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Newcastle Building Society employee receives police recognition for fraud prevention idea

Branch employee commended for helping to stop customers falling victim to scams.

Sheila Hodgson, customer support manager at Newcastle Building Society has been recognised for introducing a new initiative to help customers ‘stop and think’ when withdrawing large sums of money as part of a wider information and prevention campaign against fraud.

Sheila worked with officers to introduce extra questions before customers withdraw cash from the building society and in doing so cleverly provided customers with time and opportunity to stop and think about their transaction.

Working in partnership with the Regional Economic Crime Coordination Centre (RECCC) and police forces across the North East, Newcastle Building Society, is one of a number of partnership organisations working to reduce the threat of fraud.

After introducing the ‘stop and think’ procedure across each of the Society’s 30 high street and community branches, Sheila was presented with one of the first ever RECCC-ognition coin and certificate by Detective Sgt Paddy O’Keefe of the North East Regional Special Operations Unit.

Detective Sgt O’Keefe said: “The risk economic crime poses to the people in our region is huge, threatening all aspects of our everyday lives as those responsible seek to profit from the misery of others. It targets individuals with people being more likely to be victims of fraud than any other crime.

“The RECCC alongside our constituent forces work incredibly hard in the fight against fraud but we know a successful response to the threat requires a united approach from many stakeholders. Newcastle Building Society takes this issue very seriously and continues to develop processes to protect customers.

“That’s why this recognition is well deserved and why we’re so impressed by Sheila’s initiative and the way it’s been introduced across the Society’s branch network. Fraud and financial crime can be a complex issue but the Society’s connection with customers and commitment to their financial

wellbeing means a simple idea can have significant impact and play an important role in keeping the north east safe from the threat of economic crime.”

Stu Fearn, head of customer contact at Newcastle Building Society, said: “We recognise that fraud is not a victimless crime, and this is another example of our commitment to the financial wellbeing of our customers - helping to protect them by providing targeted support and intervention. Our continued work and partnership with NERSOU and RECCC is helping to make a difference in the fight against economic crime across our region.”

Sheila added: “Branch colleagues have a unique relationship with our customers. In the past that’s allowed us to help those on the verge of falling victim to fraud, but also means that although we’ve changed the withdrawal process, the feedback from members has been positive and they are pleased to know we have their best interests at heart.”

ENDS

For further information please contact:

Chris Hoy

External Communications Manager

E: chris.hoy@newcastle.co.uk

M: 07483 452 461