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## Trading Standards praise quick thinking bank cashier

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Department: Trading Standards

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Surrey Trading Standards are distributing a new training video, 'The Bank Job', to all 350 branches of banks and building societies in Surrey. The film is a reconstruction of an elderly and vulnerable woman being taken, under duress, to her bank to withdraw money for paperwork carried out by cold calling rogue traders.

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Counter staff in Surrey who will be shown the film, will be encouraged to be on the lookout for withdrawals that are not routine. For example, an unusually large cash withdrawal made whilst accompanied by another person, or a series of cash withdrawals over a short space of time with set alarm bells ringing and prompt a tactful enquiry as to what the withdrawal is for.

A quick thinking member of staff at a bank in Surrey recently saved one potential 'victim' thousands of pounds when, her suspicions aroused, she called on Trading Standards to intervene.

Andrea Lucas, a bank cashier working at the Woking branch of TSB, intervened when a customer asked to withdraw £19,000. She politely enquired what the money was to be used for and when the customer replied that it was for house repairs, she said she had the checks and rang Surrey Trading Standards Rapid Action Team.

Trading Standards arrived, followed by the police, who gave chase and arrested two of the gang members, one of whom had been waiting outside the bank.

Jim Smith, Surrey County Council Executive Member for Community Safety, said:

"In this case, Andrea's quick thinking prevented an individual being 'conned' out of £19,000. These doorstep conmen are relentless and

return to seek out the same victim over and over again and some unfortunately, are parted with large amounts of money as a result.

Peter Denard, County Trading Standards Officer, said: "The Rapid Response Team can respond to calls from concerned bank staff immediately and intervene where necessary to prevent elderly and vulnerable customers from being conned out of what is often their life savings. These criminals often take victims to the bank under duress but we hope the training makes all staff be on the lookout for this despicable crime."

The scheme to train bank and building society staff in this way has the backing of the British Bankers' Association and the Building Society Association and a number of other Local Authorities around the county participating in its implementation.

**ENDS**

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