

Essex Police Fraud Alert System



11th September 2020

COURIER FRAUD BACK ON THE RISE

Essex Police ran a successful operation in January resulting in a number of arrests for offences known as courier fraud. This is where people receive phone calls from criminals claiming to be police officers and requesting that residents withdraw money from their bank accounts, often asking them to lie about the reasons for the withdrawal.



These callers claim to be from a variety of police forces, including Bedfordshire, Suffolk and 'Hammersmith Police'. Recently, callers have stated that someone has been arrested who has provided the recipients address as their own, or has bank cards belonging to the recipient in their possession. They will then advise that the recipient contact their bank—often keeping the line open so that the criminals can pretend to be a bank employee. They will then arrange another criminal to act as a 'courier' to come and collect the cash or bank cards.

If you are unsure whether a call is genuine, remember:

- Hang up**—feel empowered to hang up and call back on a trusted number (such as the one on the back of your bank card). Never use a number provided by the caller. If possible, use a different phone, or wait five minutes before calling back to ensure that the line has disconnected. You have the right to confirm who you're talking to.
- Talk about it**—talk to a friend or family member about it. They will quickly tell you whether it sounds suspicious.
- Tell2**— these criminals target the elderly and most vulnerable members of society, but awareness is key to beating them! Tell2 empowers you to discuss crime prevention messages with others, who otherwise may never know. Tell2 people and ask them to do the same. An unbroken chain of 26 tell2'ers would reach 67 million people!



If you or someone you know is vulnerable and has been a victim of courier fraud, please call Essex Police on 101. Report fraud or attempted fraud by contacting Action Fraud at www.actionfraud.police.uk or call 0300 123 2040.