

Courier Fraud - Urgent information from West Mercia Police

West Mercia Police have asked us to circulate this important information about courier fraud.

Please consider disseminating appropriately across your organisations and networks.

Fraudsters are back in action claiming to be from the police, banks and fraud squads in order to extort money from the vulnerable.

There have been a couple of incidents in Hereford where couples in their eighties have been targeted.

One man was conned into withdrawing an amount of cash from his personal bank account after being told his credit cards had been cloned. They then sent out two separate couriers to collect the cash from his home address.

In a second incident they asked for an amount of cash which has been collected by a "courier". Before the individual was about to send over a much larger amount of cash West Mercia Police officers were able to step in and offer the support needed to the victim and prevent the transaction taking place.

Detective Inspector Emma Wright said: "This type of fraud often targets older and more vulnerable people and we would urge everyone to tell someone, by passing on the information about the bogus callers to relatives, friends and neighbours who may not have heard about the local telephone scam in operation.

"There are many aliases' that the imposters use but always remember that **no police officer** from any force or department will ever ask you to hand over money or transfer funds, regardless of their name or unit."

The deception can also be carried out in several ways, such as -

- **A phone caller pretending to be a police officer who is investigating unidentified activity/ fraud in their bank account and that they must cooperate with the 'investigation'.**
- **The victim is then persuaded to withdraw funds and hand them over to the 'investigators', either by some remote means or in person to a courier.**
- **The victim is told that if the bank cashier queries the large withdrawal that they are to say it is for a large purchase e.g. work/repairs in the home.**
- **Alternatively the victim may be asked to hand over bank cards, vouchers or other valuable items. They may also be asked to transfer funds to another account, which is controlled by the fraudsters.**

"These scams can be extremely convincing and manipulative. The fraudsters may give (alleged) crime numbers, investigation details, and job titles. They will always claim that the transaction must be done in secret. The fraudsters condition their victim not to trust bank branch staff, which can make it hard for those staff to help.

"These calls are not genuine and payments should not be made. No legitimate bank/building society, police officer, or business will ever phone you to ask you to give them your card, your PIN, or your cash in the way we've described above.

"Don't trust anyone who calls you about your bank details. Always hang up and wait 10 minutes to ensure the call has disconnected.
