the bona fides of the products, and the Chinese hairdryers were confirmed as counterfeit. On that basis the importer was asked to produce technical conformity files for the 'dryers, and as predicted he was unable to do so.

For an outlay of \$320 for 40 items, the trader could have netted in the region of £12,000. The unhappy importer claimed he was misled by the seller whom he claimed was uncontactable when he tried to obtain a refund. One difficulty with this case was that, because these goods had not entered the UK, IP legislation could not be used as the basis of a prosecution. However, by using EU safety legislation for electrical products, which requires the legal importer to possess evidence of safety and conformity with good engineering standards, these fake Dyson hairdryers were refused entry to the UK market and will be destroyed.

The intelligence was passed to the local authority within whose area the trader is based and Dyson are looking into the supplier in China.



Blown away – fake Dyson

MANCHESTER

Disorganised Crime stung for £4 million

Joint Operation

Any doubt about the scale and capabilities of organised criminal activity in the field of IP crime were dispelled in this joint operation between Manchester Trading Standards, Immigration Enforcement, Border Force, Greater Manchester Police, City of London Police, North West Regional Organised Crime Unit and other private industry partners in the Strangeways area of Manchester.

A warrant was executed at Lawrence House on Derby Street. Greater Manchester Police were acting on intelligence that the premises was housing illegal workers who were being used to manufacture counterfeit footwear and sports clothing.

Although there were no victims of modern slavery found on site, three wagons were filled with counterfeit goods with an estimated street value of £4 million. Along with the goods seized by Greater Manchester Police, Trading Standards made a further seizure of 1,351 counterfeit handbags from another business within the same building. Both cases are being investigated with a view to prosecution.

Prosecution – Blinge Ltd

Fake Remembrance Day poppies merchandising were among the goods seized from a shop in the Strangeways area of Manchester. All 1,407 items seized from the store run by Sarajuddin Atai near Strangeways prison were counterfeit, including products claiming to be made by Apple, Christian Dior, Chanel, Vivienne Westwood, Dolce and Gabbana, Rolex and Armani.

The fakes at the shop on Moulton Street off Bury New Road included 225 poppy brooches. These purported to be official products from the Royal British Legion. The charity's annual poppy appeal is a huge fundraising event, which as well as helping to remember the fallen, raises money for the UK's armed forces community.

Mr Atai, 50, claimed that he had never heard of brands such as Apple, Chanel or Rolex. He said he had bought the items from someone who turned up at the shop. Atai later produced an invoice, which also turned out to be a fake. Atai and the company which the shop trades as, Blinge Ltd, jointly appeared before Manchester Crown Court. Both were found guilty. Mr Atai was sentenced to six months imprisonment suspended for 12 months for each count on the Indictment to run concurrently and to 150 hours unpaid work. He was also ordered to pay £5,000 towards the prosecution costs. The company were fined £1,000 for each count on the Indictment (£13,000 in total) and were also ordered to pay £5,000 towards the prosecution costs. A Forfeiture and Destruction Order was also made.

MERTHYR TYDFIL

The tobacco trail

According to our survey, trade in counterfeit tobacco products remains the most reported form of IP crime on the high street and retailers continue to offer illegal tobacco to the general public. On the 8 January 2020, at Merthyr Tydfil Magistrates Court, Mr. Tanya Suleman Nadr of Beauchamp Street, Cardiff and Mr. Gharib Ali Ahmed of Cromwell Street, Gloucester pleaded guilty to 30 charges relating to the supply and possession for supply of over 26,000 illegal cigarettes from the One Stop Shop at Pontmorlais, Merthyr Tydfil. The charges were brought following an investigation carried out by Merthyr Tydfil Trading Standards Service.

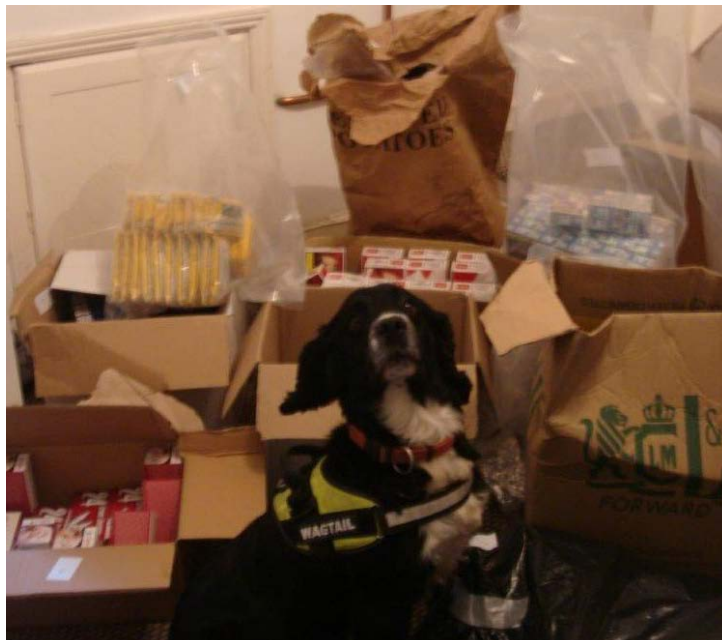
The court was told that officers from the Trading Standards had carried out a number of test purchases from the shop where cigarettes and tobacco were sold which, on examination, were found to be counterfeit and failed to display the correct health warning labels. A subsequent raid on the premises resulted in a large seizure of illegal cigarettes and tobacco. A quantity of cigarettes were concealed behind a false wall, which was discovered by a specialist tobacco detection dog from Wagtail UK that was utilised by the service.



It could be you. 'Ordinary shops' continue to supply copyright infringing goods

Sentence

In sentencing, District Judge Thomas indicated that due to the aggravating features and scale of the offending, the offences had clearly crossed the custodial threshold. Gharib was sentenced to 18 weeks custody suspended for 12 months with 150 hours unpaid work requirement; he also imposed fines and costs totalling £2,503. Tanya was sentenced to 18 weeks custody suspended for 12 months with 150 hours unpaid work requirement; he was ordered to pay a contribution towards prosecution costs of £1,338 plus a surcharge of £115.



Fake fags, genuine dog

Councillor Geraint Thomas, Cabinet Member for Trading Standards stated, "This was a thorough investigation brought by our Trading Standards Service and the punishment reflects the serious nature of the offending. The sale of illegal tobacco products is not a victimless crime and the risk posed to Public Health is significant."

Paul Lewis, Head of Protection and Safety Services at Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council stated "We appeal to anyone with information on the supply of Illegal goods to please report to Trading Standards by telephoning us on 03454 04 05 06 or by emailing tstandards@merthyr.gov.uk. All information is treated in the strictest confidence."

“A quantity of cigarettes were concealed behind a false wall, which was discovered by a specialist tobacco detection dog from Wagtail UK that was utilised by the service.”

NEWPORT

Operation Denver – Newport’s Counterfeit Tobacco Challenge

In common with much of the UK, Newport has for several years suffered from the sale of counterfeit tobacco – often via private individuals smuggling product from overseas and selling via word of mouth, at pubs/clubs or through social media. In more recent times, the instances of counterfeit tobacco sales have increased with the advent of high street retail establishments selling counterfeit tobacco from ‘under the counter’, sometimes via ingenious purpose-built concealment arrangements. Typically, the type of retail establishment involved is of the short lease, ‘convenience shop’ style establishment. The sales area normally gives the air of conventionality, with typical product for that type of establishment being displayed such as sweets, soft drinks and basic groceries. However, on closer inspection it may be noted that there are rarely any perishable products (milk, bread etc.) displayed for sale. Furthermore, when these premises have been inspected by Trading Standards Officers there is rarely any stock in the back of shop storage areas. It is believed that the main source of revenue for these types of shop is the sale of counterfeit tobacco, the rest of the limited stock, which sometimes includes a token amount of genuine tobacco, is merely there for ‘set dressing’ and occasional sale.

As a consequence of enforcement action leading to seizures of relatively large quantities of counterfeit tobacco the amount of product stored at the retail premises became small. The stock of counterfeit tobacco normally being kept elsewhere (private dwellings, motor vehicles) and the stock in the shop replenished as required. When word of enforcement action on any particular day spread it was common for ‘spotters’ to appear near suspect shops to act as an early warning method.

In July 2019 Newport had between 12 and 15 known retail premises selling counterfeit tobacco. In the previous nine months significant amounts had been seized by Trading Standards and four individuals had been successfully prosecuted resulting in sentences totalling 320 hours unpaid work. However, the profits to the criminal gangs were so attractive that shops were restocked following seizures and new individuals, often asylum seekers, brought in to replace those who had been prosecuted.

Newport City Council Trading Standards continued to work in partnership with other enforcement bodies, notably Gwent Police and Her Majesty’s Revenue and Customs in order to tackle the problem. Some innovative enforcement techniques were planned for future implementation.

Operation Denver: The Response

It came to light that a small number of other local authorities with prolific counterfeit tobacco problems had used the provisions of the Anti-Social Behaviour Crime and Policing Act 2014 to tackle the issue. The service at Merthyr Tydfil Country Borough in particular was able to provide excellent guidance and advice. The basis of this action was that Sections 76-79 of the Act introduced the concept of a Closure Notice which can be issued by either police or local authority and which requires premises to close for up to 48 hours on the grounds of nuisance or disorder taking place (or likely to take place) there.

Sections 80-86 of the Act deal with Closure Orders. A Closure Order is issued by the Magistrates Court and can require premises to remain closed for up to three months, with potential to extend to a maximum of six months.

There is a disparity between the prerequisites for a Closure Notice and a Closure Order. As mentioned earlier, a Closure Notice can be issued on the grounds of nuisance or disorder. It cannot be issued on the grounds of criminal behaviour. A Closure Order, however, can be issued for nuisance, disorder OR criminal behaviour. If there is no nuisance, there can be no Closure Notice.

With no Closure Notice there can be no Closure Order, even though the Closure Order proceedings can be based solely on criminal behaviour.

Mark Hopkins, Principal Trading Standards Officer, commenced the evidence gathering phase of the operation. Statements of witness were sourced from other interested agencies: Gwent Police for nuisance to members of the public associated with each premise and counterfeit tobacco links to OCGs; South Wales Fire and Rescue for safety issues relating to such cigarettes where the self-extinguishing measures present in genuine cigarettes are absent with the potential for house fires; HMRC for duty evaded; tobacco industry representative for damage to legitimate brands, links to OCG's and safety issues relating to levels of tar; ASH Wales for undermining efforts to curb tobacco use; Newport Now Business Improvement District for damage to legitimate businesses.

All the while officers from the team were returning to the shops and buying counterfeit cigarettes.

The Three Phases

1. Section 76(6) of the Act states that, before a Notice is served, the issuing authority must make reasonable efforts to inform those who live on the premises (if any), any person who has control of, or responsibility for, the premises and any other parties it thinks appropriate. Consequently, the decision was taken to send letters to the identified persons with an interest in the premises, namely the freeholder, the leaseholder (both obtained from Land Registry checks) and the person recorded as responsible for paying the business rates following liaison with the council's Business Rates Section. The Act is silent on when the Notice must be served so they were mailed a couple of days before the planned date of the serving of the Notice.
2. Section 76(1) of the Act provides that a Closure Notice can be issued by the local authority which requires a premises to close for up to 48 hours on the grounds of nuisance or disorder taking place (or likely to take place) there. This notice needs to be signed by a local authority representative of appropriate seniority. In this case the Head of Law and Regulation. The Closure Notice was served at the premises by Trading Standards Officers accompanied by officers of Gwent Police. Persons at the premises were told to leave, a locksmith changed the locks and any counterfeit tobacco was seized.
3. Section 80(1) of the Act provides that where a Closure Notice has been served then a Closure Order application must be made to the Court within 48 hours. Where Closure Notices had been served court dates were pre-booked for 48 hours hence. The officer in charge of the operation attended court together with a Council Solicitor. The case was presented and evidence of the criminality presented. A Closure Order was granted on every occasion.

During 2019 this process was followed four times in relation to the shops known as: Azmar Mini Market, Zam Zam, Jack News, and City Stores.

“It came to light that a small number of other local authorities with prolific counterfeit tobacco problems had used the provisions of the Anti-Social Behaviour Crime and Policing Act 2014 to tackle the issue.”

Law and Property Act

As part of Operation Denver we began to investigate another shop called New Supermarket. During the evidence building phase, it was discovered that the building had been purchased by the city's social landlord, Newport City Homes. Evidence was provided to Newport City Homes of the criminality at the shop and officers explained the effect of Section 146 of the Law of Property Act 1925. This section provides that where there is a breach of a lease provision in relation to non-compliance with an Act of Parliament then the lease may be forfeited via a termination notice. Newport City Homes served notice on the leaseholder that unless the premises was closed they would terminate the lease. Newport City Homes immediately ceased collecting rent for the premises as if they continued to do so this may have implicated them in a money laundering investigation. The leaseholder, who has a 999 year lease, was a retired businessman who had no daily involvement in the business, it transpired he had let the premises to another person who had, without permission, sub-let it. The premises was closed and is currently being refurbished.

Conclusion and Impact

Whilst reviewing the impact of Operation Denver for the Impacts and Outcomes Study by the Association of Chief Trading Standards Officers, it was calculated that the 12 month detriment avoided by this action amounted to £1.7 million.

Officers from Newport City Council Trading Standards have found the use of the closure arrangements of the Anti-Social Behaviour Crime and Policing Act 2014 a very effective tool in removing such shops from the city's high streets.



Counterfeit cigarette products seized during Newport's 'Operation Denver'

RHONDDA CYNON TAF

Counterfeit people – “Billy James” and “Ceri Smith”

Online counterfeit fraud involves the sale of counterfeit goods, and the creation of fake identities to facilitate this process. In this case two real suspects, Matthew Thomas and Amy Cromar combined to produce an alter ego on Facebook. On 26 September 2017 a complaint was made to RCT Trading Standards alleging the sale of counterfeit clothes and trainers on the Facebook page of “Billy James”. The Facebook page was viewed and there were numerous apparently counterfeit items offered for sale, including clothing items for adults and children, footwear, cosmetics, aftershave, perfume, hair straighteners, watches, bags and purses. These items displayed various registered trade marks including Adidas, Gym King, Nike, The North Face, Emporio Armani, Versace, Michael Kors, Ted Baker, Timberland, Tiffany & Co, Ralph Lauren, Kylie Jenner, GHD and Ugg. The name “VQ Sales” was overwritten on some of the photographs of the items and there was text advertising the availability of “all top brand duty free perfumes and designer goods at very cheap prices”. Information was also received by RCT TS that a test purchase of some Tiffany & Co. earrings had been undertaken by an investigator with the trade mark representative, Surelock International Limited.

Enquiries revealed that “Billy James” was a false Facebook profile. Using the PayPal details that had been used for the test purchase, officers were able to confirm that it was being operated by THOMAS and CROMAR, who were then residing at Heol y Mynydd, Gilfach Goch, Porth. On 4 December 2017 an entry warrant was executed at this address and a quantity of items was seized, including suspected counterfeit clothing, footwear, accessories, perfume, aftershave, jewellery, cosmetics, two mobile phones, an iPad, documentation relating to sales/orders

and packaging materials. A number of the items seized were packaged and labelled, ready to be posted to customers.

The evidence showed that THOMAS and CROMAR had been operating a prolific trade in the sale of counterfeit items, with almost everything being sent by recorded delivery. They would not deliver to customer’s home addresses, even those that were local, and refused to allow anyone to visit their home address. THOMAS and CROMAR were travelling to obtain goods from various markets, and had established contact with different suppliers. They were both heavily involved with the running of the business and had an extensive client base. Some of the seized cosmetics were sent away for testing and failed with regard to significant issues with the product labelling on all samples, and one sample also failed to comply with allergens labelling. THOMAS and CROMAR both declined to attend a formal interview, stating that neither of them were mentally prepared for it.

THOMAS and CROMAR were both charged with 25 offences under S92 of the Trade Marks Act 1994, two offences under the Cosmetic Products Enforcement Regulations 2013 and an offence under S9 of the Fraud Act 2006. **On 2 October 2019 they both entered guilty pleas to all charges at Merthyr Magistrates Court. THOMAS was sentenced to a 12 month Community Order with a 10 day rehabilitation order element, £120 fine, costs of £4,000 and a victim surcharge of £85 (total £4,205). CROMAR was sentenced to a 12 month Community Order with an unpaid work element of 160 hours, costs of £4,000 and a victim surcharge of £85 (total £4,085). The court also ordered the forfeiture and destruction of all the seized counterfeit goods.**

Alias Evans and Jones

Wayne Jones and Lisa Evans of Tonyrefail were investigated for a similar group of offences. On 26 July 2017 a complaint was made to RCT Trading Standards alleging the sale of counterfeit footwear by "Ceri Smith" on Facebook. This was followed by a further complaint on 16 August 2017. The "Ceri Smith" Facebook page was viewed and numerous photographs of apparently counterfeit items of footwear were identified. These displayed the registered trade marks of Adidas, Converse, Nike and Timberland, along with requests for various sizes, etc. from potential customers. Enquiries revealed that "Ceri Smith" was a false Facebook profile being operated by JONES and EVANS. On 26 November 2017 a further complaint was received alleging the sale of counterfeit clothes and trainers on Facebook by EVANS. It was alleged that she obtained the goods from Birmingham, and the sales helped to fund lavish holidays. It was also alleged that she stored goods at her mother's home address of Oakwood Drive, Tonyrefail.

On 5 December 2017 four warrants of entry were executed. These were at the homes addresses of JONES, EVANS and EVANS' mother. Seizures were made at all three premises and they included clothing, footwear, mobile telephones, documentation and £965 in cash. The fourth entry warrant was for any vehicle in the use of JONES. Officers recovered a quantity of cannabis resin from an Audi car that was registered to JONES. This was passed on to South Wales Police for further investigation. As a result of the seizure of the drugs, JONES was convicted of possession with intent to supply in July 2018 and was sentenced to 12 months custody. After his release, JONES was interviewed and confirmed that he had been purchasing items from Wellsbourne Market.

He had built up a relationship with some of the traders and would sometimes have items delivered to him, paying money to a nominated bank account. He denied that EVANS was involved in the activities with him. However, the evidence pointed to them both being involved, and EVANS had a previous informal warning and conviction for similar offences. On the advice of her legal representative, EVANS declined to attend a voluntary interview.

JONES and EVANS were both charged with seven offences under S92 of the Trade Marks Act 1994 and one offence under S9 of the Fraud Act 2006. They both entered guilty pleas at Merthyr Magistrates Court on 24 July 2019. JONES was sentenced to pay a £400 fine, £500 costs and a victim surcharge of £30 (total £930). EVANS was sentenced to pay a £500 fine, £500 costs and a victim surcharge of £30 (total £1,030). The court also ordered forfeiture of the seized £965 cash and forfeiture and destruction of all the seized counterfeit clothing and footwear.

The Taff Trail - Small scale operators contribute to widespread problems

Dean Morgan

On 7 August 2018, Officers from South Wales Police executed a Misuse of Drugs search warrant at Mountain Ash CF45 the premises of Dean Morgan.

Quantities of drugs were sized along with 7800 illegal cigarettes and 16 counterfeit perfumes/aftershave. Dean Morgan was issued with a caution for the drugs offences.

The counterfeit goods were handed to Trading Standards to investigate.

The items were examined and information provided by brand representatives on their authenticity and an officer from Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs on the legality of the sale of the tobacco. The perfumes examined were found to bear unauthorised trade marks and as such were counterfeit. The tobacco was examined also found to be counterfeit. The American Legend and Richman cigarettes seized did not carry the warnings required by The Tobacco and Related Products Regulations 2016 and the UK Fiscal Mark and did not comply with the Standardised Packaging of Tobacco Products Regulations 2015.

A prosecution file was submitted to the legal department for the counterfeit perfumes/aftershaves and illegal tobacco. Information's were laid for offences contrary to The Trade Marks Act 1994 for having in possession for supply items bearing unauthorised trade marks, and operating a Fraudulent Business Contrary to The Fraud Act 2006.

A hearing held at Merthyr Magistrates Court on 4 September 2019 at which Morgan was sentenced to a community order for 12 months including 100 hours unpaid work, costs of £644 were also levied and forfeiture and destruction of cigarettes, aftershave and perfume demanded.

Cheg Ali – ‘Wellstyle Limited’

Following trial at Merthyr Magistrates Court on 10 July 2019, Mr Cherag Ali of Cannon Street, Aberdare was found guilty of four charges laid against him by Rhondda Cynon Taf’s Trading Standards Department in relation to the sale and possession for supply of counterfeit DVD’s (2 charges) contrary to The Trade Marks Act 1994.

Well Style Limited came to the attention of Rhondda Cynon Taf Trading Standards in November 2017 as a result of a complaint received via The Citizens Advice Consumer Services concerning the supply of a counterfeit DVD. The consumer had received a refund for the item.

Further information was received in February 2018, alleging the sale of counterfeit DVDs by Well Style Ltd on eBay using user name ‘wellstyle17’.

A test purchase was made and Cars 3 and The Boss Baby DVDs purchased from eBay user wellstyle17. The discs were confirmed to be unauthorised counterfeit copies by the Film Distribution Association. eBay and PayPal transaction details obtained for the account show the company traded using this name from June 2017 until March 2018. A total of 3,206 payments were received totalling £18,024.77. In the main the goods supplied were described as DVD’s.

On 23 March 2018, a warrant of entry was executed at the business address and a residential address linked to Mr Ali. Items seized included laptops, Trolls DVD’s and Boss Baby DVD’s. Mr Ali then attended a voluntary interview and, on 31 July 2019, Mr Ali was sentenced to a community order which would last 12 months of 120 hours unpaid work in the community, £250 fine for each offence (totalling £1,000) £1,677.99 in costs, Government surcharge.

Tonypandy Mini Market

Hamid Abdulla Hussein of Kenry Street, Tonypandy, CF40 1DE pleaded guilty on 31 July 2019 at Merthyr Magistrate Court to six trade mark offences and six labelling offences. 100 pouches of HRT was found on Hussein’s premises Tonypandy Mini Market, 91 Dunraven Street, Tonypandy. Hussein was fined £250 plus £1,500 costs.

SALFORD

Operation Levi

In September 2019 Salford City Council Trading Standards and Greater Manchester Police set up a multi-agency working group, known as Operation Levi. The purpose of the group was to work together to tackle non-compliance within businesses in the Broughton area of Salford with a joined up and coordinated partnership approach. The group comprised of Salford Trading Standards, Greater Manchester Police, Business Rates, HRMC and brand representatives. Salford Trading Standards' main objectives were to tackle unsafe and counterfeit products being placed on the market and distributed by importers and wholesalers.

Between October and December 2019, Salford Trading Standards, Greater Manchester Police and representatives from the other partners, delivered proactive inspections to eight wholesale and import businesses in the Broughton area. More than 50,000 counterfeit and unsafe consumer products worth over £800,000 were seized from all eight premises, and Salford Trading Standards have a number of ongoing criminal investigations resulting from these seizures, regarding suspected trade mark and product safety offences.

Amongst the seized products were 26,878 counterfeit Heisenberg, Vampire Vape and Golden Virginia branded e-liquids with a street value of £370,450 and 17,771 counterfeit Apple products with a street value of £431,526. Other brands seized included LOL Surprise, Apple, Marvel, Disney, Superman, Minions, Peppa Pig, Mattel, My Little Pony, Beats by Dr Dre, Samsung, and PlayStation. A further 2,000 unsafe products were also seized including toys and electrical products with two pin plugs, some of which are also counterfeit. In particular, some of the LOL Surprise items seized were not only counterfeit but also contained high levels of phthalates.



Counterfeit vaping products and toys seized



Around Salford

Salford Trading Standards has also been busy tackling illicit and counterfeit tobacco within the City. Between April 2019 – March 2020, the team made 20 seizures, resulting in the seizure of 97 KG of Mixed Flavored Hookah Shisha tobacco, 90,330 illicit cigarettes and 15.25 kg of hand rolling tobacco, of which 66,260 were counterfeit cigarettes and 8.85 KG of counterfeit hand rolling tobacco. The team have made two cash seizures totaling £6,643.10, and have a number of ongoing criminal investigations.



Counterfeit tobacco seized

THE SOCIETY OF CHIEF OFFICERS OF TRADING STANDARDS IN SCOTLAND (SCOTSS) IP GROUP (SC047951)



The SCOTSS IP Group was set up at the end of 2015 due to the increasing demand. We became aware that IP crime was taxing the resources of Trading Standards authorities throughout Scotland.

The idea was to create a group of enforcement officers who would represent the whole of Scotland. This group would meet twice a year to discuss IP issues and coordinate a national strategy. At present the group is made up of officers from the following local authorities Glasgow, Edinburgh, Aberdeen, Aberdeenshire, Falkirk, Renfrewshire, West Dunbarton, North Lanarkshire, Fife, Highland and a representative from Trading Standards Scotland (TSS).

One of the first things the group decided to do was issue a survey to the 32 Scottish authorities to find out what their requirements were to assist with the fight against IP crime. The results of the survey showed that local authorities were concerned with their lack of resources when it came to investigating IP crime:

- Many said lack of staff and other work prevented them from carrying out as much investigatory work as they would have liked.
- There was a real need for authorities to be able to access surveillance equipment to assist with IP crime investigations as many did not have their own or the finances to purchase equipment in the future. This also included stand-alone PCs.
- Many officers felt they required training on how to investigate IP crime and how to carry out social media surveillance on a target.
- Officers felt that it would be beneficial to standardise investigation policies throughout Scotland including RIPSAs policies.
- Officers also expressed a need to improve relationships with other enforcement agencies as well as brand holders.

Most of the points above were actioned or ongoing.

Over the years the group has evolved into a sounding-board for more complex IP crime prevention issues. The group has also encouraged each authority to create a dedicated IP officer who can act as a contact, disseminate training and pass on up to date IP crime prevention information. Guest speakers are invited to our meetings and we are always interested to hear from relevant brand holders.

A specific challenge in the administration of Scottish Trading Standards authorities and IP crime relates to the standardisation of procedures. Individual authorities have traditionally created their own systems, we encourage standardisation, joined up tactical approaches and have offered advice regarding IP investigations. This is made accessible on the Hub and can be accessed by all 32 authorities.

The group has networked and improved communication with the brand holders, ACG, other enforcement agencies and IP organisations. Our Chair also sits on the SAITG which allows him to network with other enforcement agencies and brand holders.

Training needs were discussed with the Chartered Trading Standards Institute Scottish Branch and several sessions were organised with the help of the IPO and TSS. This remains an ongoing priority with the group.

The SCOTSS IP Group saw an ideal opportunity to create a similar project to Operation Jasper in Scotland and rebranded it Operation Sapphire. There have been three phases of Operation Sapphire in Scotland. All 32 Scottish Authorities have participated.

This project emphasised direct action and, in particular, investigating the use of 'disruption' techniques to benefit authorities in Scotland. It was recognised that, due to budget and staff cuts, individual Trading Standards authorities in Scotland were struggling to resource IP investigations. Disruption tactics were set up and the Anti-Counterfeiting Group asked their members (IP owners) to assist with requests that Facebook remove pages that advertise and sell counterfeit goods. Gumtree and eBay were also investigated as part of the project.

The project was very successful and resulted with several warrants being executed and seizures of counterfeit goods. The project led to an increase of investigations being carried out throughout Scotland which resulted in enforcement action. The number of intel logs increased.

The following outcomes were reached –

- Adoption of a clear protocol to contact Facebook to disrupt IP crime by Scottish based sellers.
- Toolkit developed to assist authorities with online IP enforcement.
- Increased capacity to deal with social media platforms and online selling marketplaces.
- The use of e-crime techniques taught at the TSS e-crime workshops were utilised.
- Enhance partnership working with the private sector.
- Adoption of best-practice models used elsewhere in the UK.
- Updated IP intelligence on MEMEX.

Consumer education was another area the IP Group was very involved in as we felt that, once again, Scottish Authorities were struggling to use their stretched resources to promote anti-counterfeiting in their own areas. The group focused on particular events to utilise the best publicity, so the anti-counterfeiting message could be delivered to consumers.

This year the following days of action showed Trading Standards authorities putting together displays, issuing press releases and information on social media were –



World Anti-counterfeit Day
6th June



Retailers Against Crime Conference
31st October

As well as during Scottish Trading Standards Week which ran from 16th to 20th September and during the run up to Christmas when the group promoted joint enforcement agency work.

We hope that the SCOTSS IP Group will continue to flourish and help support Scottish local authorities fight the ever-increasing harm of intellectual property crime.

TRADING STANDARDS SCOTLAND

Trading Standards Scotland (TSS) is the national body for Trading Standards authorities in Scotland. TSS has a duty to both undertake and coordinate casework of significance across council boundaries in Scotland. It is a resource intended to complement and add capacity to local authority trading standards teams. One of the organisation's national priority areas is illicit trade and TSS holds the strategic lead for this theme at the Scottish Crime Campus (the forum at which multi agency work is co-ordinated in the fight against serious organised crime in Scotland). During 2019/20, TSS has been heavily involved in tackling IP crime and the following provides some highlights from this work.

Illicit Streaming

During 2019/20, TSS has experienced a significant increase in intelligence regarding illicit streaming. The team has sought to direct its investigative resource towards the largest problems within Scotland, considering how it might be dealt with under both intellectual property and fair trading law. This involved the investigation of businesses supplying public houses across the country, with access to content including EPL and SPL football matches, avoiding lawful purchase and in breach of copyright. It was uncovered that these services were being marketed in a manner which convinced customers that the distribution systems were entirely legal. The detriment identified to just one of the rights holders, has been estimated at £1.88M. One report has so far been submitted to the Procurator Fiscal Service in respect of charges under the Copyright, Designs and Patents, and Trade Marks Acts. Further enquiry continues to be made into similar practices in another case.

TSS has also more recently been working closely with rights holders on subjects based within Scotland, who are assessed to be wholesale providers of significant illicit streaming services operating across the UK. In its co-ordinating role, TSS devised a project aimed at engaging local authority TS teams in identifying and taking action to disrupt the advertising and sale of illicit streaming services at a local level.

Counterfeit goods sold via Social Media

Another key area of concern for Trading Standards Scotland is the proliferation of counterfeit goods being sold via online marketplaces and social media; most commonly clothing, footwear, cosmetics and electrical goods. TSS seeks to work in partnership with Scottish local authorities to pursue local cases and gather associated upstream intelligence, while itself investigating more complex cases.

Operation CHERRY

Following initial intelligence from a brand holder, TSS investigated a trader selling significant quantities of counterfeit sportswear via an online marketplace. After being identified and traced to an address in the West of Scotland, it was established that, on average, 15 large consignments were being imported every 6 months, from various addresses in China. The subject actively sought to avoid detection; using false names and addresses, and selling through multiple online accounts. This complex investigation resulted in recovery of a large quantity of counterfeit goods assessed to the value of circa £30,000, with subsequent financial investigation conservatively assessing criminal proceeds from sales to be in excess of £68,000. The subject currently awaits trial on a number of charges under the Trade Marks Act.



Sample of counterfeit goods seized during Op Cherry

Project JASPER

Throughout the year, but with a particular focus on the festive period, TSS worked further in partnership with Scottish local authorities and partner agencies to both detect and disrupt the sale of counterfeit goods. Intelligence assistance was provided on a routine basis and included work culminating in the execution of warrants in the Lanarkshire and Falkirk areas, where quantities of counterfeit goods and cash were seized. TSS itself also progressed an intelligence led case, resulting in the execution of a warrant in the Glasgow area in December, whereby a quantity of counterfeit clothing, makeup and accessories, valued at circa £13,000, was seized.

Through this work, TSS uncovered instances of individuals selling counterfeit clothing to fund lavish "Instagram" lifestyles, including frequent foreign travel and the purchase of genuine designer articles for themselves. Individuals, operating businesses of significant scale, were assessed to not only be evading tax on that income but some were also believed to be claiming unemployment benefits at the same time. On the execution of one warrant, goods were found to be stored in such unsavoury conditions that, had consumers known this, they would likely have been far less willing to make a purchase. Cases also continued to demonstrate the links between individuals involved in intellectual property crime, and other forms of organised criminality. These experiences were used to inform public awareness campaigns run by TSS, to expose the true nature of this trade.

Operation TOD

The investigation in this case concerned a persistent offender and resulted in the seizure of a significant quantity of counterfeit clothing, cosmetics, jewellery and accessories, with assessed detriment to multiple brand holders in excess of £250,000. On 18 December 2019, the subject of this case pled guilty at Paisley Sheriff Court to 10 charges relating to commercial possession and sale of the counterfeit branded goods and was sentenced to 120 days imprisonment. **It marked the first custodial sentence for a TSS case in respect of offences under the Trade Marks Act.**



The money you spend on counterfeit brands funds the seller to buy the real thing for themselves

#GlamScam



Head for the right kind of lights this December...

...don't let counterfeit beauty products ruin your party season

#CheapIsExpensive

Don't let fake cosmetics ruin your Valentine's Day



#GlamScam



The assessed annual turnover of the businesses encountered in the pre-Christmas work alone exceeded £250,000, including one producer of counterfeit goods, and their reach extended across the UK. While criminal outcomes are awaited in terms of the intellectual property offences uncovered, TSS has also engaged with partners wherever appropriate, particularly HMRC and DWP, to ensure pertinent information was also available to them for further action.

WEST YORKSHIRE

Release the hounds!

West Yorkshire Trading Standards' Illicit Tobacco team have been tackling sellers of counterfeit and illicit tobacco in the county. These illegal products, which are usually sold at a fraction of the price of genuine items are often found hidden in sophisticated concealments. Illegal tobacco undermines the age and price restrictions placed on tobacco and also encourages people to continue smoking. The sale of counterfeit tobacco is linked to organised crime and contributes to an underground economy worth billions of pounds. Victims of human trafficking are often forced to sell these illegal products in order to pay off debts or fearing harm to themselves or their families.

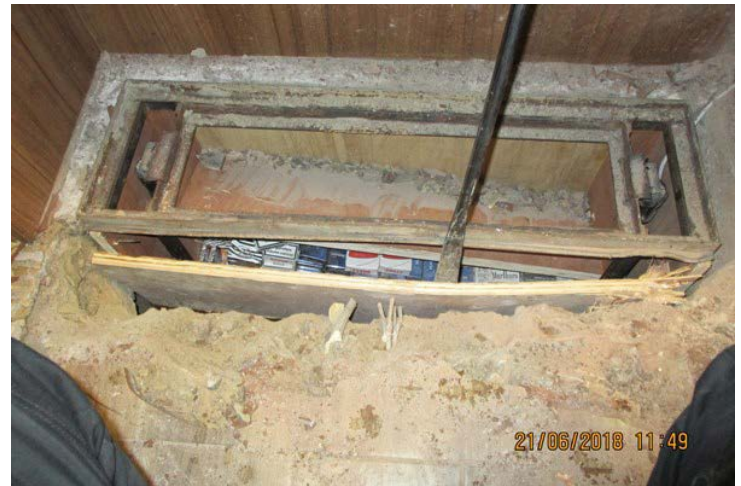
To date the programme has taken more than 5 million illegal cigarettes and over one tonne of illegal hand rolling tobacco off the streets. The team has been assisted in this by Wagtails UK Tobacco dogs.



Wagtail's dog Bradley in action.

Super Save Mini Market- too good to be true

In April 2019, Mr Herish Wali from Hanover Gardens in Dewsbury appeared at Kirklees Magistrates Court accused of selling illegal cigarettes and hand rolling tobacco at his business, Super Save Mini Market, Commercial Street, Batley. Mr Wali pleaded guilty to fraudulent trading over an 18 month period and five offences of selling counterfeit and non-duty paid cigarettes and was ordered to pay costs of £1,500 plus a victim surcharge of £85 bringing his total bill to £1,585. He was also ordered to do 60 hours of unpaid work. Counterfeit tobacco was found hidden under the counter in a sophisticated hydraulic concealment and under the stairs controlled by an electric fob.



'Under the counter' at the Super Save Mini Market

The front and the back – how unscrupulous traders use legitimate products as window dressing

West Yorkshire Trading Standards in partnership with officers from Huddersfield Town Centre NPT visited International Express multiple times and seized illegal tobacco on each occasion. This material was counterfeit, it did not bear the statutory health warnings, it was not in the standardised packaging and duties had not been paid. Illegal tobacco was found hidden in the sales area and the back store room in sophisticated concealments. The total amount recovered was over 72,000 cigarettes and 8kg of hand rolling tobacco.

In August 2019 Mohammad Zada appeared at York Crown Court for sentencing, having been convicted of supplying illegal tobacco from his business International Express, John William St, Huddersfield. He was sentenced to 12 months in prison, with 6 months in custody and 6 months on licence.



Counterfeit tobacco seized

Multi-agency crackdown on illegal tobacco

In January 2020 West Yorkshire Trading Standards and the Police were out in force in Bradford, tackling the suppliers of cheap and illicit tobacco. Accompanying them on visits to a number of premises where suspected illegal activities were taking place were officers from Bradford Council's Licensing Team, British Gas Revenue Protection and tobacco detection dogs from Wagtail UK.

Over 60,000 counterfeit and non-duty paid cigarettes and 5kg of illicit hand rolling tobacco were seized, with officers also finding suspected non-duty paid and counterfeit alcohol on some premises. If genuine, the market value of the cigarettes seized would be around £37,000.



Counterfeit tobacco seized

Proceeds of Crime Act Successes

Halifax man ordered to pay £49,198.14

A seller of counterfeit clothing, sporting goods and vehicle stickers was subject to a confiscation order of £49,198.14, following an investigation by West Yorkshire Trading Standards. Stephen Clarkson, of High Meadows, Greetland, Halifax, who was the director of 'Custom Designs' which operated from Brighouse, West Yorkshire, was convicted of 14 offences under the Trade Marks Act 1994. These related to selling goods via the auction site eBay. Copyrights breached included the Seattle Seahawks, Denver Broncos and music bands such as Motorhead and the Rolling Stones.

Mr Clarkson also received an eight month prison sentence suspended for two years and 280 hours of unpaid work.

“A Keighley man who was part of a £1/2 million counterfeiting conspiracy was ordered to pay back £38,874.93 under the Proceeds of Crime Act 2002 at Bradford Crown Court.”

Keighley man ordered to pay back proceeds from counterfeiting conspiracy

A Keighley man who was part of a £1/2 million counterfeiting conspiracy was ordered to pay back £38,874.93 under the Proceeds of Crime Act 2002 at Bradford Crown Court. Stephen Carr of Carr Lane, Riddlesden, Keighley supplied counterfeit branded heat transfers to a Bradford family involved in the sale of counterfeit clothing via online sites eBay and Amazon.

The successful prosecution followed a two year investigation by West Yorkshire Trading Standards into an industrial-scale screen printing operation in which the registered trade marks of leading music artists, bands and sports teams were illegally printed onto clothing and distributed globally via eBay and Amazon. The trade marks breached included Arctic Monkeys, The 1975, Motorhead, Ramones, Beyoncé, 5 Seconds of Summer, Harry Potter, Ed Sheeran and Nirvana as well as a number of others.

The £38,874.93 Confiscation Order made against Carr represents the extent of the contractual payments received by him for supplying heat transfers to the family, uplifted to take into account the change in the value of money since the offence was committed. He also received an eight month sentence suspended for 18 months plus 180 hours unpaid work. Proceeds of Crime Act proceedings are ongoing into the other five defendants.



2019/20

IP Crime Group 2020

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