

# Annual Report 2022

**ACCG**  
THE  
ANTI-COUNTERFEITING GROUP





**The ACG is extremely proud to be at the forefront of the movement to prevent counterfeiting across the UK, Europe, and the world. We share intelligence with our partners to identify the greatest threats to the UK by analysing and prioritising the intelligence we collect. We ensure it is used to its full advantage within the UK law enforcement community, enabling coordinated strategies and joint operations.**

Intelligence is the bedrock of the full range of services we offer. It not only helps to drive intelligence-led enforcement and coordinated operational efforts, it provides the foundation for evidenced-based policy, research, awareness raising, training, the development of knowledge and skills, and key advisory support for enforcement and government decision-makers.

Global counterfeiting is a crime that has no borders and no one country or authority can deal with this on its own. ACG is about building and cementing national and international alliances, around joint intelligence, to identify global crime networks. We aim to foster the development of strategic and tactical approaches, to help drive further international government support.

Unfortunately, the hard truth is that due to the enormous scope and scale of worldwide counterfeiting, it will never be possible to put all of the criminals involved before the courts.

Our collective focus must be on targets where we can have the most effect and benefit, to this end ACG will continue to use its resources to identify those targets and support our UK and international partners to maximise our impact on organised crime and counterfeiting.

Introduction	2
Contents	3
Director General Statement	4
Highlights of our year	6
Our plan for 2023	7
The ACG year in numbers	9
ACG Outreach	10
ACG Board	11





**2022 was a year where we faced new difficulties, supply chain issues, the cost-of-living crisis, and the war in Ukraine. This has led to even more changes in consumers' buying behaviours, which had already escalated during the pandemic.**

During and post-pandemic the world of intellectual property and anti-counterfeiting quickly realised what we were up against in a swiftly changing environment. Figures from the UK's Office for National Statistics revealed that we were spending substantially more online than before the pandemic. In household goods alone there was a 70% jump in online sales compared to pre-COVID levels. Some consumer surveys reveal that 67% of consumers say that their online purchasing has increased since the start of the pandemic and that 91% of those will continue to buy online.

For e-commerce, this has been great news, but of course, we were not the only ones to recognise the enormous opportunities afforded by global shopping. As the pandemic took hold, counterfeiters swiftly identified the potential and reacted quickly. They increased their manufacturing levels and their exploitation of legal logistical channels and express delivery companies.

The exponential rise of intelligence reports to ACG confirmed much higher levels of manufacturing, marketing, and sales of fake goods. Moreover, e-businesses bypassed retail outlets and heightened international delivery

service channels. With the arrival of 24 million internet sites, it was clear that many new players were entering the market.

The result? Counterfeiters flooded international trade and enforcement authorities, who were operating on limited budgets and dealing with competing priorities. They were unable to deal with the volume and were overwhelmed. Latest figures reveal that across the world 64% of worldwide border seizures of suspect counterfeits were made from mailed packages carrying small and single items, bought online.

Where are we now? The latest joint report by the OECD and the European IP Office (EUIPO) revealed that the worldwide trade in counterfeit and pirated goods is now worth a staggering \$424 billion.

We also need to remind ourselves of what this means to a distressed global economy. Criminals don't build hospitals and schools and the money lost to countries desperately seeking to deal with escalating costs of living also funds other forms of insidious illicit trade including trafficking, drugs, and weapons.

How did all this get so bad?

The emergence of digital organised crime has grown alongside traditional transnational crime syndicates, and both have learned from each other. The traditional Organised Crime networks have invested in the digital world and in return "digital OC networks" have organised themselves into specialist areas, developing new forms of illicit trade, including money laundering and identity theft.

These sophisticated criminal organisations are making use of legal structures in maritime freight, airlines, and of course, e-commerce to ship huge volumes of fake goods.

Today the internet, mobile phones, email, and social media enable us to buy and send money at the speed of light. Moreover, borders have become nonentities to those engaged in organised transnational crime.

Alongside this, while revolutionary changes in transportation have enabled and boosted international trade they have paradoxically amplified illicit trade and hampered our ability to control the movement of illegal goods, services, and people.

This has resulted in the global trade in counterfeiting being worth the same as Austria's GDP and its reach is far. Over 80% of fakes come from China and Hong Kong but more and more countries are being used for manufacturing, as Chinese counterfeiters have become more affluent, and domestic manufacturing has become more costly. This can bring further threats to vulnerable countries as counterfeiters replace domestic jobs and become influential parasites. The organised crime model of using money to launder and influence stands as a model of business efficiency.

So, what can we do? The past two years and the current financial downturn have brought distress to millions of people across the world. This and the combined pressures of rebuilding the UK economy in the face of unexpected burdens resulting from the war in Ukraine and dealing with some of the less predicted outcomes

following our exit from the EU have brought new and unforeseen challenges.

Many will be aware that ACG's drive is to bring forces together to combat the dangers that criminal counterfeiters bring. It is still my firm belief that collaboration and information sharing is the crucial way to make a difference. We have to work together across public and private sectors and beyond borders.

As we know, to achieve their aims transnational crime organisations need our legal structures, banks, accountancy companies, shipping, postal and freight services, and of course e-commerce. Laws to deter crime by increasing the gravity of penalties have been largely ineffective in the counterfeiting world. Most transnational criminals are located outside of our jurisdictions and care little about our sanctions.

Deterrence works when we deepen criminals' views that they will be caught. This takes international conformity, acceptance, and most importantly cross border, cross-sector, and cross-agency intelligence sharing.

This has to be the nucleus of everything we do to fight this worldwide crime wave, that destroys jobs, economies, and lives and feeds other forms of global criminality and illicit trade.

ACG's continued aim is partnership and intelligence sharing nationally and internationally.



**Phil Lewis**, ACG Director General

“

**It is still my firm belief that collaboration and information sharing is the crucial way to make a difference. We have to work together across public and private sectors and beyond borders.**

”

# 2022

- Our continuous high-level support for multi-agency actions on IP crime in the Birmingham area during the Commonwealth Games. ACG provided an in-depth insight into the potential threats arising from the physical and online distribution of fake goods.
- Steering the National Markets Group to tackle the threat of IP crime and infringements on Instagram (Meta), resulting in the removal of thousands of infringing images from the platform.
- Joint coordination of extensive multi-sector operations, including an Essex Police-led raid on suspects involved in the sale of online counterfeit goods and the supply of illicit drugs.
- We initiated a collective approach to identifying dangerous counterfeit products including the testing of suspect children's clothing, cosmetics, jewellery, candles, furnishings, speakers, headphones, electric toothbrush heads, and drinks.
- ACG's intelligence and operational activities supported a new and innovative anti-counterfeiting initiative that successfully targeted counterfeit goods in self-storage facilities across the UK.
- New operational guidelines were produced, with the assistance of the Chartered Trading Standards Institute (CTSI), to help promote more effective assistance to law enforcement on operational activities.
- We contributed to key reports for the UK Government to help understand pressures in countries where new trade deals are being negotiated.
- Continuous support for partner institutions including the OECD Task Force on Countering Illicit Trade, the EU Observatory on IP Infringements, and the European Commission, which included contributions to the Misuse of E-Commerce, Challenges faced by EU Action Plan to combat IP crime, EU Customs Reform and the EUIPO Monitoring Services Research Project.
- The ACG Director General received an IP Champion Award from the Alliance for IP members.
- Our conference, roadshows, and roundtables across the country have continued to bring members together with enforcement, customs, authorities, and major e-commerce platforms to build greater cooperation and understanding of the dangers associated with IP crime.





**We remain in the midst of an intellectual property crime epidemic and combating it will require skills, collaboration, and wider sharing of knowledge, intelligence, and expertise.**

**ACG will aim to keep businesses, consumers and national interests safe from the impact of IP crime by:**

1. Ensuring IP is well respected, protected and enforced, and properly taken account of within the UK policy agenda, including post-Brexit trade deals.
2. Using accurate and timely intelligence to spread awareness about the widening threats associated with IP crime to Government, enforcement, business, and consumers.
3. Representing businesses by influencing government authorities to deliver cohesive national responses to reduce the impact of high-level, organised, criminal counterfeiting networks.
4. Advancing knowledge and skills in IP enforcement and facilitating, supporting, and steering intelligence-led strategies and responses to IP crime.
5. Mobilising and supporting national, regional, local enforcement and border resources to deliver long-term, intelligence-led enforcement strategies and actions.
6. Building and developing more strategic networks, partnerships, and approaches with UK and international governments, enforcement, business groups, representative associations, and alliances to provide long-term solutions to IP crime.

## POLICY AND INFLUENCING

**We will work to raise more public awareness** about the increased dangers associated with counterfeiting crime, nationally and internationally, working with international government agencies, strategy groups, business leaders, enforcement authorities, and consumer federations to protect our priceless assets, jobs, safety, and security.

**ACG also commits to working with the Government** to help develop policies that respect and protect IP in post-brexit trade deals and beyond.

**We will increase our responses to research requests** and will provide even more evidence-based reports to the Government to help build knowledge and identify key challenges and threats arising from source and transit countries.

**We will continue to work with partner associations** and improve our close links with European anti-counterfeiting associations, ABAC – BAAN (Belgium), Unifab (France), APM (Germany), INDICAM (Italy), ANDEMA (Spain) and AIM (the European Brands Association).







## ENFORCEMENT

**Further develop and strengthen partnerships** with public sector agencies including the IPO, TS, NTS, HMRC, Border Force, and others to ensure an intelligence-led response to product counterfeiting.

**Support Trading Standards and Police** on raid actions to remove infringing goods from the marketplace.

**Provide logistical support** to the authorities to enable them to take appropriate action against infringers.

**Continue to influence decision-makers** at an operational level to raise the profile of IP crime and provide sufficient resources to tackle the issue.

**Engage, support and gather intelligence,** to protect consumers and legitimate businesses, by supporting national groups and forums including the IP Crime Group and the National Markets Group.

**Support key stakeholders** in cross-agency strategies and actions to bring down major criminal networks involved in selling counterfeit goods, including Op Vulcan.

## RAISE AWARENESS

**Launch broader educational events** for members, embracing Trading Standards, Border Force, Police and wider enforcement related agencies.

**Participate in raising awareness and education** on anti-counterfeiting and IP issues through tailored messages with national and international partners including the IPO, the British Brands Group, the Alliance for IP, the EU Observatory, the GACG, national associations and the OECD.

**Host roundtable discussions** with wider online marketplaces for members and partners to gain greater understanding.

**Make consumers aware** about the key issues with our media outreach work, including our social media campaigns and messages across all public forums.





**7 MAJOR  
GOVERNMENT**

**CONSULTATION EXERCISES,  
REFORM STATEMENTS  
AND PROPOSALS**

**7 LIVE  
EVENTS**

**SUPPORT  
FOR 5 UK AND EU  
CONSULTATIONS AND  
RESEARCH PROJECTS**

**CONTRIBUTED TO**

**24**

**COUNTRY AND  
INDEPENDENT  
RESEARCH REPORTS**

**1,250  
PIECES OF  
INTELLIGENCE**

**£25.6  
MILLION**

**GOODS  
SEIZED**



**ADVICE FOR 14 NATIONAL  
AND INTERNATIONAL  
FORUMS**

**TRAINING FOR**

**417**

**BORDER FORCE  
AND TRADING  
STANDARDS  
OFFICERS**



**33 RAIDS**

**62**

**INVESTIGATIONS  
WITH PARTNER  
AGENCIES**

The ACG year in numbers

**During 2022 our Director General appeared on numerous podcasts including a live safety podcast for Bennetts BikeSocial and Channel 5's programme – Shoplifters and Scammers at War with the Law.**

Other media mentions for the ACG included The Trademark Lawyer magazine, Trading Standards Journal, and the local press across the UK. There was also great media coverage for an operation we were involved in. Operation Monty 2 had stories featured in the Mirror, Sun, UK Times News, Independent, Mail Online, ITV.com, and the Evening Standard.

Phil was awarded the IP Champion Award by the Alliance for IP members for his tireless campaigning against counterfeiting. He also represented ACG at major international meetings with the OECD Task Force, the EU Observatory, and the World Customs Organisation. He took part in the All Party Parliamentary Group Meetings on IP and contributed to numerous consultations in the UK and Europe, including the UK's future Designs Legislation and Reforming Competition and Consumer Policy. Phil also gave lectures at three academic institutions including the University of Newcastle.

ACG delivered quarterly in-house members' expert group meetings on policy and physical and online enforcement. The ACG Intelligence team also spoke at numerous training events for PSNI, Border Force, and the Football Against Fakes Conference.

We organised and delivered IP Open day events which attracted 135 Border Force officers. ACG Roadshows were held in Edinburgh, Doncaster, and London. We also ran numerous IP Open Days for Trading Standards which were attended by 282 Trading Standards officers.

At CTSI Annual Conference, in Bristol, ACG supported and presented at 'Spotlight Sessions'. During the event, we presented our Annual ACG Awards for Excellence in Anti-Counterfeiting for enforcement officers. We also attended and presented at the CTSI Welsh Spring Conference.



A variety of round tables with major e-commerce companies were held throughout the year including those with Alibaba, Amazon, TikTok, and Coupang.

Our Annual Conference in London brought experts from across the world including the OECD, the Transnational Alliance to Combat Illicit Trade (TRACIT), and the Global Anti Scam Alliance (GASA), alongside major e-commerce representatives, UK experts from Oxford University, the Police International Property Crime Unit (PIPCU), and the Greater Manchester Police Operation Vulcan team.



**The Board is the ACG's ultimate governing body and at the end of 2022 was made up of eight members who meet at least four times a year to review strategy, business plans, and operations.**

At the 2022 Annual General Meeting members agreed that the number of Board members should increase, to add greater resilience and expertise, in a wider variety of sectors.



**Mark Bearfoot Chair**

Senior Legal Director Global Brand Protection (PVH Tommy Hilfiger Europe BV)



**Chloe Long Vice-Chair**

Head of Brand Protection and IP (Superdry Plc)



**Nicola Consterdine**

IP Protection Manager, Strategic Planning Dept (Epson Europe BV)



**Sheila Henderson**

Chief Intellectual Property Counsel (Richemont International Ltd)



**Caron Tayler**

Senior Corporate Counsel, Global Brand Protection (Harley-Davidson Europe Ltd)



**Paul Dicken**

Director, Brand Protection (Liverpool Football Club)



**Claire Wood**

Global Brand Protection Director (Reckitt)



**Mark Ruffels**

Senior Director, Global Brand Protection Operations (Procter & Gamble)



**Louise Butler**

Global Head of Brand Protection, (Diageo Plc)

Additionally, there are the following, specialist, ACG groups open to members.

## BRANDS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Chair: **Chloe Long**

Head of Brand Protection and IP (Superdry Plc)

Vice Chair: **Adefunke Adeyeye**

Senior Counsel Intellectual Property Anti-Counterfeiting (Haleon Plc)

## ADVOCACY AND PUBLIC POLICY STEERING COMMITTEE

Co Chair: **Joel Blank**

Assistant General Counsel, Head of Global Trade Policy and Advocacy (Supreme New York)

Co Chair: **Marilyn Krige**

Senior Brand Protection Counsel, (Reckitt)

Vice Chair: **Toe Su Aung**

Director (Elipse Limited)

## INTELLIGENCE AND ENFORCEMENT STEERING COMMITTEE

Co Chair: **Jak Cluness**

Head of Global Brand Protection (New Era Cap Ltd)

Co Chair: **Sharon Penketh**

Manager Global Brand Protection eBusiness (Procter & Gamble)

Vice Chair: **Stephanie Jackson**

Director (React UK)

## EVENTS STEERING COMMITTEE

Co Chair: **Iain MacLeod**

Brand Protection Manager (Diageo Plc)

Co Chair: **Paul Dicken**

Director, Brand Protection (Liverpool Football Club)

Vice Chair: **Briony Mogg**

Manager (WRi Group)





**The Anti-Counterfeiting Group (ACG)  
20 Manor Courtyard  
Hughenden Avenue  
High Wycombe  
Buckinghamshire  
HP13 5RE**

**T: +44 (0)1494 449165  
E: [admin@a-cg.com](mailto:admin@a-cg.com)  
[www.a-cg.org](http://www.a-cg.org)**