

Warning as North Yorkshire residents falling victim to 'Courier Fraud' scam

North Yorkshire police are warning residents to be extra vigilant after a number of reports have been received in the past week where the victim has been called on the telephone by someone claiming to be an officer from the Metropolitan Police in London. The victim is informed that someone has attempted to use their card to purchase a laptop or similar and as a result their bank account is under threat. The victim is instructed to attend their bank and withdraw all their money in order for a police officer to attend their home address (the courier) who will take their money for 'safe keeping'.

The victim may be further convinced the call is genuine as the fraudsters will tell the victim to call 999 to check they are genuine but do not clear the line so the victim who thinks they have dialled 999 and speaking to the police when in reality they are in fact still speaking to the fraudsters.

The victim is told to attend the bank and withdraw their money. The victim is told they may be challenged at the bank as to why they are withdrawing their money and they are told what to say, for example paying for building work, buying a car etc. The fraudster will claim the bank are involved and there is an undercover police operation in the bank and to say anything will compromise the police operation. The victim is made to think that their cooperation is needed for this police operation. Often the victim will be called by the fraudster prior to attending the bank and be told to keep their phone on whilst they are in the bank. The victim withdraws their money, often tens of thousands of pound which they take home. The fraudster posing as a police officer will attend the home and take the money often using a password agreed between the fraudster and the victim.

Detective Inspector Jon Hodgeon Head of North Yorkshire Police Economic Crime Unit explained:

"This is a sophisticated fraud perpetrated by experienced criminals who convince the victim their bank account is under threat and they need to act quickly to safeguard their money and to assist a police operation to catch criminals.

A police officer will never get in touch and advise you to withdraw, transfer or pay money and neither will a bank or building society. If you receive a call out of the blue by someone claiming to be from the police asking you to withdraw or transfer your money, this is a scam and you must terminate the call immediately"

If the person you are talking to ever asks you to lie to the bank or the police, it is a scam

If you suspect you've been scammed, report it to the police by calling 101 and we will be able to support you as well as protecting others from falling victim to the same fraudsters"