**COURIER FRAUD ALERT**

Dial **101** for **Non-Emergencies** Dial **999** for **Emergencies**

Elderly residents are being warned about a phone fraud where victims are being duped out of cash by people posing as police.

West Mercia and Warwickshire Police have recorded 70 of these offences across Worcestershire, Herefordshire, Shrophire and Warwickshire since March this year with unsuspecting victims falling for the scam.

The offenders are targeting older people across both Forces, as part of a national scam which is commonly known as a ‘courier fraud’.

In many cases a person claiming to be a police officer will contact an elderly or vulnerable victim by telephone and inform them that their bank card has been used fraudulently.

The victim will then be tricked into thinking they are either calling or being put through to their bank, but in fact they are still speaking to the fraudsters.

The victim will then disclose banking information and will be instructed to either place their bank cards in an envelope for a courier to collect or attend the local branch of their bank to withdraw a sum of money and pass it to a courier sent by fraudsters. Sometimes the fraudsters use legitimate Taxi companies to make the pick up.

Often elderly victims are unwittingly defrauded of their entire life savings, being left distraught and traumatised in many cases.

Over the last couple of months, the number of offences has escalated, with West Mercia and Warwickshire Police receiving numerous reports from victims across both Force areas.

Detectives are working with local banks/buildings societies and taxi firms as part of the investigation into the fraud and are urging anyone else who may have been a victim to come forward.

They are also repeating warnings to the public, particularly older residents, not to go along with the scam and to report any attempts to police.

**This is a national problem which has reached West Mercia & Warwickshire policing areas**.

DCI Sean Paley said, “This is a heartless and callous fraud with the offenders targeting elderly and vulnerable people who are trusting and willing to help who they think are bona fide police officers”.

“We are urging the public, particularly older people, to be aware of this fraud and not to go along with it. Genuine police would not phone members of the public in this way and certainly would never ask you for your bank details or ask you to send money.

“Because of the nature of the fraud and the vulnerable victims involved it is believed this offence is currently under-reported, therefore we would urge the public to come forward and tell us if they have been contacted by these people.

“We appeal to members of the public, banks and taxi drivers to be on their guard and report any suspicious activity of this nature to the police immediately.”

If you receive a phone call of this nature, police advise you to:

• Do not give out any information and end the phone call immediately. Wait at least five minutes to clear the line from the scammer before making any other calls, or use another phone. Make sure you have a dialing tone.

• Report the offence as soon as possible to police by telephoning 101.

Please remember:

• Your bank will **never** attend your home.

• Your bank and the police will **never** collect your bank card or cash

• Your bank and the police will **never** ask for your PIN.

Anyone with any information about this fraud can contact police

on **101**, quoting **Operation Ardent.**