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 ***News Release***

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**HMRC investigates suspected Money Laundering Regulations breaches**

Five properties in The Lothians and Fife, the registered addresses for around 1,500 companies, were searched yesterday morning by officers from HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC). The searches are part of an investigation linked into suspected Money Laundering Regulations breaches and illegal film distribution.

HRMC, along with Police Scotland and the Federation Against Copyright Theft (FACT), seized computer and business records from five business and residential properties in the Edinburgh and Fife areas. The addresses searched are believed to be the registered offices of around 1,500 legal entities, including Limited Partnerships (LPs), Limited Liability Partnerships (LLPs), and Limited Companies, which are being investigated by HMRC.

Anne-Marie Gordon, Assistant Director, Criminal Investigation, HMRC, said:

“Breaching Money Laundering Regulations is a serious crime. This activity could open the door to allow organised criminals and terrorists to profit from their illegal activities. Money laundering costs millions of pounds in lost revenue that should be funding public services.

“Today’s operation, working closely with Police Scotland, a partner in the Serious Organised Crime Task Force, and FACT, sends a clear message that HMRC will investigate any activity suspected of flouting Money Laundering Regulations. Anyone with information about alleged financial crime can contact the Customs Hotline on 0800 59 5000.”

Detective Inspector Arron Clinkscales from Police Scotland's Organised Crime and Counter Terrorism Unit said:

"Today's activity is the culmination of considerable intelligence-gathering and partnership working between all of the agencies involved.

"Various pieces of evidence were taken from the addresses in Edinburgh and Fife and these will now we reviewed.

"Police Scotland is committed to working alongside our partner agencies whenever we receive reports of criminal offences linked to serious organised crime to bring those responsible to justice."

Kieron Sharp, Director General, FACT, said:

“The illegal distribution of film content causes significant harm to the UK economy, and often those involved are linked to financial crime and other forms of serious crime. FACT is committed to working alongside HMRC and Law Enforcement Agencies to identify and bring those individuals to account.”

Investigations into the evidence seized are ongoing.

**Notes for editors**

1. Details of properties searched:
* One business and one residential property searched in West Fife.
* One business and two residential properties searched in North Edinburgh.
1. HM Revenue and Customs is a committed member of the Scottish Government’s Serious Organised Crime Task Force. The Task Force has a remit to pursue serious organised crime in all its forms by bringing together all agencies involved in tackling organised crime groups. Task Force members include the Cabinet Secretary for Justice, the Lord Advocate, representatives from the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service, the Scottish Government, Police Scotland, HMRC, NCA, SPS and the Scottish Business Resilience Centre, amongst others.

1. Suspected financial crime can be reported to the Customs Hotline on 0800 59 5000.
2. Images are available on HMRC’s Flickr site [www.flickr.com/hmrcgovuk](http://www.flickr.com/hmrcgovuk)
3. Follow HMRC’s press office on Twitter @HMRCpressoffice

**Issued by HM Revenue & Customs Press Office**

**Press enquiries only please contact:**

Greg Black

Tel: 03000 546 374

Email: greg.black@hmrc.gsi.gov.uk

Or

Martin Couper (Police Scotland)

Tel:      0131 311 3083

Email: martin.couper@scotland.pnn.police.uk

Out of hours Tel:         07860 359544

**Website** [www.gov.uk/hmrc](http://www.gov.uk/hmrc)