

On Tuesday 6 February, police officers in North Worcestershire from local patrol and the CID Proactive Team arrested two people on suspicion of fraud.

Two men, in their 20's and 30's were detained and arrested when they visited a house in Stourport. It is believed their intention was to pretend they were 'couriers' who were to collect thousands of pounds from a victim they had conned into believing the police required they hand over money as part of an investigation. The victim was told the serial numbers on the bank notes were fake and they needed to hand the money over.

Courier Fraud, the act of defrauding people by falsely claiming police officers require victims withdraw money from their bank as part of a police investigation, is a scam engineered by organised crime gangs currently targeting vulnerable people in North Worcestershire and across the force area.

Detective Inspector Colin Berry said: "Both men were arrested as part of our ongoing operation and investigation into recent courier fraud attempts on elderly and vulnerable people.

"The victim contacted us believing they had been conned into thinking they needed to handover £5,000. Officers visited the house as part of the investigation and to assist with safeguarding and support with the victim when two men arrived, believed to be couriers to collect cash."

"In cases such as this, individuals have been pretending to be police officers in attempts to get people, usually elderly and more vulnerable members of our communities, to visit their banks and withdraw large sums of money. The criminal gang then send a 'courier', to the victim's house to collect the money. It is all part of an elaborate lie about their bank under investigation and they can be very convincing.

"These people are cowards and spiteful criminals, preying on those often too scared to say no to someone they think is a police officer.

"These arrests are part of a much broader police operation and I want to reassure the public that we are doing all we can to tackle the organised gang of criminals and to bring them to justice.

"I would urge people to make sure their elderly relatives, neighbours, customers and friends are aware of this scam and to remind them please that **no police officer will ever call them and ask for their money**, no matter how convincing the person on the telephone may appear. If they do receive this type of scam call, hang up, wait 10 minutes and then call us on 101 and report it.

"If the crime is in progress, please call 999 immediately.

"If you think you have been a victim of this fraud then please, don't be embarrassed, call us and tell us and we will investigate."