



**2021 - 2022**

# **TRADING STANDARDS SUCCESSES**

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The data has not been substantiated by the IPO.

# AT A GLANCE

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# CHAPTER 1



# TRADING STANDARDS SURVEY

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## The trend of prevention

75% of Trading Standards Authorities approached by the IP Group have engaged with this year's survey. The statistics, therefore, provide an accurate snapshot of the nature of IP Crime as experienced by Trading Standards Officers in the UK today. Trading Standards Authorities respond to IP crime through long and short-term operations, often involving coordinated responses to complex criminal networks, as well as through direct intervention with IP crime as it happens in our communities.

The experience of Trading Standards Officers as they tackle all kinds of IP crime directly, provides insight into the impact of IP crime on consumers and the nature of criminality. This year, our key observation is that IP crime is back on the streets, with Trading Standards Authorities reporting an increase in engagement with high street retailers and outdoor markets. In respect of the goods involved in illegal trade, there has been a 10% increase in investigations involving the sale of both counterfeit tobacco products and clothing and an increase of just under 10% in respect of footwear.

Online, the levels of investigation into IP crime suggest a shift of emphasis away from social media, with a fall in the percentage of reporting authorities referring to social media for the second consecutive year. In general, it is possible to understand corresponding upticks in investigations at markets, pubs and private residences as part of a post-lockdown bounce back. However, it should be noted that the reasons behind shifts in the patterns of IP crime investigation could be the result of a wide variety of influences.

In 2021-22 there were also changes in the products Trading Standards Officers encountered during their investigations. IP infringement in respect of goods relating to vaping was reported by more than 30% of responding authorities, far more than in previous years. This indicates that the market for counterfeit vaping products has transformed during the last four years from a relatively small scale, niche, area of criminal activity into a more significant one. Similarly, when compared with statistics for 2020—21, increases in levels of investigation were encountered in all major product types, particularly, tobacco products, clothing, footwear and alcohol.

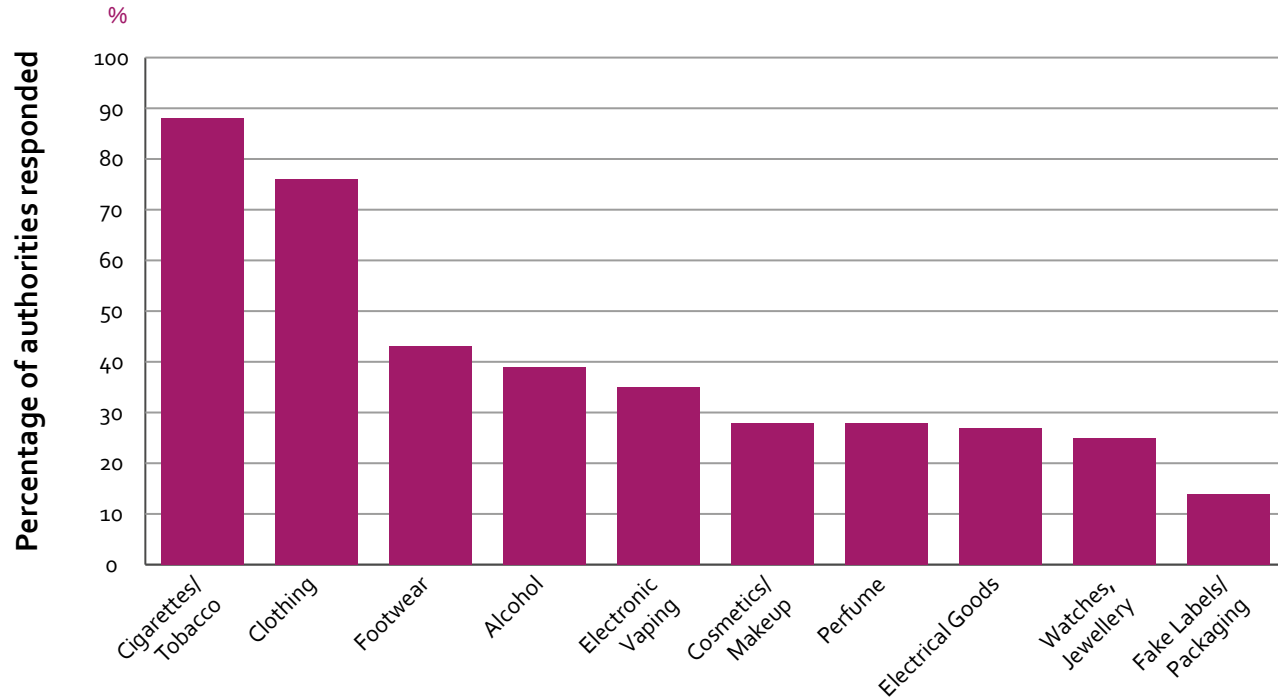
When considered over the medium term, recognisable trends in the patterns of investigation can be discerned through these statistics. In general, levels of investigation into cases relating to product categories like cosmetics, makeup, perfume, electric goods, watches and jewellery, whilst rising, have not returned to pre-pandemic levels. Indeed, investigations into toys, DVDs/CDS and computer games have declined in volume consistently over the past four years.

As well as recording where and what we investigate, the survey also provides an indication of how collaborative our work is. This year's statistics demonstrate continued close relationship within the Trading Standards community, with police forces, HM Revenue and Customs, Companies House, the IPO's Intelligence Hub and Border Force. Our stakeholders representing the interests of industries are equally important. The Anti-Counterfeiting Group (ACG), React and FACT, along with a number of consistent partners, maintain close cooperation between IP owners and Trading Standards Authorities as we apply the law, apprehending perpetrators in our communities. Specific agencies like the Food Standards Agency and the Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency remain important sources of technical knowledge, whilst the DVLA and Department for Work and Pensions are sources of crucial data which link our investigations to others.

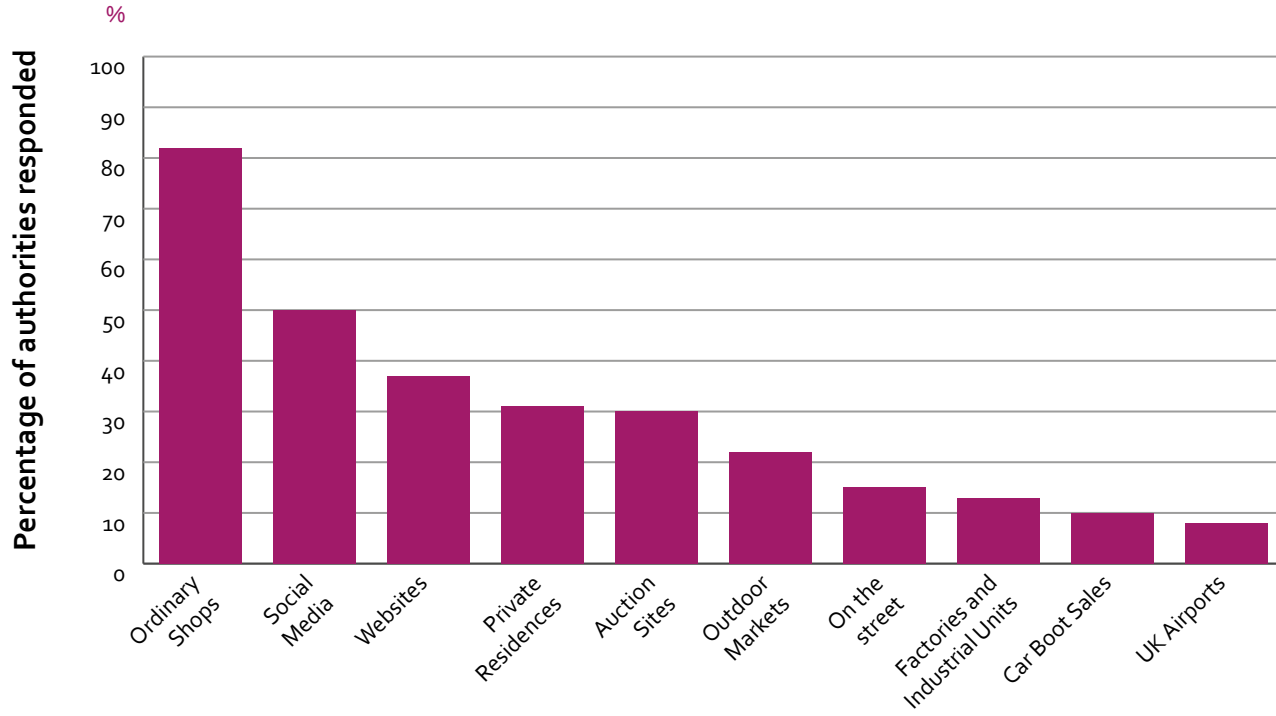
The connections between IP crime and other forms of criminality are important and our statistics show that benefit fraud, for example, may often be related to cases involving IP crime. Increases in cases involving violence, people trafficking and money laundering are all evidenced in this year's statistics. 40% of contributing authorities reported cases which linked to organised criminal groups, a significant increase when compared with the previous year. Our emphasis on collaboration between crime prevention agencies is motivated by a desire to expose this tendency.

Organised crime groups create criminal networks perpetrating distinct, but related crimes and, as several of the cases discussed in this report suggest, collaborations between Trading Standards Authorities and partners drawn from the public and private sectors enable more effective crime prevention and a better understanding of the scale and scope of the problem.

## Top 10 products investigated by Trading Standards

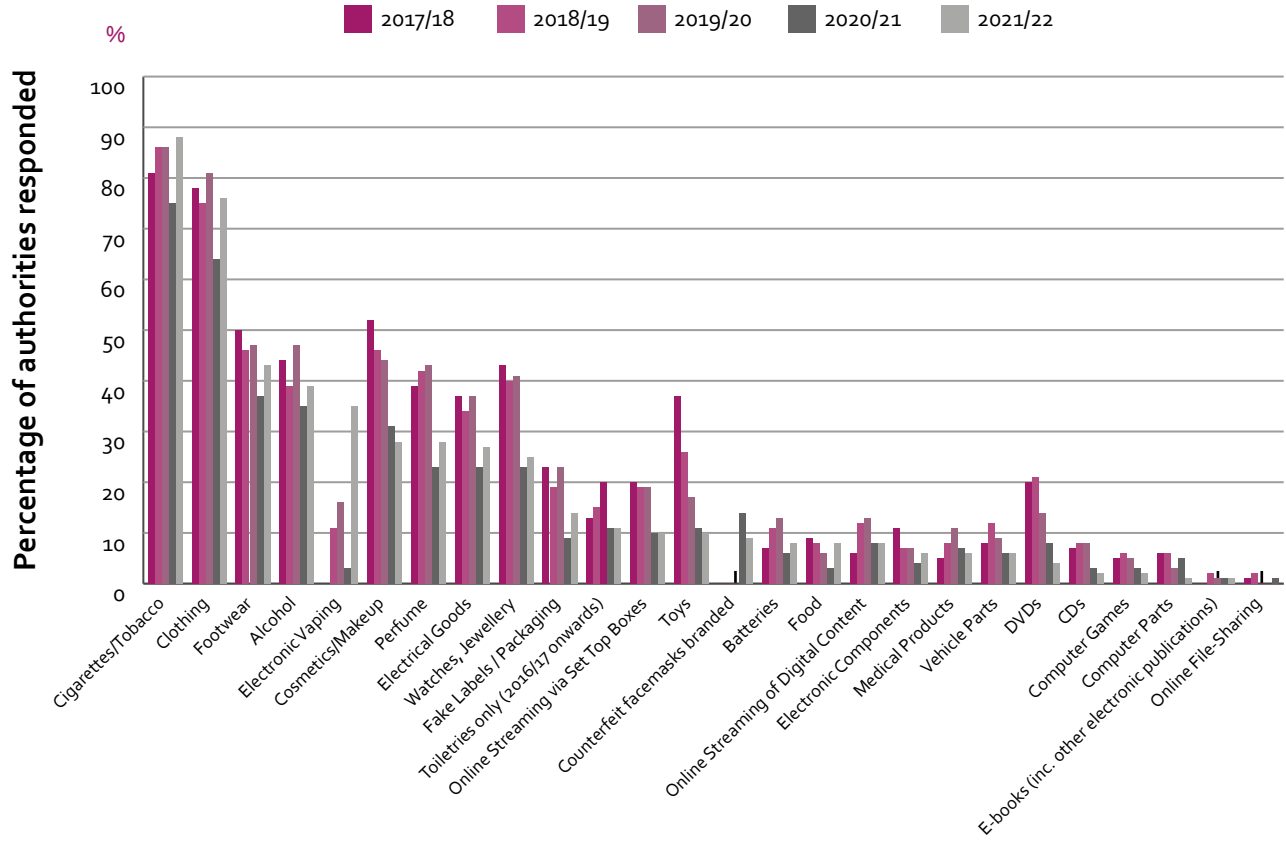


## Top 10 locations

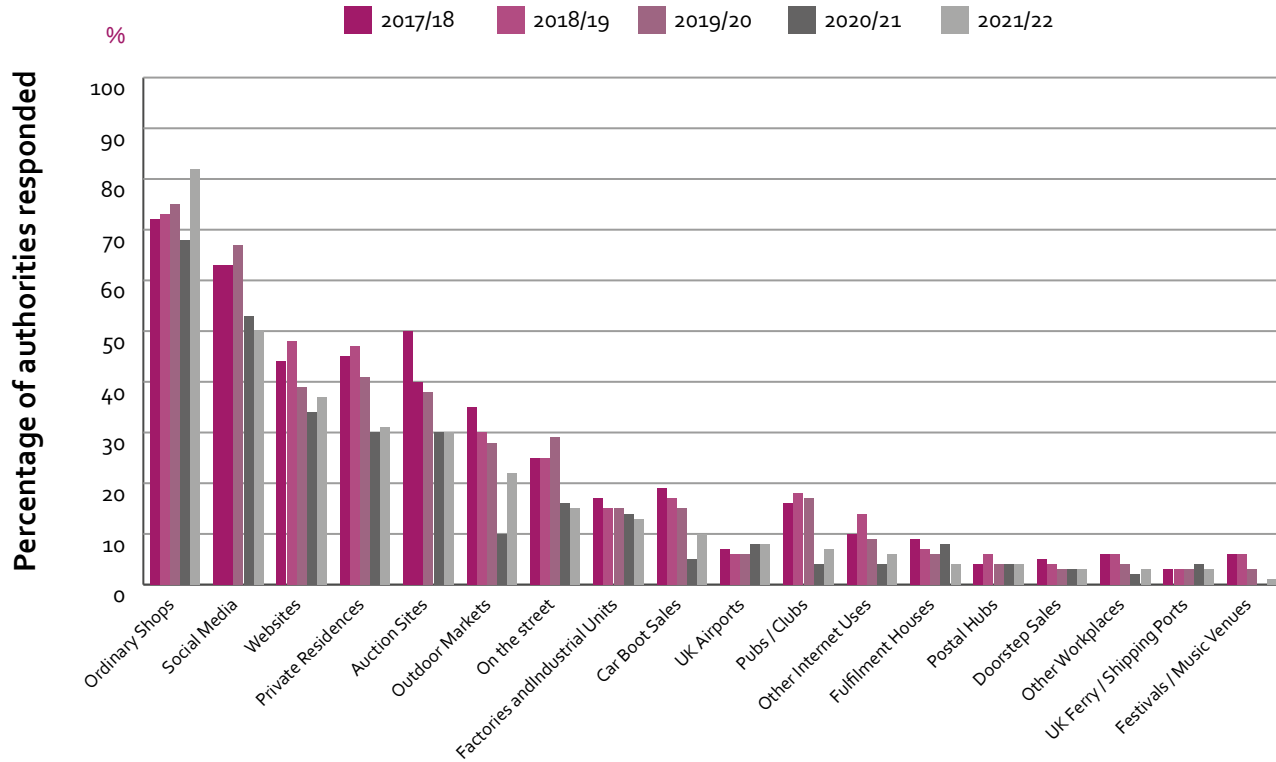




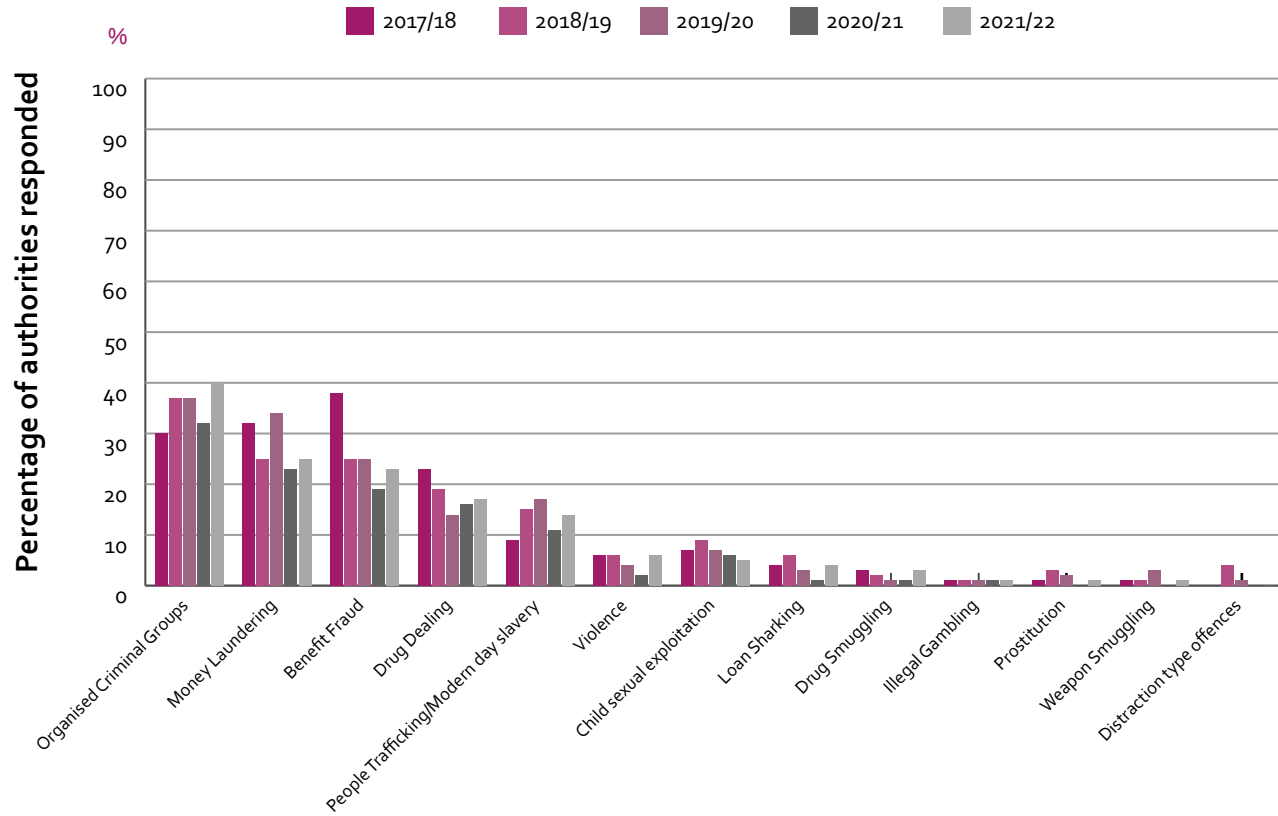
## Top products investigated by Trading Standards



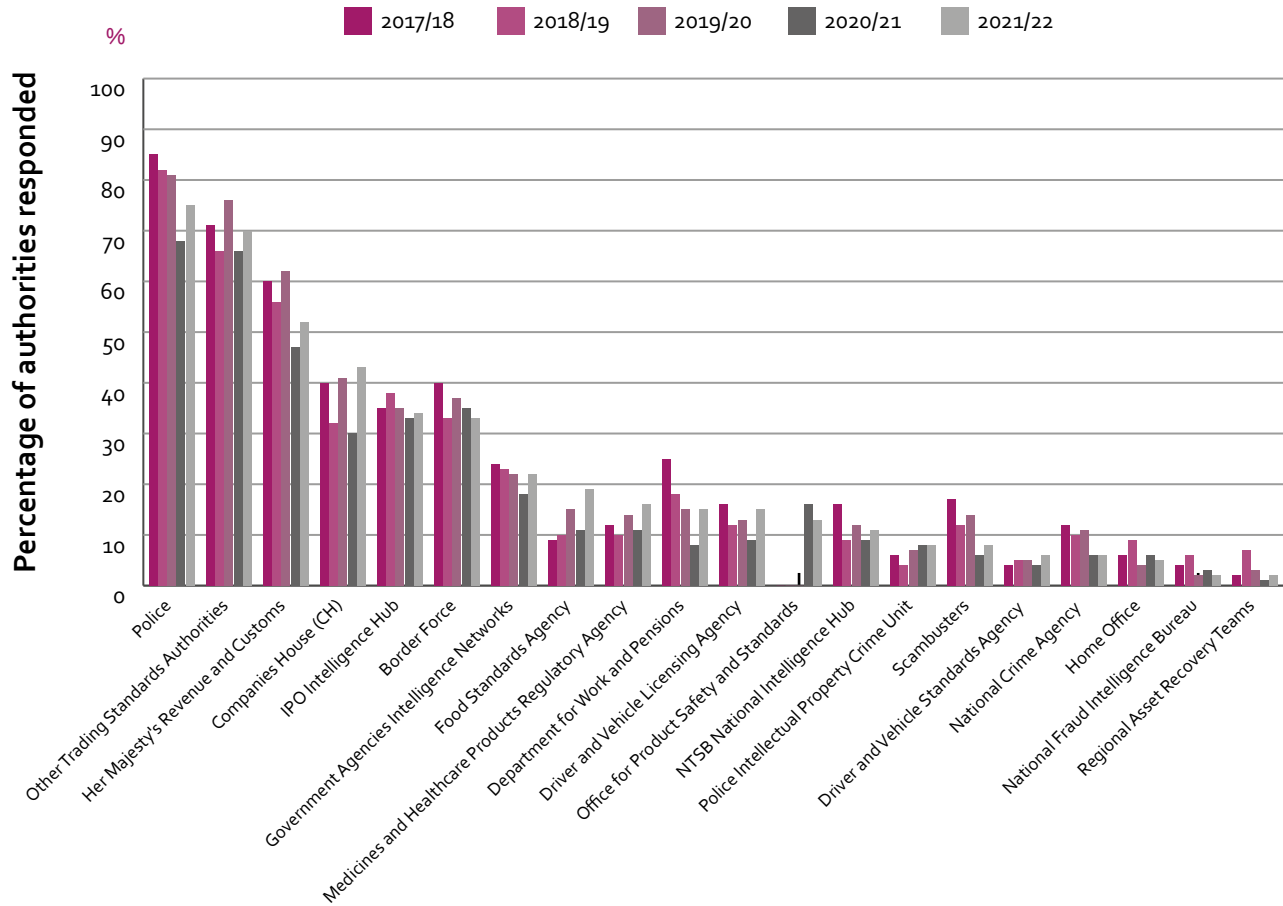
## Most investigated locations



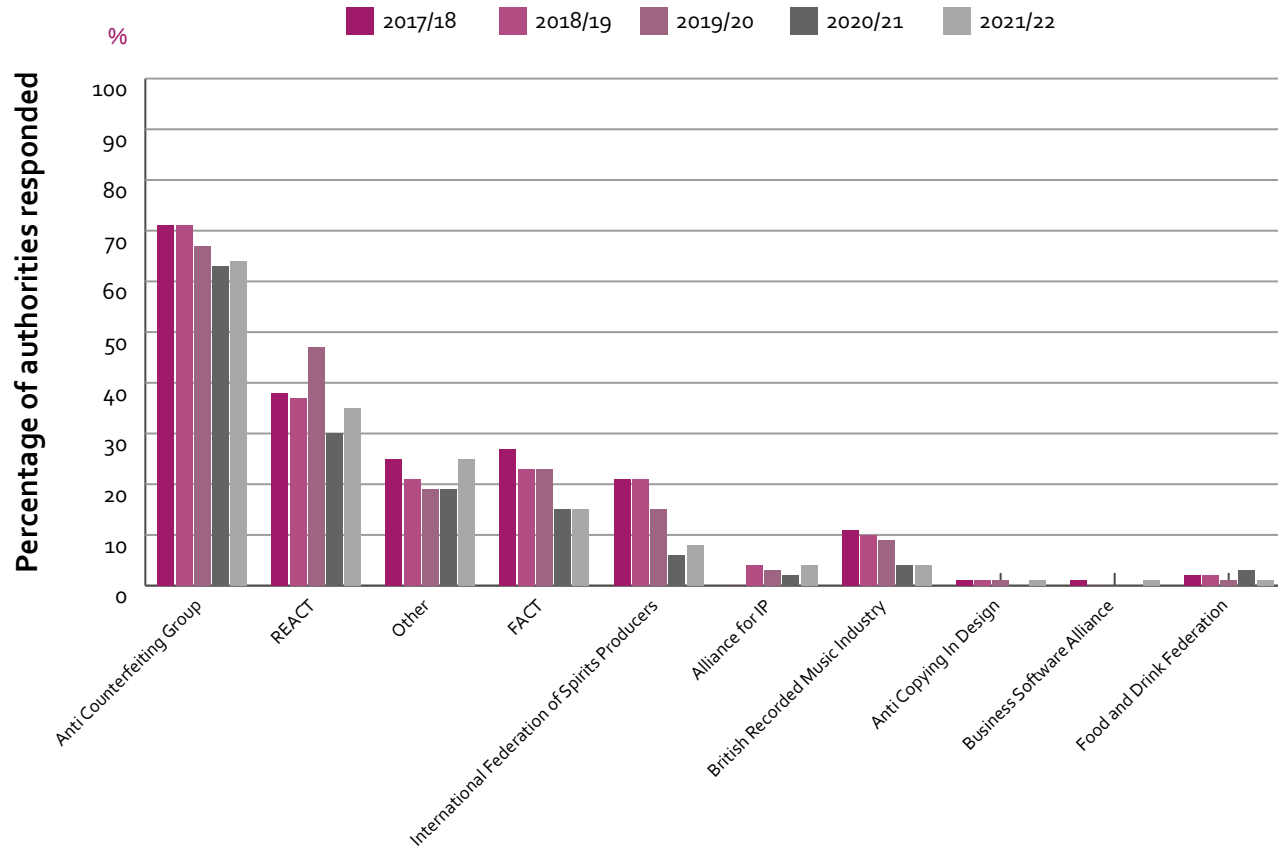
## Links to other criminality



## Working with other public sector partners



## Working with industry bodies (top 10)



# CHAPTER 1



# TRADING STANDARDS SUCCESSES

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These reports from Trading Standards Authorities throughout the UK characterise our work this year. As our statistical analysis suggests, there has been a return to the 'real' world, with significant activity in shops selling illegal tobacco, evidenced here by Manchester, Salford, Rhondda Cynon Taf, West Yorkshire, Oxford and Warwick Trading Standards teams.

Similarly, prosecutions concerning goods for sale in markets represent significant achievements in response to a rise in criminal activity. Manchester Trading Standards Officers seized over 200 tonnes of counterfeit clothing, footwear and perfume in a multi-agency operation involving self-storage units in the Strangeways area. West Yorkshire, Rhondda Cynon Taf and TS Scotland also evidence the trend with a seizure with a street value of £25m from Glasgow and, at Furnace End Market, Warwickshire Trading Standards seized over 6000 items of high-end counterfeit clothing products.

The importance of Trading Standards Authorities contribution to public safety is demonstrated by Greenwich and Redbridge Trading Standards teams who, through Operation Altham and Operation Furlong, both seized sizable quantities of dangerous consumer electronic goods including phone chargers and batteries. These multi-agency operations evidence effective leadership and teamwork from specialists, as they tackle organised criminal networks. Key elements contributing to the success of these projects are meticulous, inventive planning processes, expert investigation techniques and the ability to act, accurately in the field.

Reports from Slough and Salford Trading Standards Authorities show the infinite range of counterfeit and dangerous goods available. In Slough, the completion of a case involving counterfeit

vehicle registration plates mounts resulted in a confiscation order of £333,955. In Salford, trade in counterfeit vaping goods led to a seizure of 4,000 counterfeit e-liquid products. Salford Trading Standards Authority also confirms that the trade in counterfeit vaping products seems to be increasing. In response, Salford Trading Standards have positioned a number of stories in local press and public-facing websites highlighting their activities in relation to easily consumable products like tobacco. This attention to the issue of raising public awareness in respect of relatively commonplace instances of IP crime is extremely important. In our drive to help the general public understand the pervasive nature of IP crime, we must remember that awareness isn't achieved, it is maintained.

Prosecutions under the Proceeds of Crime Act are being pursued by Trading Standards Scotland and the West Yorkshire Trading Standards team. They successfully prosecuted a case worth £1.5m in illegal proceeds in Bradford.

The reports that follow show the details of all these cases and more. They highlight best practice and evidence the teamwork, commitment, and diligence necessary to bring cases to successful conclusions. Key partners like the ACG, (NW)PIPCU, UKBF, GMP, OPSS, Trading Standards Regional Investigation Teams, the eCrime Team and many others, including Mostyn the sniffer dog from Oxfordshire Trading Standards case are vital links in the drive to change public perceptions of IP crime. Mostyn is pictured on the cover of this report on a successful raid by Oxfordshire Trading Standards, where 680,000 counterfeit cigarettes were seized. Everyone in this team has a vital part to play, even Mostyn... especially Mostyn. By exposing the supply chains and networks that sustain IP crime, through successful prosecutions and sustained efforts to keep these successes in the public eye, IP Crime will be controlled and curtailed.

# ROYAL BOROUGH OF GREENWICH

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## Greenwich Means Time

Operation Altham is an investigation by the Royal Borough of Greenwich Trading Standards service into the supply of counterfeit mobile phone accessories and chargers. These were being sold as genuine products via online and physical sales platforms, contrary to the Trade Marks Act 1994 and the Electrical Equipment Safety Regulations 2016.

In February 2021, a business premises offering mobile phone repairs and accessories was visited by Greenwich Trading Standards and a quantity of phone cases and electrical devices suspected of being both counterfeit and unsafe were seized. Items, including eBay postal labels linked to addresses in the Ilford area of London were also identified.

Test purchases have been conducted by brand holders and they have confirmed that the goods are counterfeit and unsafe. In addition, there are confirmed cross-borough links. Enquiries have identified further links between business premises and online sellers.

In February 2022, four entry warrants were executed at locations in Woolwich and Ilford. This resulted in the seizure of a large quantity of counterfeit mobile phone accessories as well as mobile phones and computers.

At the Ilford address where the majority of the goods were stored, intelligence received from those premises indicated a further storage facility at a self-storage unit. In March 2022, those premises were visited and a pallet of counterfeit phone batteries were seized. Enquiries are ongoing.

Without the assistance of the Anti-Counterfeiting Group (ACG), Redbridge Trading Standards, National Trading Standards Regional Investigation Team and the eCrime Team these operations would not have been successful.



Dangerous counterfeit phone batteries seized



# MANCHESTER CITY COUNCIL

## Landlords Take Responsibility

On 9 September 2022 a closure order was granted on premises at 17-19 Bury New Road, Manchester. The district judge was impressed with the level of evidence submitted and made the decision based on that submission alone. A second closure for an address at 1, Harris Street, Manchester was obtained on 21 October 2022. Both orders were obtained due to the supply of counterfeit goods at the premises and associated anti-social behaviour. The closure orders required both premises to remain shut for three months.

The landlords of both of the premises have been interviewed by Trading Standards and the Anti-social Behaviour Team with regards to how they intend to ensure future tenants will not revert back to criminal activity. Both landlords have agreed to add clauses to their tenancy agreements to assist us (keeping roller shutters up throughout trading hours) and to visit their premises more frequently and report back to us if they have any suspicions that the tenants are not complying with the tenancy agreement. They have been warned that further closure orders will be sought if the problems continue.

## Heavy Smoker Runs Out of Puff

Between November 2020 and June 2021, Manchester City Council Trading Standards Service launched an investigation into a business suspected of supplying illicit tobacco goods. Seizures of illicit tobacco were made from this business on two separate occasions. On the first occasion, more than 11,000 cigarettes and 900g of rolling tobacco were found behind the counter, as well as in boxes and a rucksack. Counterfeit brands seized included Richmond,

Lambert and Butler, Mayfair and Amber Leaf. On the second occasion a tobacco dog assisted in the detection of 600g of rolling tobacco and more than 2,000 illegal cigarettes, stored behind the counter and from a hidden compartment built into the wall.

At a hearing held at Manchester Magistrates' Court on 24 March 2022, Moxom Manchester Limited, of Dagenham Road, Rusholme, was charged with breaches of Tobacco and Related Products Regulations, as well as breaches of trade mark regulations. The company director claimed a haul of thousands of illegal cigarettes were for 'personal use'. The company was fined £16,000, ordered to pay costs of £2,500 and also to pay a victim surcharge of £250. A warrant is still out for the director.

Councillor Rabnawaz Akbar, Executive Member for Neighbourhoods, Manchester City Council said: 'Closing off avenues where they are sold [illicit tobacco] is not just a matter of enforcing the law, it is a way of protecting public health.'



A wide range of illicit tobacco products seized at Rusholme, Manchester

## Self-Storage-Swag

On 5 May 2021, inspections were undertaken at two self-storage facilities following intelligence received from the UK Border Force (UKBF). The UKBF had detained three separate consignments of counterfeit goods which were destined for these facilities in different consignee names. The inspections involved cross referencing the consignee details with the facility customer database, as well as discussing the company's' due diligence processes with the manager of the premises. One consignee's name matched a customer record and powers were used to inspect the storage units. However, no counterfeit goods were found. The Anti-Counterfeiting Group (ACG), UKBF, GMP and PIPCU Officers were in attendance to support with the seizure of counterfeit goods if required.

On 20 May 2021, intelligence generated from the inspections on 5 May identified an individual who was suspected of storing counterfeit goods in three units within a self-storage facility. The units were inspected and once again the ACG, UKBF and PIPCU were in attendance. This time, approximately 13,800 items of counterfeit clothing, footwear and accessories were seized, with an estimated street value of £276,000 (using an average of £20 per item). We suspect the case is part of an organised crime group and the investigation is ongoing in association with the IPO and PIPCU.

In early September 2021, three consecutive days of enforcement action took place at one large self store premises close to the retail/wholesale area of Strangeways. A total of 200 tonnes of counterfeit clothing, footwear, perfume, etc. were seized by North West Police Intellectual Property Crime Unit (NWPIPCU) and Trading Standards. A total of 55 units were opened (13 by Trading Standards). Two perfume factories were discovered. Trading Standards Officers subsequently executed a warrant at the home address of the person who'd been renting the units. They recovered a laptop and mobile phone these are being examined and the investigation is ongoing.

**'A total of 200 tonnes of counterfeit clothing, footwear, perfume, etc. were seized by North West Police Intellectual Property Crime Unit (NWPIPCU) and Trading Standards.'**

# LONDON BOROUGH OF REDBRIDGE

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## Lap-top Charger Connects to Organised Crime

Operation Furlong started just as we were entering the first Covid lockdown in 2020, with a referral from another London Borough's Trading Standards Service. They had received a complaint about an alleged unsafe laptop power supply/charger. The complainant was an electrical engineer and had become suspicious about the safety of a replacement charger that he had bought for his laptop via a seller on eBay. He clearly had knowledge of safety standards and decided to break open the charger. He found it to be poorly constructed, leaving the user at risk of electric shock.

## Suspicion Leads to Trade Mark Validation

The seller's eBay shop was visited, and it was noted that a large number of branded laptop chargers and other power supplies were being offered for sale. The images of the labels applied to the chargers were very clear and, as well as the trade marks of well-known laptop manufacturers, the trade mark of Underwriter Laboratories (UL) was on display. Redbridge had recently been supported by the UL brand holder on another similar investigation, so an image was sent to UL for opinion. UL confirmed that the label appeared counterfeit and furthermore that the seller was already known to them. They had recently conducted a test purchase via eBay and followed this up with a bulk purchase arranged outside of the platform. All goods supplied were confirmed to be counterfeit.

As the latter bulk purchase had been made outside of eBay, a direct payment had been made via bank transfer. This meant that we had details of a financial account other than the PayPal account that had been used for the eBay test purchase. The usual applications for information were submitted to eBay and PayPal. When the trading history was obtained it became immediately apparent that the seller was turning over a very high number of transactions.

## Financial Investigation Strengthens Case

At the time, Redbridge did not have access to an accredited financial investigator so we approached the neighbouring borough Barking & Dagenham, who we had an existing arrangement with following a previous investigation. Financial enquiries were made. It transpired that the bulk test purchase payment had gone to an international money transfer service, with the account being held by a resident of another neighbouring borough. The name on the account matched with the name used on the WhatsApp account used by the seller to arrange the bulk purchase. A statement for the account was obtained and it could be seen that large payments were going to Chinese companies for goods described as "plugs" and "chargers". So, we knew we were dealing with an importer rather than just a distributor.

As weeks progressed the numbers of branded chargers being offered for sale by the seller seemed to drop and they were replaced by generic chargers described as suitable for use with various brands. It is a well-known fact that counterfeit goods are often also unsafe. Further test purchases were made of both the branded and unbranded chargers.

## Technical Evidence Secures Warrants

The cost of having formal electrical safety assessments carried out on the test purchases far exceeded our available budget. For this reason, The Office for Product Safety and Standards (OPSS) was approached. The OPSS agreed to pay for the assessments and samples were submitted. The resulting reports confirmed that all of the samples presented a high risk of electric shock, fire or both.

By this time, three residential addresses and a self-storage unit had been identified, each in different boroughs of London. The scale and cross border nature of the investigation was more than the resources available in our borough. An application for support from the National Trading Standards Regional Investigation Team was submitted to the Regional Tasking Group and approved.

Late in 2020, we were ready to apply for warrants and a magistrate's appointment was made in the new year. Covid had other ideas though and we were once again delayed by a national lockdown. Warrants were eventually executed in May 2021. One of the addresses to search was in Barking and Dagenham and we were assisted at that address by officers from the local TS Service.

## Huge Haul

A large quantity of goods was expected but, nevertheless, we were still surprised at the quantity. In excess of 30,000 laptop chargers and other power supplies were seized, along with 22,000 counterfeit self-adhesive labels. The floor of the container was strewn with the backing paper from the labels and the labels apparently removed from the generic chargers.

Now we had the issue of proving that all the goods were unsafe. The task was made more difficult not only by the large volume but also by the wide range of different products. OPSS were once again approached for support. It was agreed that they would fund the cost of testing 50 samples. This enabled us to submit one example of more or less every type of item seized. 48 high risk failure reports were returned, with the remaining 2 categorised as low risk safety failures, additionally, dimensional requirements for plugs were not complied with. Although most of the goods outwardly appeared similar to legitimate products, with only the input/output voltage and wattage differing, there was a wide range of reasons for failure. The one common feature of the failures was that, where a mains cable had been supplied, the plug contained a counterfeit fuse containing no ballast. This in itself is very dangerous.

The case has yet to come to trial. But regardless of the result, 30,000 dangerous electrical products have been prevented from reaching the marketplace.

This case is a great example of how a small service can make a big impact by partnering with neighbouring authorities, our national counterparts in the form of the NTS Regional Investigation Team, a government agency, police and brand representatives.

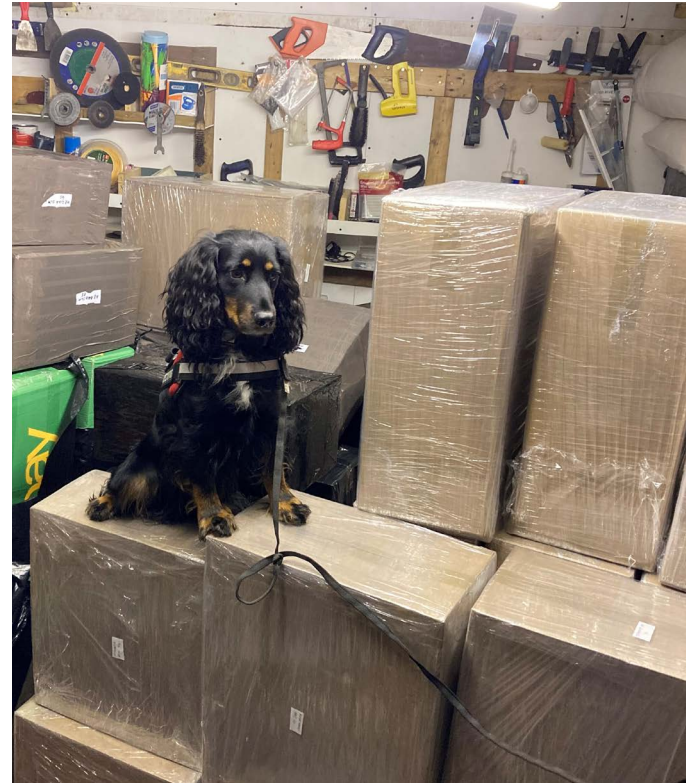
# OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL TRADING STANDARDS

## Brand Theft

In October 2021, Oxfordshire Trading Standards and Thames Valley Police executed a warrant on a residential address in Banbury, Oxfordshire following two test purchases made after adverts for cigarettes and tobacco were posted on a Polish language Facebook group in the area. This resulted in nearly 25kg of illegal hand-rolling tobacco and over 44,000 illegal cigarettes being seized. Also identified were a range of trade marked garments, unworn, with tags attached and with hand-written price labels ready for sale, including the brands Calvin Klein, Louis Vuitton, Givenchy, Ralph Lauren, Lacoste and Tommy Hilfiger, samples of which were all confirmed as being counterfeit. This shows that illegal tobacco sellers may also be involved in other criminality. The investigation is ongoing.

## Counterfeit Cigarettes

In November 2021 Oxfordshire Trading Standards and Thames Valley Police executed a warrant on a residential address in Banbury following a test purchase made after adverts for cigarettes were posted via a Romanian language Facebook group in the area. This resulted in over 680,000 illegal cigarettes being seized, one of the biggest single seizures made by a Trading Standards Authority. Most of the haul was counterfeit, with over 300,000 fake Rothmans cigarettes alone. This shows that sales of counterfeit goods on social media sites such as Facebook should not be underestimated by enforcement authorities. The investigation is ongoing.



Sniffer dog Mostyn, and the record haul in Banbury

# RHONDDA CYNON TAF

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## Protecting the Public

On 9 June 2021, at Merthyr Tydfil Magistrates' Court, mother and daughter, Miss Amanda Batchelor and Miss Bobbie Batchelor, both of Penrhwiweiber, Mountain Ash, pleaded guilty to nine charges for operating a fraudulent business, contrary to the Fraud Act 2006. A further eight offences contrary to the Trade Marks Act 1994 were also brought, for selling and having in possession for sale goods bearing unauthorised trade marks. The case was made by Rhondda Cynon Taf Trading Standards Department, following an investigation instigated by a complaint received against the Batchelors for the sale of counterfeit goods using the online platform Facebook.

Enquiries were made and it was found that the Facebook Group "Amanda & Bobbies Designer Bargains" had been running for two months. On 2 December 2019, a warrant of entry was executed at the Batchelor's address. Items seized included footwear, clothing, handbags, perfume, aftershave, dolls and make-up sets, all of which bore registered trade marks. Additionally, £843.96 cash, computer equipment and mobile phones were seized. In total 72 items believed to be counterfeit were confiscated. The brands involved included Fred Perry, Chanel, Hugo Boss, Calvin Klein, Lacoste, GHD, Cloud 9, Jimmy Choo, Marc Jacobs, Beats, North Face, Levi, Dior, North Face, Michael Kors, Tommy Hilfiger, Ralph Lauren.

In mitigation it was stated that the goods sold could not have been anything other than counterfeit goods given their price. There was a short period of sales. Both defendants were fined £200 for operating a fraudulent business. They were also charged £200 for four of the trade mark offences with 'no separate penalty' awarded for the remaining five offences. The Batchelors were ordered to pay a victim surcharge of £100 and costs of £75, bringing the total amount to pay to £1175, payable in £15 weekly instalments.

The defence stated that the cash seized belonged to Amanda Batchelor's son and this was ordered to be returned to the defendant. An order was also issued for the forfeiture and destruction of all other goods seized including laptop and iPad.

The offences involved in this investigation are serious in nature and involve goods to which product specific legislation is applied. These goods could be deemed as high risk due to their nature and intended end user. The goods concerned have been produced and supplied without authority of the trade mark owners and involve premium distinguished brands. These goods, by their nature, would not have undergone the rigorous safety and quality checks for which the brands are known.

## Prosecuted For Selling Counterfeit Goods

Mr Reza Tahir Ahmed of Aberfan, Merthyr Tydfil has been successfully prosecuted by Rhondda Cynon Taf Council's Trading Standards department for operating a fraudulent business and having counterfeit goods in his possession, for the purpose of selling. Appearing at Merthyr Tydfil Magistrates' Court, the 32-year-old male, who owns Aberdare Mini Market, 37 Commercial Street, Aberdare in the town centre, pleaded guilty to 14 offences relating to the sale and possession for supply of counterfeit tobacco products, dangerous goods and running a fraudulent business.

The successful charges were brought against the defendants by the Council's Trading Standards Department, following an investigation as a result of information received that the store was supplying illegal tobacco to consumers.

Officers carried out a test purchases at the store on January 28 and May 4, 2021, and counterfeit tobacco products were seized from the premises on February 5 and May 25, 2021, following complaints that illegal tobacco products could be purchased from the premise. Mr Reza Tahir Ahmed, was fined £360, ordered to pay a further £600 court costs and an additional £36 victim surcharge.

## Finied For Selling Counterfeit Goods

Two Rhondda Cynon Taf residents, an employee and a shop owner in Mountain Ash have both been successfully prosecuted by Rhondda Cynon Taf Council's Trading Standards department for operating a fraudulent business and having counterfeit goods in their possession, for the purpose of selling.

The 23-year-old female Mrs Pavlina Benakova and 43-year-old male Mr Talib Kerim Abdullah, husband and wife, appeared at Merthyr Tydfil Magistrates' Court, where they both pleaded guilty to 24 offences relating to the sale and possession for supply of counterfeit tobacco products, dangerous goods and running a fraudulent business.

The successful charges were brought against the defendants by the Council's Trading Standards Department following, an investigation as a result of information received.

Following complaints that illegal tobacco products could be purchased from the premises, officers carried out test purchases at the town centre store Mountain Ash Mini Market on May 4, October 22 and December 11, 2021. Counterfeit tobacco products were seized from the premises on April 20, May 27, and December 11, 2021. Louise Davies, Rhondda Cynon Taf Council's Director of Public Health, Protection and Community Service, speaking after the court case, said: *'Once again, the Council has concluded yet another successful prosecution against a Rhondda Cynon Taf business owner and employee in relation to the sale of counterfeit goods. The law is there to protect both the public and those bona-fide international companies who have a global reputation for selling quality goods at reputable outlets.'*

*Our Trading Standards officers, working on information received, carried out a thorough investigation, which has resulted in this successful prosecution. The sale of these counterfeit goods was not only detrimental to consumers, but also to the honest traders. Consumers also have the right to know that items they are purchasing fit the description being offered.'*

Pavlina Benakova was sentenced to a 12-month community order consisting of 100 hours unpaid work, was also ordered to pay £800 court costs and an additional £95 Victim Surcharge. Talib Kerim was fined £600, ordered to pay £800 court costs and an additional £60 Victim Surcharge.

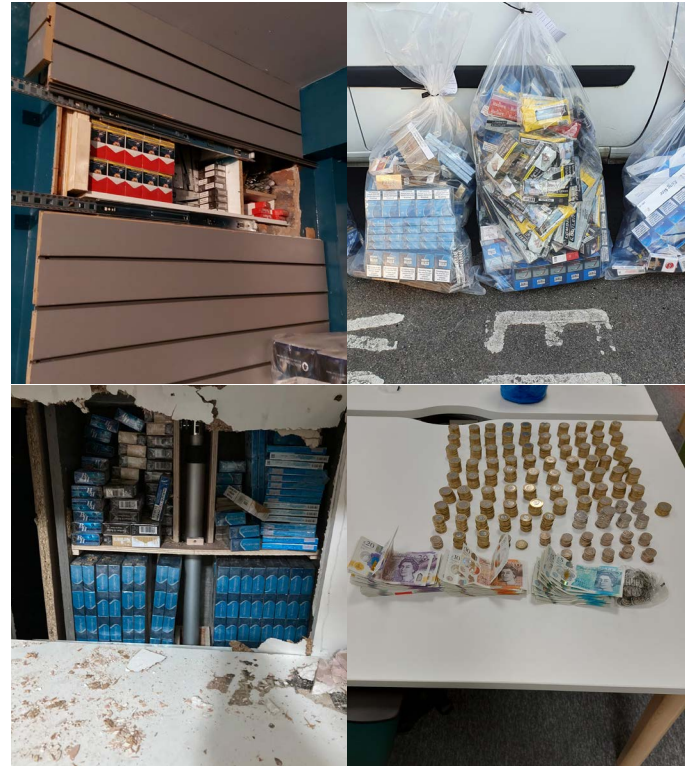
# SALFORD TRADING STANDARDS

## Vape Fake

Salford Trading Standards and Licensing team has a significant regulatory remit and is a relatively small team with 13 multi-skilled officers and a Trading Standards capacity equating to eight operational officers. Despite service pressures and resource demands, the team continue to prioritise the protection of consumers and offer support to legitimate businesses by tackling counterfeit and unsafe products.

In 2021, over 15,000 products were seized for infringing registered trade marks. Most of these items were mobile phone accessories, e-liquid products and toys. Counterfeit e-liquids have been an emerging trend in Salford, with officers regularly seizing these goods, alongside the more traditional items like electrical items, toys and mobile phone accessories. In October 2021, officers visited a premises and seized over 85 counterfeit Superman and Spiderman speakers, along with a number of branded fidget poppets.

In June and July 2021, officers visited an e-liquids trader and seized over 4,000 counterfeit e-liquid products. In addition, during that year, over 50,000 cigarettes and 20kg of counterfeit hand rolling tobacco were seized, as well as £6,000 cash under the Proceeds of Crime Act. Moreover, in March 2022 officers visited 6 premises and seized a large volume of counterfeit tobacco alongside £3,700 cash seized from one premises alone. The disruption to the supply of counterfeit and illicit tobacco supports smoking cessation, which delivers a really positive contribution to society.



Fags, bags, stash and cash from Salford raid (2022)



During the year, Salford Trading Standards have issued a number of press releases<sup>1</sup>, showcasing their work and ensuring the public is aware of activities like the ones highlighted here are ongoing in their communities.

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1 [£13,000 of illegal tobacco seized in Salford • Salford City Council](#)

[Second conviction for unsafe toy seller • Salford City Council](#)

[£46,500 fine for Company after Salford Trading Standards investigation • Salford City Council](#)

[Salford shopkeeper found guilty for selling illegal tobacco and has cash seized • Salford City Council](#)

<https://www.salford.gov.uk/your-council/news/salford-shopkeeper-found-guilty-for-selling-illegal-tobacco-and-has-cash-seized/>

<https://www.salford.gov.uk/your-council/news/13-000-of-illegal-tobacco-seized-in-salford/>

<https://www.salford.gov.uk/your-council/news/news-archive/news-from-december-2021/director-and-company-prosecuted-after-11-000-of-illegal-tobacco-seized-in-salford/>

<https://www.salford.gov.uk/your-council/news/news-archive/news-from-may-2021/illegal-tobacco-sales-lands-shopkeeper-in-court/>

# SLOUGH TRADING STANDARDS

## Unlucky Numbers

A Slough based business is hundreds of thousands of pounds out of pocket after being prosecuted for selling illegal number plate holders.

The investigation into Sola Sales Ltd began in June 2017, after a test purchase of a set of number plate holders bearing the BMW/Mini logos was made at the business premises on Farnham Road, by the council's Trading Standards Officers. Once these items were confirmed as being counterfeit, a search of the premises was carried out in November 2017. A total of 3,466 surrounds were seized bearing the trade marks of 22 different car manufacturers. A business computer was also seized.

Although the two directors claimed they purchased the number plate holders from a reputable EU based company in good faith and were unaware the holders were an unlicensed product, a forensic analysis of the seized computer revealed that a large consignment of counterfeit number plate holders destined for Sola Sales, from their supplier, had been seized and destroyed by Customs Officers in Calais in March 2016.

The confiscation hearing was held at Reading Crown Court on 1 April 2022. Judge H.H.J. Nott stated she accepted the company was set up with a legitimate purpose and would sentence on the basis of recklessness and carelessness, rather than specific intent to commit financial crime.

The judge granted a confiscation order for the sum of £333,955.62, to Sola Sales Ltd and its two directors Marcin Wdowiak and Kazimiera Swiniarska, as well as the council's prosecution costs and fines totalling £20,000.

Jaspal Singh, Principal Enforcement Officer for the council's Trading Standards Service and lead officer in the case, said: *'I'm pleased the directors had previously pleaded guilty to the offences under the Trade Marks Act 1994 and now have to pay prosecution costs to the Council, as well as a significant amount in Proceeds of Crime money, received during the period of April 2014 to April 2018, when the sales of this product took place through Amazon and eBay marketplaces.'*



Huge quantity of counterfeit number plates holders seized by Slough Trading Standards

# TRADING STANDARDS SCOTLAND

## £3million success

During 2021, Trading Standards Scotland led a multi-agency operation to tackle a major importer and wholesaler of counterfeit goods, supplying the West of Scotland from a series of storage containers in the Glasgow area.

The continuing restrictions imposed due to Covid-19 posed a challenge to enforcement action; however, it did allow further intelligence to be developed in liaison with Police Scotland. This collaboration suggested that the subject was expanding operations and was in possession of a large quantity of recently obtained illicit goods. Once restrictions were lifted, a warrant was quickly obtained, as was operational support from Police Scotland and brand representatives from the ACG.

In June 2021, executive action took place at the storage containers in question and a major operation ensued. The seizure of goods took two days and saw the recovery of counterfeit clothing, perfumes, watches and footwear, including the brands North Face, Moncler, Ugg and Dior. It is understood the goods were obtained directly from suppliers in Turkey and China. The seized items were assessed by ACG experts to be worth at least £3million, with a retail value in excess of £25million. Further seizures were made under Proceeds of Crime Act.

This operation was a fantastic example of effective partnership working to detect and disrupt organised criminality. The nature and scale of the subject's operation threatened the interests of both consumers and legitimate business alike, through the wholesale supply of counterfeit and potentially unsafe goods.



Counterfeit goods seized by Trading Standards Scotland from storage containers in the Glasgow area

# WARWICKSHIRE TRADING STANDARDS

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## £100,000 of Fakes Seized from Furnace End Market

Counterfeit goods worth an estimated £100,000 and a value, if genuine, of more than £1 million were seized from traders operating on Furnace End market.

Warwickshire County Council Trading Standards, Warwickshire Police and brand representatives visited Furnace End Market on Sunday 28 November 2021. Over 6,600 fake branded products were seized, including: Canada Goose jackets, Adidas and North Face T-shirts, Ted Baker bags and purses, Ugg hats and gloves, Tiffany jewellery and Nike trainers.

Warwickshire County Councillor Andy Crump, Portfolio Holder for Community Safety said: *'Many knock-off products, especially beauty goods, jewellery and electronics can be dangerous, whilst the sale of all counterfeits hurts local retailers and the wider economy.'*

*'We will continue to work with the Police and others to tackle the sale of fake goods.'*

Investigations are continuing.

**'Counterfeit goods worth an estimated £100,000 and a value, if genuine, of more than £1 million were seized from traders operating on Furnace End market.'**

# WEST YORKSHIRE TRADING STANDARDS

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## Facebook Fake Football Kit Seller Pleads Guilty

A Facebook seller from Bradford, Sajid Hussain of Mill Race Lane, has pleaded guilty to selling counterfeit football kits on the platform. He first came to the attention of Trading Standards and brand holders in 2017 when selling under the name "Sajid Hussain". These concerns led Facebook to deactivate his account. He was later found to have returned using an account called "Hussain Saj" and was once again selling counterfeit football kits online.

Test purchases were conducted in June 2019 by brand holders of a Manchester United kit, and it was found to be counterfeit. In August 2019, West Yorkshire Trading Standards received a package from Leeds Bradford Airport, intended for the defendant, containing 39 counterfeit items. Checks on the email address for Sajid Hussain identified a PayPal account which had total sales of £161K between January 2017 and August 2019. A linked eBay account was also located with trade marked items listed as having been sold.

West Yorkshire Trading Standards, along with police and brand protection officers from Nike and Adidas, executed a warrant in January 2020 at the home address of the defendant, and counterfeit items were seized. Financial enquiries uncovered evidence of the sale of counterfeit items through the defendant's personal bank accounts.

Sajid Hussain pleaded guilty on 12 April 2022 to 26 counts of unauthorised possession and distribution of trade marks and will be sentenced in May 2022.

## Convictions for Counterfeit Tobacco Sellers

West Yorkshire Trading Standards' Illicit Tobacco team continue to tackle 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 9 million illegal cigarettes and over 3 tonnes of illegal hand rolling tobacco off the streets.

**'West Yorkshire Trading Standards' Illicit Tobacco team continue to tackle sellers of counterfeit and illicit tobacco in the county.'**

## Illicit Tobacco Dealers Sentenced

In February 2022, Ali Mohamad from Bradford and Aram Ahmed Mohammedie of Leeds were sentenced at Leeds Crown Court having previously pleaded guilty to selling illegal cigarettes and hand rolling tobacco at their business, Mama Mia Convenience Store Ltd, in Leeds.



Concealed compartment storing illegal tobacco

Ali Mohamad was sentenced to a 9-week custodial sentence suspended for 18 months with a 4-week curfew between 7pm and 7am. Aram Ahmed Mohammedie was given a community order for 18 months and ordered to complete 120 hours unpaid work. Cash seized during one of the inspections, totalling more than £30,000, was also forfeited by the defendants.

The premises was well known to West Yorkshire Trading Standards. A number of test purchases had been undertaken and illicit tobacco was seized from Mama Mia during inspections in June 2020, November 2020 and February 2021. The illicit tobacco was found both in store rooms and in concealments. Warnings to stop the illegal activity were ignored.

In November 2020, the shop was also stacked high with imported high strength lager and vodka. HMRC seized over 970 litres of non-UK duty paid vodka which had an estimated duty plus VAT evaded of £15,000. In September 2021, despite a pending court appearance for the two company directors, the store was continuing to sell illegal tobacco and a van parked on the road at the rear of the shop was found by West Yorkshire Police to be full of boxes and bags of illegal tobacco. A further small amount of cigarettes was recovered from the shop's rear extension roof void.

The total amount of illegal tobacco seized from Mama Mia Convenience Store by police and Trading Standards was 108,620 sticks and 892 packets of Hand Rolling Tobacco. The tobacco was also not in the standardised format and did not have the prescribed health warnings in English. The loss of excise duty on the seized tobacco would have been around £47,000.

## Proceeds of Crime Act Successes

### Bradford Counterfeiting Family Ordered to Pay Back £1.5M Proceeds

Five members of an extended Bradford family who ran an online counterfeit clothing operation were ordered to pay back the proceeds of their crime at a hearing at Bradford Crown Court.

This followed an 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. Using a number of eBay and Amazon user accounts, in both their own and third-party names, including those of their family members, the extended family generated global counterfeit sales of £472,898.09 over a 5-year period. The proceeds were then used to purchase a number of properties and high value motor vehicles. The trade marks breached included Arctic Monkeys, The 1975, Motorhead, Ramones, Beyonce, 5 Seconds of Summer, Harry Potter, Ed Sheeran and Nirvana as well as a number of others.

Brothers Amar Choudry, Yasir Choudry, and Qaisar Choudry of Duchy Crescent, Bradford, and Faisal Choudry of Duchy Drive, Bradford, and their brother-in-law Mudasar Alishan of Oakdale Drive, Shipley, were sentenced in February 2019 at Bradford Crown Court for their offending. Each received a 2-year custodial sentence suspended for 2 years with a requirement to undertake 300 hours unpaid work.

At a Proceeds of Crime Act Hearing on 30 November 2021, His Honour Judge Burn found the family had benefited by a total of £1,797,559.16 from their criminal enterprise. He ordered the family to pay confiscation orders totalling £1,513,163.49 which represented the total of their available assets.

### Fake Fancy Dress Costumes Cost Tingley eBay seller £74,000

In February 2018, West Yorkshire Trading Standards, along with officers from West Yorkshire Police and brand protection officers from Rubie's Masquerade Co UK Ltd, executed a warrant at the home address of Simon Goodison, owner of an eBay page selling counterfeit and unsafe children's fancy-dress costumes. Over 2,000 costumes were seized on the day and were later confirmed as counterfeit. Official safety tests were also conducted on the costumes and there were failures, including part of a child's costume which failed the required flammability test.



Counterfeit and unsafe fancy-dress costumes seized

In November 2019, at Leeds Magistrates Court, Simon Goodison pleaded guilty to 8 offences under the Trade marks Act 1994 and two offences under the General Product Safety Regulations 2005. He was sentenced at Leeds Crown Court in February 2021 to a 12-month community order with 150 hours of unpaid work.

On 17 November 2021, a confiscation hearing under the Proceeds of Crime Act 2002 was held at Leeds Crown Court where Simon Goodison was found to have benefited from his offending to the tune of £167,866.44. His assets available for confiscation were calculated as £73,797.25 and, as such, a confiscation order was made in that amount.

**‘In November 2019, at Leeds Magistrates Court, Simon Goodison pleaded guilty to 8 offences under the Trade marks Act 1994 and two offences under the General Product Safety Regulations 2005.’**







**Trading  
Standards**



IP Crime Group 2022

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CP2200418