

NEWS RELEASE

COUNTERFEIT MUSIC MAN JAILED FOR EIGHT MONTHS

On Monday, Leeds Crown Court sentenced a man from Featherstone to serve eight months in prison for twelve offences of counterfeiting music CDs, DVDs and computer games.

Brian Damien Brear, 36, has been counterfeiting since November 2003 from a counterfeiting "factory" in his home in Featherstone. Trading Standards Officers uncovered the set up earlier last year after investigators working for the Mechanical Copyright Protection Society (MCPS) tipped them off that Brear was selling these copied discs illegally on internet forums.

During the raid Officers from Trading Standards working with West Yorkshire Police and MCPS found in excess of 14,000 titles on master discs which were ready to copy and send off to his customers on demand. The estimated retail value of the goods is in excess of £180,000. Computers and other copying equipment were also recovered during the operation.

In December last year Brear pleaded guilty to all twelve specimen offences at Pontefract Magistrates Court. Due to the serious nature of this crime, the matter was referred to Leeds Crown Court for sentencing.

Graham Hebblethwaite, Chief Officer of West Yorkshire Trading Standards Service said "This result should deter counterfeiters from carrying out this illicit crime. It is driven by greed and causes a loss of millions of pounds to the retailers of West Yorkshire and to members of the music and entertainment industry every year. The haul of items from this operation and the detention of Brear should send out a clear warning to counterfeiters on the electronic superhighway. The internet is swamped by criminals selling a variety of counterfeit goods and I must warn the consumers of West Yorkshire to take care when shopping online and to be aware of the volume of counterfeit goods offered for sale."

Councillor Keith Wakefield of the Trading Standards Committee added "This service is determined to strike hard against counterfeiters and will continue to work closely with the Police and Industry bodies. Often members of the public have no idea about the economic harm caused by the sale of counterfeit goods. The Court has sent a clear message to anyone involved in this illicit trade - you will have to spend time in prison if you are caught selling this type of goods."

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