



Retailers
Against Crime

Gift Card Scam

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There have been increased reports of members of the public being cold called by fraudsters claiming to be officials from various government departments advising they have an outstanding debt to a government agency such as HMRC (Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs) or DWP (Department of Work and Pensions) and also requesting amounts to be paid to unlock a PPI claim.

The caller (fraudster) thereafter requests settlement of the alleged debt by means of purchasing gift cards such as iTunes or store gift cards and gaming vouchers. As the majority of victims are mostly elderly and vulnerable persons they typically feel intimidated and threatened by such a call. The fraudster does not require to have physical control over the card/voucher, merely the identifiable code on the rear to have control of the cash amount. Victims are requested to attend at a local supermarket/store to purchase the gift cards/vouchers and on return will have further contact with the fraudster at which time they are instructed to reveal the identifier code to the caller. Incidents have been reported of victims being scammed out of thousands of pounds at any one time. Many stores have been very proactive in their efforts to take preventative measures to safeguard their elderly and vulnerable customers and have deterred attempts to purchase cards recently.

Victims are frequently threatened by the fraudster they do not pay the amount requested.

Please ensure ALL of your staff are aware of this scam and when attempts are made to purchase high value amounts of any type of gift card or gaming voucher please ask the customers if they are making the purchase to pay a debt and if so advise them to contact the Police as it is a scam.

Please be aware that legitimate organisations and Government Departments will never ask for any debt to be settled over the phone with gift cards or vouchers.

Please circulate and raise awareness of this scam. If you have or you know someone who has been targeted please contact the police on 101.