

## Local retailers warned of credit card fraud

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RETAILERS are being warned to watch out for a credit card con after a family business says it was swindled out of more than £2,000 worth of goods. Buckinghamshire Trading Standards has asked businesses to be on their guard after Abingdon Beds, in neighbouring Oxfordshire, reported being defrauded, Howard Alsworth, owner of Abingdon Beds, in Spring Gardens, Abingdon, said he had been phoned by a man who said he needed beds straight away. Mr Alsworth said: 'As we had them available I took his credit card details over the phone he wanted to split the cost over two cards and got clearance by phone from the credit card companies.

'He said his lads were in the area and would come and collect the beds. When they turned up they didn't have the credit cards, but I thought it was all okay as I'd had clearance from the card companies.'

But the card companies later told Mr Alsworth the cards had since been reported stolen.

He was unable to recoup his losses as he had not got an Imprint of the cards, and the beds were not delivered to the address of the card holders.

'These conmen have left me out of pocket to the tune of £2,250. As a small family business this is a loss I can ill afford,' said Mr Alsworth.

Nigel Strick, head of Trading Standards at Oxfordshire County Council, advised traders to get an imprint of credit cards or deliver to the card holder's address. Jackie Eldridge, Information officer at Buckinghamshire County Council Trading Standards, added: 'We want to remind businesses that they can be vulnerable to this type of theft and they need to be vigilant.'

Help for traders:

Members of a new web-based scheme to help traders stop credit card fraud can check their own online credit card orders against a database of known frauds, as well as contributing information on frauds they have discovered themselves.

Similar to the ring-round scheme shops use to alert each other about shoplifters, the scheme also features tools such as: a way of checking a customer's Internet service provider by IP address; a database of freight forwarding companies so a delivery address can be checked; a link to Companies House; and a check facility for the card issuer. The scheme is currently free and new members can register at [www.early-warning.org.uk](http://www.early-warning.org.uk)

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