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 ***News Release***

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**Seasoned tobacco smuggler returns to prison**

A convicted tobacco smuggler, who was warned that if he was caught with illicit tobacco again he would return to prison, has been jailed for ten years.

Phillip William Hall, 56, was released on licence in August 2014 after being sentenced to five years in prison and issued with a Serious Crime Prevention Order for importing illicit tobacco in 2011 after an investigation by HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC).

The Wednesbury man was caught out again after he was stopped by West Midlands Police in February 2015. Officers found more than 10 kilogrammes of loose tobacco and in excess of £4,400 cash. A quantity of Class B drugs and more cash were discovered during further searches of Hall’s home address.

Paul Fisher, Assistant Director, Fraud Investigation Service, HMRC, said:

“As a convicted tobacco smuggler, Hall knew that if he offended again he would return to prison, but he thought he could evade detection - he was wrong. Tobacco smuggling does not pay, you will be caught and pay the price.

“Disrupting criminal trade is at the heart of our strategy to clampdown on the illicit tobacco market, which costs the UK around £2 billion a year. This is theft from the taxpayer and undermines legitimate traders through unregulated tobacco sales. We encourage anyone with information about the illegal sale of tobacco to contact the HMRC Fraud Hotline on 0800 788 887.”

Temporary Detective Chief Inspector Darren Crutchley, West Midlands Police, said:

“This is a great example of how the Regional Organised Crime Unit for the West Midlands has worked closely with partner agencies to bring Hall to justice.

“Whether operating locally, regionally or nationally, those who seek to place our communities at risk will be targeted and brought to justice.”

On sentencing Recorder Rhind commented that, “Hall was a career criminal who had chosen this path in life and had the intention to produce Amphetamine on an industrial scale. He showed no remorse, no admissions and had lied his way through the trial, attempting to create sympathy from the court. Mr Hall was a thoroughly and utterly dishonest man”.

Hall was sentenced to a total of ten years in prison and had his Serious Crime Prevention Order extended until May 2024.

**Notes for Editors**

1. Phillip William Hall (DOB 22/01/1961) of Walsall Street, Wednesbury, pleaded guilty of failing to comply with a Serious Crime Prevention Order at Wolverhampton Crown Court on 28 March 2017. He was also found guilty of attempting to produce a controlled Class B drug, contrary to section 1(1) of the Criminal Attempts Act 1981 and possessing a class B drug with intent, contrary to section 5(3) of the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971. He was sentenced at the same court on 31 March 2017.
2. Hall was originally sentenced to five years imprisonment and given a Serious Crime Prevention Order at Stafford Crown Court on 31 March 2011, after being convicted of importing three tonnes of raw tobacco. He was released on licence on 28 August 2014, which is valid until 30 September 2017. Hall was sentenced for other tobacco offences in January 2012 and August 2013. Further details are available at <http://www.mynewsdesk.com/uk/hm-revenue-customs-hmrc/pressreleases/thirteen-sentenced-in-ps8-5-million-tobacco-conspiracy-899968>
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