



CCTV issued as police hunt callous conmen

Police in York and Harrogate are asking members of the public to help identify suspects who have conned elderly people into handing over their bank or credit cards.

Detectives have issued CCTV images of some of the suspects who are described as charming and friendly as they convince elderly people to part with their bank cards and personal identification (pin) numbers. The callous tricksters call up their victims on the phone and pretend to be from their bank or a utility company and claim that there has been fraud committed against the victim's bank account or that they have not paid a bill. They then offer to send someone to the victim's house to pick up their bank card to enable them to sort out the fraud or to settle the bill. At some point during their conversations they persuade the unsuspecting victim to give them their pin number.

The conmen struck in Harrogate and York in late June and early July and have succeeded in stealing thousands of pounds after going to banks and travel agencies to withdraw money using their victim's bank cards. Police issued an appeal at the time warning residents to be on their guard. Police have now issued CCTV footage of some of the suspects captured as they have used the stolen cards to withdraw cash and attempted to buy goods.

Detective Sergeant Lydia Davenport of Harrogate CID, said: "These people are very plausible and charming when they contact the elderly people and it is easy to see how they can be convinced by what they are saying. In reality they are preying on elderly people's vulnerability and trusting nature. There are a number of suspects involved who go to some lengths to disguise their identity, including dressing up as the opposite sex. We are determined to catch them and bring them to justice. I am therefore asking for the public's help as we continue our investigations. Firstly, I would ask that if you recognise the suspects from the images or know who they may be, to contact the police as a matter of urgency. Secondly, anyone who sees any suspicious activity or vehicles in their neighbourhood, please alert the police by calling 101." The CCTV shows one suspect in a bank and a jewellers store, one in a travel agency and one attempting to withdraw cash at a cash machine.

Anyone who believes they know who the people are, is urged to contact North Yorkshire Police on 101 and pass information to force control room. If you prefer to remain anonymous, you can pass information to Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111. Officers from local Safer Neighbourhood Teams will be delivering leaflets to elderly residents to raise awareness of the scam and to remind them not to give their bank details to anyone. Please see below link.

Relatives, friends and neighbours of older people are asked to reinforce the message not to hand over their bank details or answer their door to anyone they don't know.

Five offences have been reported in Harrogate and two in York.

Link to moving CCTV footage: <http://youtu.be/4zWhKcmCg74>