

Warning after fraudsters impersonate police in phone calls

Residents are being urged to be vigilant of callers claiming to be from the police after a pensioner was defrauded in Dover.

The victim, who is in his eighties, received a phone call on Wednesday 10 February 2021 from a man claiming to be from 'Hammersmith Police'.

The man claimed police needed help catching criminals and gave him a number to ring if he wanted to check the call was legitimate.

The victim called the number, but spoke to another fraudster, who convinced him to transfer two payments totalling more than £15,000 into an account as part of a purported police operation.

The fraud was one of five similar calls reported to Kent Police, all to victims in the Dover and Folkestone area, on Wednesday 10 February. In the other incidents, no money was transferred to the caller.

All of the incidents are being investigated by Kent Police, who are warning anyone contacted by similar callers not to transfer money and to report it at the first opportunity.

Detective Sergeant Marc Cananur, of the Kent and Essex Serious Crime Directorate, said: 'A police officer will never ask you to pay or transfer money over the phone and would never ask you to lie as part of a supposed investigation.'

'Never give out your personal information in response to an incoming call, particularly if the caller is asking you to do something that will affect you financially.'

'If somebody rings you asking for this information, do not give it to them. Instead, hang up the phone and call a trusted number, if possible from a different phone, or wait at least five minutes to ensure the line has cleared and you are not still talking to the same fraudster or an accomplice.'

'Contact your bank immediately if you think you may have been scammed and also report the incident to Action Fraud.'

Anyone with information about any of the Dover and Folkestone incidents is asked to contact Kent Police on 01843 222289, quoting reference 46/22157/21, or Action Fraud on 0300 123 2040.

You can also contact the independent charity Crimestoppers anonymously by calling 0800 555 111 or using the anonymous online form at [Crimestoppers-uk.org](https://www.crimestoppers-uk.org)