



# NEWS RELEASE

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## Local authorities blinkered on fake goods

Councillors are not only blinkered to the damage being done to their local communities by the sale of fake goods, but are unsure as to who should be responsible for stopping this criminal activity. This is despite the vast majority of councillors believing it is important to protect consumers from substandard or dangerous products.

This discrepancy was uncovered following research carried out by the polling company ComRes.

Responsibility for protecting people from fake goods e.g. counterfeit toys, children's clothing, household products as well as CDs and DVDs, and enforcing IP law rests with trading standards, but only half of the councillors surveyed believe this should be the case; over 40% also pointing to central government, amongst others.

This confusion continues over the funding of this enforcement. Trading Standards are funded by local authorities (LAs) but a staggering 79% of councillors believe funding for this issue should come from central government not out of local budgets.

Susie Winter, Director General of the Alliance Against IP Theft said:

"Counterfeiting and piracy affects every local authority in the UK. Consumers are ripped off and potentially harmed; local businesses are unable to compete with sellers of fakes; and criminal gangs intimidate legitimate traders and embed criminality and anti-social behaviour in the community.

"We are very concerned that this confusion over responsibility, and lack of understanding about the harm fake goods cause, is resulting in, at best, inaction but, at worst, budget cuts in this important area of trading standards work.

### Members:

Anti-Counterfeiting Group

Authors' Licensing and Collecting Society

British Brands Group

BPI (British Recorded Music Industry) Limited

British Video Association

Business Software Alliance

Cinema Exhibitors Association

Copyright Licensing Agency

Design and Artists Copyright Society

Entertainment and Leisure Software Publishers Association

Entertainment Retailers Association

Federation Against Copyright Theft

Federation Against Software Theft

Film Distributors Association

Institute of Trade Mark Attorneys

Motion Picture Association

Premier League

Publishers Licensing Society

**Associate Members:**  
Anti Copying in Design

British Jewellery & Giftware Federation

Video Standards Council

**The Alliance Against Intellectual Property Theft Limited**

**Director General:** Susie Winter

**Chair:** Lavinia Carey **Vice Chairs:** Ruth Orchard, Roz Groome **Treasurer:** Mike Rawlinson

Registered Office: 167 Wardour Street, London W1F 8WL Telephone 020 7534 0595 Fax 020 7534 0581

[www.allianceagainstiptheft.co.uk](http://www.allianceagainstiptheft.co.uk)

Registered in England and Wales. Company number: 5976983

“We ask all local authorities to ensure their trading standards department is properly resourced and equipped to deal with the sale of fake goods, and using the Proceeds of Crime Act to take assets off IP criminals so that not only is their ability to reoffend taken away but so that, under the incentivisation scheme, the authority receives a proportion of the monies seized.”

**ENDS**

## **NOTES TO EDITORS**

ComRes surveyed 504 local Councillors online, between 30th October and 11th of November 2008. Only Councillors in authorities with responsibility for tackling IP Crime were sampled. The research was weighted by region and party to represent all Councillors in England and Wales.

ComRes is the retained pollster for the Independent and the Independent on Sunday. ComRes is a member of the British Polling Council and abides by its rules ([www.britishpollingcouncil.org](http://www.britishpollingcouncil.org)). This commits us to the highest standards of transparency.

On average, Councillors scored each of the seven consequences of IP crime listed below between ‘to no extent’ and ‘to some extent’. Full tables are available at the ComRes website: <http://www.comres.co.uk/page190734021.aspx>

Thinking about your local area, to what extent do you see evidence of the following consequences of IP crime?

*To a great extent, to some extent, to no extent, don't know*

- Consumers acquiring poor quality or potentially dangerous products
- Increase in anti-social behaviour such as intimidation and harassment
- Under-age children exposed to unsuitable material (e.g. fake pornographic/violent DVDs)
- Legitimate traders losing trade (e.g. markets)
- High street shops being forced to close
- Feeding other serious criminal activity (e.g. drugs, weapons, child pornography)
- Public finances harmed through loss of tax and other revenue payments

Launched in 1998, Alliance Against IP Theft provides a unique single voice to promote to government the importance of intellectual property (IP) to all sectors of the UK economy and to explain the harm – economic, physical and social – caused by IP theft.

**The Alliance Against Intellectual Property Theft Limited**

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Representing film, music, software, sports and publishing, branded manufactured goods and retailers, individual designers and small businesses, the Alliance has campaigned vigorously to demonstrate the important economic and cultural contribution IP makes to the UK and helped bring about legislative reform to ensure our assets are safeguarded for the future wellbeing of the British economy.

## **ALLIANCE MEMBERS**

Anti-Counterfeiting Group  
Authors' Licensing and Collecting Society  
British Brands Group  
BPI (British Recorded Music Industry)  
British Video Association  
Business Software Alliance  
Cinema Exhibitors Association  
Copyright Licensing Agency  
Design and Artists Copyright Society  
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