

Police in Suffolk are urging friends, relatives, carers and neighbours to pass on advice to elderly people they care for after five people have been scammed out of almost £30,000.

The 'elaborate' scam which is being carried out by con men and women has now hit Suffolk after sweeping across the Metropolitan and Essex Police Force areas.

Since August, Suffolk Police has received five reports of virtually identical scams where a person calls their elderly victim, purporting that they are a Police Officer calling from The Met or Essex Police.

The 'Police Officer' calls the victim telling them they are from the police investigating fraud on their bank account. On occasions they claim to be working for the victim's bank and they ask for account information including their card number, security number and PIN. Should the resident become suspicious the offender suggests they call 999 or 101 to ask for confirmation the caller is a police officer.

The victim then calls the police, but does not realise that the offender has not hung up so goes straight through to them again. In some cases a female offender comes on the line and pretends to be working for the police control room and verifies the so called officer's details. The caller is then handed back to the original offender who obtains the victims details.

In other cases victims have been told a courier will be sent round to collect their bank card or have even been asked to go to their bank to withdraw large amounts of money which is again collected by courier.

The latest incident in Suffolk happened yesterday, Monday 16 December. A 62 year old woman living in South Ipswich was duped into withdrawing nearly £4,000 from her bank account which was collected by a courier later that day.

Community Safety Manager for Suffolk Police Alan Osborne said: "Fraudsters will try every way possible to scam money out of people and this appears to be one of the latest con tactics they are using.

"The police or banks will never ask for people's bank account details over the phone and should anyone receive this type of call they should hang up immediately.

"We are working with banks, building societies and taxi or courier companies to raise awareness of this particular scam but we are keen to stress to those people who have elderly family members or neighbours to spread the word and talk to them about this type of crime.

Police are issuing the following advice:

- Your bank or the police will never ask for your PIN, bank card or bank account details over the phone – never give these details out.
- The police will never call you and ask you to withdraw money from your account to give to a courier or taxi driver, regardless of how convincing they may seem.
- If you receive such a call leave the landline for at least five minutes to make an outside call. Fraudsters will keep the line open and have been known to play ring tones, hold music and a recorded message down the phone so the victim believes they are making a call to a legitimate number.
- Use a friend's or neighbour's telephone instead.
- Friends, family, carers and neighbours are asked to spread the word to ensure everyone is aware of this scam and what they should do.

If you have been a victim call police on 101 or 999 if you are vulnerable and need police assistance – and remember allow your landline to clear for at least five minutes before you call, or ideally use an alternative line.

Please use the following link to pass useful information to Suffolk Police about any incident.

<http://www.suffolk.police.uk/safetyadvice/reportacrime/tellthepolice.aspx>

**DO NOT USE THIS LINK IN AN EMERGENCY OR IN A SITUATION THAT REQUIRES AN IMMEDIATE POLICE RESPONSE WHEN YOU SHOULD RING 999. Police Direct Team**