

From: Gillian Midworth <westhatchpc@outlook.com>
Sent: 26 June 2020 12:51
Subject: Fw: Alert: 24/06/20 9788 Somerset: Warning after phone fraud in Somerset costs victim £13,000

This scam is still catching people out, so please be vigilant and pass on the details to anyone who may be vulnerable to this type of scam.

Regards
Gillian Midworth
Clerk to West Hatch PC

From: Avon and Somerset Police <noreply@notify.avonandsomerset.police.uk>
Sent: 24 June 2020 17:02
To: westhatchpc@outlook.com <westhatchpc@outlook.com>
Subject: Alert: 24/06/20 9788 Somerset: Warning after phone fraud in Somerset costs victim £13,000



24/06/20 9788 Somerset: Warning after phone fraud in Somerset costs victim £13,000

People in Somerset are being reminded to be vigilant of telephone fraudsters following several reports of scams in the past fortnight.

We've been contacted by one person who lost £13,000, while we've received four similar reports this month from others. The five victims live in the area around Chard.

In all five cases the victims received calls from scammers posed as police officers from London. They claimed the victims' money was at risk from a rogue bank employee and asked them to make a substantial withdrawal from their bank, but not tell staff why they wanted to take out such a large amount of cash. Two of the victims hung up on the call and reported the matter to the police.

The other three victims attended their local bank, but in two cases the bank staff felt the circumstances were suspicious and informed Avon and Somerset Police.

In the third instance, the victim took out £13,000 and left the money to be picked up by a male courier, described as white, 5ft 10ins to 6ft, with messy hair – dirty blond to grey hair in colour – dark trousers, dark grey top, logo on the right side and of medium build, with no discernible accent.

The two victims – both women in their 70s – who were prevented from withdrawing the money by their bank, have issued advice to people who may find themselves in a similar situation.

One said: “My advice would be to discuss it with a family member or talk to someone who is close to you before you proceed.”

The second victim said: “I feel very, very stupid. I feel so small, stupid and pathetic.

“I’ve never come into contact with that side of life so it didn’t occur to me that it might be a scam.”

When asked what advice she would give to others who may find themselves in a similar situation, she replied: “Put the phone down and report it to police.”

Neither the police nor the banks will ask you for banking details or PIN numbers on the phone. Similarly, they would never send a courier to collect bank cards or money.

Our message is – don’t discuss your finances with anyone who calls you out of the blue, even if they claim to be a police officer or a representative from a bank fraud department.

Genuine callers will be happy for you to make an appointment to visit them at a bank branch or police station. They will never ask you to withdraw cash on their behalf; arrange for cash to be collected by a courier; ask for details about your bank card; or ask for the PIN on your card.

If you know someone who may be vulnerable to this type of offence, please speak to them and share our crime prevention tips and remind them of the threat from telephone fraudsters.

People who receive a call on their landline and are asked to contact their local police station or bank to verify the caller’s details ideally need to put the receiver down and not touch it for five minutes, just in case the fraudster has kept the line open. Ensure you have a dialling tone before re-using. Ideally use another phone such as a mobile phone or a neighbour’s phone and use 101 to verify the call.

We would also appeal to taxi drivers who are asked to collect parcels – especially from elderly – to be vigilant and contact us if they are suspicious.

DS Louise Sinclair said: “The trusting nature of elderly and vulnerable victims is often preyed on by criminals who target them.

“Under no circumstances should people withdraw cash from their bank accounts as a result of a telephone call, and if you have received a call like this, or ever do so in the future, please do report it so we can put a stop to this crime.

“I can understand why anyone who has lost money to fraudsters in this way may be reluctant to report it because of feeling ashamed or embarrassed, but there is no need to be. We know how devious and cunning these people are.

“Any legitimate bank employee or police officer would never ask you to withdraw money, transfer it to a different account or send a courier to pick up your money. Bank staff will never ask you to reveal your full banking password or PIN and they would never ask you not to tell bank staff why you are withdrawing money.

“Contact your bank immediately if you think you have fallen victim to a scam and report it to Action Fraud.”

Anyone with information about the incidents in Somerset should call 101 and quote reference 5220128467.

More information on protecting yourself from fraud is available on our website and from Action Fraud.

<https://www.avonandsomerset.police.uk/>

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