

Residents urged to be alert to courier fraud scam

Residents are being warned about a courier fraud scam operating in Norfolk by suspects claiming to be police officers.

In the last few weeks, police have seen a rise in incident where cold-callers will make efforts to defraud victims of money, often stating they need to withdraw large sums in connection with an investigation.

Officers are investigating an incident which happened on Tuesday (6 July) where a woman in West Winch was conned out of £4,200. Following a cold-call from a man claiming to be a police officer, the victim went to her bank and withdrew the money, believing she was helping an investigation into counterfeit money. After withdrawing money, she returned home where a 'courier' collected the cash, and telephoned the victim later on to confirm it was counterfeit.

A second attempt that day is also being investigated after a man from Clenchwarton was cold-called by someone claiming to be from Hertfordshire Police who said they were investigating a theft from the victim's bank account. The man was asked to withdraw £9,000 which would be collected following day. The victim managed to withdraw £2,000 and told a family member about the incident who immediately reported it to police. No money was handed over.

Detective Inspector Richard Weller, from Swaffham CID, urged people to make elderly or vulnerable relatives and neighbours aware of the scam.

He said: "This type of courier fraud is nothing new; suspects will often approach victims under the guise of a police officer, bank or government department, in an effort to win trust and encourage people to go along with the scam.

"They will often use a range of techniques and in these most recent incidents, cold callers claim to be police officers investigating bank account thefts and counterfeit money. These scammers can be really convincing, making the caller feel they are helping a genuine police investigation, compelling them to withdraw the money. Suspects will then arrange to collect the money from the victim.

"More often than not, we're talking large sums of cash into the thousands which is ultimately people's savings and funds they rely on.

"Police officers will never ask you to withdraw money, or send someone to collect money. We know scammers target the elderly and I would urge people to make their family members, friends and neighbours aware of this scam and the warning signs."

Further advice includes:

- Your bank or the police will **NEVER** ask for your PIN, bank card or bank account details over the phone – never give these details to anybody.
- Neither the police nor the banks will send a courier to collect money from you.
- Always request Photo ID and if unsure call the police.
- If you're asked to telephone a bank, then always do it on a different phone to the one you were contacted on.
- Fraudsters will keep the line open and have been known to play ringtones, hold music and a recorded message down the phone so the victim believes they are making a call to a legitimate number. Ensure you can hear a dialling tone before calling police or use a friend or neighbour's telephone instead.
- Do not rush into complying to the scammers demands / requests.
- If you have already given your bank details over the phone or handed your card details to a courier, call you bank straight away to cancel the card

If anyone has received a similar type of telephone call or has any information about these incidents. Contact Norfolk Police on **101** quoting **Operation Radium**.

Alternatively, Contact the independent charity Crimestoppers 100% anonymously on **0800 555 111**.

If you believe a crime is in progress, always call **999**.

For further advice, head to the Action Fraud website: www.actionfraud.police.uk or call 0300 123 2040.