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**EARLY SUCCESS AS UNIT BUSTS COUNTERFEIT CARD FACTORY**

Officers from the Dedicated Cheque and Plastic Crime Unit yesterday (Wednesday 10 July) raided a sophisticated counterfeit plastic card factory in Tottenham, North London, resulting in the arrest of a Turkish male and a Romanian female. This is a significant early success for the Unit, which was established in April.

Equipment needed to produce counterfeit cards on a massive scale - such as card skimmers, printers, presses, card account numbers and computer software - was found in the premises.

"This raid is a good example of how a partnership approach between law enforcement and the banking industry can be highly successful in combating this type of crime," said Head of the Unit, DCI Tony Drain. "My officers, together with investigators from Barclaycard, have discovered what appears to be a very well organised counterfeiting operation."

Ian Spencer, Barclaycard's Head of Fraud, commented: "It is good to see the Dedicated Cheque and Plastic Crime Unit bringing in a good result at such an early stage. This is another positive step towards protecting customers from credit card fraud."

John Denham, Home Office Crime Reduction Minister said: "I am absolutely delighted with the early success of the unit's work. This is a step in the right direction in combating plastic card fraud."

The Unit was set up as a two-year pilot by the Association for Payment Clearing Services (APACS) and the Home Office to fight the organised crime syndicates behind steep rises in UK plastic card fraud losses.

A key focus of the Unit is on criminals involved in counterfeiting. This has become the UK's worst type of card fraud, growing 50 per cent last year to cost £160 million. Cheque, ATM, identity theft and card-not-present fraud will also be investigated where organised crime is involved.

Based in London and comprising mostly officers seconded from the Metropolitan and City of London Police Forces, the Unit works with other law enforcement agencies across England and Wales using intelligence provided largely by the banking industry. APACS' Member banks and building societies are funding 75 per cent of the £5.6 million cost of the pilot with the Home Office providing the remainder.

### **Notes to Editors**

- The British Bankers' Association will provide intelligence on cheque fraud to the unit.
- The Association for Payment Clearing Services (APACS) represents the major UK banks and building societies on a wide range of non-competitive payment-related issues, including plastic card fraud prevention.
- APACS' Fraud Intelligence Bureau shares information and intelligence between the banking industry and police to combat counterfeit skimming. The FIB will work closely with the Dedicated Cheque and Plastic Crime Unit.

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