

The following is a Police Connect message.

Please see below this week's Consumer & scam alerts from Norfolk Trading Standards.

Kind regards

PC Pete Davison  
North Norfolk Community Engagement Officer

## Scam Alert – Telephone cold calls about ‘your recent accident’ – 14 May 2020

We have received a report from a Norfolk resident about telephone cold calls claiming to be about ‘your recent accident’.

The call was displaying a caller ID number using the STD code for Cromer, but this number is highly likely to have been spoofed by the cold caller to appear more local.

Generally, these calls are an attempt to gather personal, vehicle and financial details.

We always advise people to be very wary of claims made during telephone cold calls. If you receive this or a similar call, our advice is **do not** interact with the call and **hang up**.

If you have received a telephone cold call which you believe to be a scam you can report it to us via our partners, the Citizens Advice consumer helpline, on freephone **0808 223 1133**

## Scam Alert – Telephone cold callers claiming to be police officers – 13 May 2020

We are highlighting a warning from Norfolk Police after two elderly North Norfolk residents were targeted by telephone scammers pretending to be police officers.

In the first incident, an elderly couple living at an address in Binham received a telephone call on Monday 4 May, where the caller, who claimed to be a police officer from a Fraud Investigation Team coerced the victims into withdrawing £5,000 from their bank. The cash was later collected from the address by a courier. The couple were later encouraged to withdraw a further £7,000 on Wednesday 6 May. The same courier attended the address to collect the cash.

A second incident was reported when a male victim aged in his 80s and from Fakenham received a telephone call from a man also claiming to be a police officer. The caller told the victim that his bank details had been obtained by someone in London and that he should immediately call 999. The victim, who then believed he had been put through to the police, was told to withdraw a large quantity of money from the bank. The victim was told to keep his phone off the hook until he returned with the cash.

Courier fraud happens when a fraudster contacts a victim by telephone claiming to be a police officer, bank or from a government department, among other agencies. Several techniques will then be adopted in order to convince the victim to hand over their bank details or cash, which may then be passed on to a courier.

Residents are reminded that neither your bank nor the police will ever ask you to withdraw money or purchase items.

Further advice includes:

- Your bank or the police will **never** ask for your PIN, bank card or bank account details over the phone – never give these details to anybody
- Neither the police nor the banks will send a courier to collect money from you
- Always request photo ID and if unsure call the police
- If you're asked to telephone a bank, then always do it on a different phone to the one you were contacted on
- Fraudsters will keep the line open and have been known to play ringtones, hold music and a recorded message down the phone so the victim believes they are making a call to a legitimate number. Ensure you can hear a dialling tone before calling police or use a friend or neighbour's telephone instead
- Never download any software suggested by caller
- Do not rush into complying to the scammers demands/requests
- 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 already given your bank details over the phone or handed your card details to a courier, call you bank straight away to cancel the card

Norfolk Police are urging members of the community to contact family and friends, particularly elderly relatives, to ensure they are aware of these scams.

Police are keen to hear from anyone who may have received a similar type of telephone call or have any information about these incidents. Contact Norfolk Police on **101** quoting crime reference number 36/30104/20 or 36/29830/20.

Alternatively, contact the independent charity Crimestoppers 100% anonymously on **0800 555 111**.

In an emergency always call **999**.

## **Information Alert – Been offered a free trial? Make sure you know what you're signing up for – 13 May 2020**

The Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) and Advertising Standards Authority (ASA) are reminding people to take care when signing up to 'free' trials.

In these challenging times, with many of us staying at home, some businesses are offering 'free' trials of their products or services. These can be very tempting when so many of us have more time on our hands or are trying to juggle our work while also attempting to fill our children's time. But there can be problems if we later find out we have signed up to more than we bargained for.

These top tips tell you some of the things to look out for.

Ask yourself:

- What am I agreeing to in order to claim this offer
- Do I have to provide my payment details? If yes – stop and ask why
- Is the trial really 'free'? Or could I have money taken from my bank account or card
- If there can be a charge, how much it is and when the payment will be taken
- What exactly will I get in exchange for that charge
- Is this something I would be happy to pay for in future

- What must I do to stop the payment and by when
- If I do get charged, what does the company say about giving me my money back
  - If I do get charged and do nothing, what happens next? Might the company take more payments in the future

If you think an ad is misleading, bring it to the attention of the ASA via their [online reporting form](#).

If you have signed up to a paid contract by mistake after a 'free' trial, complain to the company concerned. If you see a charge on your bank/payment card statement you didn't expect you can also contact your bank or card issuer for help.

If you need further advice, contact us via our partners the Citizens Advice consumer helpline on freephone **0808 223 1133**.

## **Scam Alert – Text messages claiming ‘Someone who came in contact with you tested positive or has shown symptoms for COVID-19’ – 12 May 2020**

Our colleagues at the Chartered Trading Standards Institute have received reports of text messages circulating claiming that ‘Someone who came in contact with you tested positive or has shown symptoms for COVID-19’.

The message also contains a link which if followed goes to a bogus website which attempts to gather personal details.

The UK Government is currently trialling a new COVID-19 coronavirus contact tracing app on the Isle of Wight. Many expect that the app will roll out to the rest of the country later this year.

If you receive this or a similar text message **do not** click on any links and report it to Action Fraud on **0300 123 2040** or via the [Action Fraud website](#).

You can also report scam text messages to us via our partners the Citizens Advice consumer helpline on freephone **0808 223 1133**.