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PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release: 25 April 12

Banking industry police unit tops £400 million in estimated fraud savings since launch

- Unit marks ten years since launch on 29 April 2002

Latest figures show that the Dedicated Cheque and Plastic Crime Unit (DCPCU) – the specialist police unit that tackles UK card and cheque fraud crime – has passed the £400 million mark in reduced fraud activity since its launch ten years ago. The work of the Unit has undoubtedly contributed to the current downward trend in card fraud losses¹.

The Unit was launched on 29 April 2002 and became permanent two years later following a successful trial, which was jointly managed by the banking industry and the Home Office. The DCPCU is now fully sponsored by the banking industry, which invests nearly £5 million per year in the Unit's operation².

The DCPCU comprises officers from the City of London and Metropolitan police forces who work alongside a team of banking industry fraud investigators and support staff. Although London-based, investigations are nationwide, targeting the organised criminal gangs responsible for card and cheque fraud.

Since its inception, the DCPCU has:

- Achieved £400 million in savings from reduced fraud activity – equating to £750,000 per week.
- Recovered 75,000 counterfeit cards
- Recovered 331,000 compromised card numbers
- Secured 269 convictions on fraud related matters - an average of more than one successful prosecution per fortnight over the last decade.

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¹ ² - see Notes to editors

James Brokenshire MP, Minister for Crime and Security at the Home Office said:

“The DCPCU continues to be a valuable asset in the fight against fraud. It serves as an excellent example of how a public and private sector partnership can work together effectively.

“I visited the unit again recently and was impressed by the sheer scale of the work it undertakes, as well as the dedication and professionalism of all those involved. The Unit’s exemplary record over the past ten years is testament to that.”

Particular highlights over the past ten years include: the Unit’s work with other police forces, including Europol and Interpol, to bust several organised crime gangs responsible for setting up counterfeit card factories in the UK; receiving a judge’s commendation in 2003 for excellent investigative and court preparatory work; and winning the International Association of Financial Crime Investigator’s (IAFCI) *European Investigation Unit of the Year* award in 2008.

Detective Chief Inspector Paul Barnard, who heads up the DCPCU, said:

“The success we’ve had in cracking down on card and cheque fraud over the past ten years is down to very effective collaboration. By working hand-in-hand with the banking industry and other police forces we continue to disrupt the organised gangs committing these crimes, sending out a strong message to them that they will be caught and brought to justice.

“Advances in technology and the advent of new ways to pay, such as mobile payments, have brought different challenges to those the Unit faced ten years ago. However, the DCPCU is determined to stay at the forefront of crime prevention, tackling payment fraud in whatever shape and form it exists.”

The work of the DCPCU was highlighted on television on 5 April as part of *Fraud Squad*, which was broadcast on ITV1. A film crew accompanied the Unit during the course of its work and the programme showed officers tracking down and arresting cash machine fraud criminals across the UK. It is available to view on ITV player at www.itv.com/itvplayer/video/?Filter=313811

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Notes to editors:

- **Card fraud losses** totalled £341.0 million in 2011 – a 44% decrease over the past three years (losses were £609.9 million in 2008).
- **The *Dedicated Cheque and Plastic Crime Unit (DCPCU)*** is a special police unit that consists of police officers from the City of London and Metropolitan police forces who work alongside banking industry fraud investigators and support staff. The Unit is fully sponsored by the banking industry which invests nearly £5 million per year in the Unit's operation: The UK Cards Association provides 80% and the Fraud Control Steering Group provides 20% of this funding.
- **The *UK Cards Association*** is the leading trade association for the card payments industry in the UK. With a membership that includes all major credit, debit and charge card issuers and card payment acquirers, the Association contributes to the development of legislative and regulatory frameworks; develops industry best practice; safeguards the integrity of card payments by tackling card fraud; develops industry standards; and co-ordinates other industry-wide initiatives across matters relating to both card payments and the provision of credit.
- **The *Fraud Control Steering Group*** is an unincorporated association of financial institutions who participate in retail banking and the payments market in the UK. It is responsible for formulating and implementing policy and ensuring a coordinated industry approach to fighting payment, cheque and lending fraud.
- **Financial Fraud Action UK** is the name under which the financial services industry co-ordinates its activity on fraud prevention, presenting a united front against financial fraud and its effects. Financial Fraud Action UK works in partnership with The UK Cards Association on industry initiatives to prevent fraud on credit and debit cards, with the Fraud Control Steering Group on non-card fraud matters and the Cheque and Credit Clearing Company on credit clearing and cheque fraud.

For further information about the DCPCU, visit www.dcpcu.org.uk.

