

## Over £200,000 lost to courier fraud in Norfolk

### The police will never...



Contact you to ask for your PIN or bank details



Ask to withdraw cash to hand over to them for safe-keeping



Ask you transfer money out of your account for fraud reasons



Send someone to your home to collect cash, PINs, or cards

People over the age of 70 are being disproportionately targeted by courier fraud, new data from the City of London Police reveals.

Data from the National Fraud Intelligence Bureau, run by the City of London Police, the national lead force for fraud, revealed that people in their 70s or older lost more than £12.6 million to courier fraud last year, 77 per cent of all money stolen by this type of fraud.

The split of fraud reports made by men and women aged 70 or above was 37 per cent and 63 per cent. Shockingly, data shows 153 reports were made by people in their 90s with one report being from someone aged over 100. In the last year (May 2022 to May 2023), 1,587 reports of courier fraud were made by people over the age of 70 across the UK. There were a total of 1,847 reports of courier fraud.

The top areas, where 43 per cent of all reports were received from victims, were the Metropolitan, Surrey, Sussex, Thames Valley and Hampshire police areas. In the last year, a total of £16.3 million was lost to courier fraud. Action Fraud received 39 reports in Norfolk the past year with victim's losing £206,680.

Reports to Action Fraud, also run by the City of London Police, identified a link of courier fraudsters targeting locations such as retirement homes and villages, care homes and buildings that provided assisted living, often targeting some of the country's most vulnerable and oldest members of society.

**Detective Chief Inspector Lee Parish, from the Fraud Operations team at City of London Police, said:**

“Courier fraud is a devastating crime that preys on vulnerable and often older people. Millions of pounds of hard-earned pensions and savings are being stolen each year and we are concentrating efforts to stop courier fraud at the source.

“We've seen a growing trend of courier fraud taking place in and around retirement villages, care homes and assisted living accommodation. We're asking family members and staff supporting older people across the UK to be vigilant, especially for incoming phone calls to residents, couriers arriving by motorbike or taxi and to any visitors who unexpectedly arrive.

“Banks or police officers will never send a courier to pick up cash, bank cards or pin codes from individuals and we would encourage anyone who thinks they are being targeted to report it using Action Fraud and also reporting separately to their bank. If there is a crime currently taking place, you should always call 999.”

The City of London Police led an intensification period on operational activity to target those who commit courier fraud. Additional resources were used, facilitated by City of London Police, to scale up both existing and new investigations that resulted in multiple warrants executed across the country.

### **What is courier fraud?**

Courier fraud is a sophisticated scam that preys on the trust and vulnerability of individuals. The perpetrators often employ cunning tactics to deceive victims into believing they are assisting the police or employees from their bank. This type of fraud typically begins with a phone call or email, where the fraudsters pose as bank officials, police officers, or other authority figures.

Once they establish contact, the fraudsters manipulate their victims with convincing stories, often claiming that there has been fraudulent activity on their bank accounts. They will try to create a sense of urgency and coerce the victims into complying with their demands.

One common tactic in courier fraud involves convincing victims to withdraw large sums of money from their bank accounts. The fraudsters instruct the victims to place the cash in an envelope or bag and hand it over to a courier who will visit their home to collect it.

Courier fraudsters have also been known to coerce victims into using mini cabs and taxi services where they are then sent to jewellers to purchase high-value items. Reports have also shown that victims have been sent to foreign exchange bureaus, where they are instructed to electronically transfer money for “safe-keeping”.

Another variation of courier fraud involves convincing victims to hand over their bank cards, PIN numbers, or other sensitive information such as answers to security questions. The fraudsters claim that they need these details to verify the legitimacy of the victim's account or to assist in their investigation. Once the victims disclose this information, the fraudsters gain access to their funds and can carry out unauthorised transactions

To stay safe and protect yourself, remember:

- **Your bank or the police will never** call and ask you to verify your personal details or PIN. If you get a call asking you to do this, hang up, wait a few minutes and call your bank on a number you know to be genuine, such as the one on the back of your card
- **Your bank or the police will never** send a courier to your home to collect your cash, bank cards, PINs, or any other valuable goods. Any requests to do so are part of a scam
- **The police will not** contact you out of the blue and ask you to participate in an investigation that requires you to withdraw money from your bank, or to purchase high value goods, such as jewellery or gold

Remember, staying cautious and sceptical can go a long way in protecting yourself from courier fraud. Take the time to verify information, seek advice from trusted sources, and never rush into making financial decisions under pressure.

If you think you've been a victim of fraud, contact your bank immediately and report it to Action Fraud online at [actionfraud.police.uk](https://actionfraud.police.uk) or by calling 0300 123 2040, or call Police Scotland on 101.

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