

Credit Cards blamed for suicide

News Story

The widow of a man who killed himself after running up debts of £130,000 on more than 20 different credit cards is blaming card companies for his death.

Richard Cullen, 65, from Trowbridge in Wiltshire, took his life after his debts spiralled out of control.

His wife, Wendy, said he dealt with all the finances and she had no idea about the scale of debts he had built up.

Mrs Cullen said of the card companies: "They shouldn't have let this happen, it's not worth losing your life over."

'Not extravagant'

It is thought Mr Cullen initially used credit cards to pay for daily outgoings after he took time off work to look after his wife, who had been told she had cancer.

When he could not meet the repayments, he started getting new cards to pay off the debts of the others.

"It just built up from there, there weren't any purchases. We live in a tiny house with a small car, he wasn't extravagant," said Mrs Cullen.

She described her husband as a proud man who would not have wanted her to know how badly in debt he was.

"I don't think he could have admitted to anyone the mess he got into," she said.

Checking processes

Sandra Quinn, of the Association for Payment Clearing Services - the industry body for credit card providers, said there were processes in place to stop debts getting out of hand.

"If an individual gets into difficulty, they can talk to their bank or debt-counselling agencies can help," she said.

"We rely on the information that customers give us. And as lenders we share data.

"It is a voluntary code, but the industry is keen on this happening, there is no interest in us lending money to anyone who can't afford it."