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NEWS RELEASE

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S; Warning after bogus 'police officer' scams pensioner

Police are again urging people to be vigilant after a pensioner was conned out of thousands of pounds while another had a 'lucky escape' by men posing as police officers.

On Monday 20 October, an 81-year-old woman from the Bury St Edmunds area was contacted by phone by a man claiming that he was a police officer. He said that someone had tried to access her bank account and she would therefore need to withdraw the cash so that it could be checked.

The bogus police officer made several phone calls, instructing the victim not to tell anyone about his requests because he was working undercover and saying he would book a taxi for her so that she could bring him the money. The woman refused and told a friend after which police were contacted. No money was handed over.

On Thursday 23 October, a 77-year-old woman from Shotley also received a telephone call from a man purporting to be a police officer. He claimed that bank staff were trying to steal all her money from her account and, in order to protect it, she should withdraw it all and hand it over to him. Again, she was told not to tell anyone and a taxi was booked for her. She got the taxi to her bank where she withdrew money, before travelling to London where she handed over £4,000 to a man.

Detectives investigating both crimes are reminding people not to divulge bank account details, PINs or withdraw any cash for the police.

DI David Giles said: "If you have vulnerable or elderly family, friends, or neighbours, please take the time to make sure they are aware never to give out personal information over the phone to people they don't know – especially bank details.

"The police or your bank will never ask for this information on the phone so if you do get a call like this please hang up immediately and leave five minutes before reporting it to the police, as the fraudsters may stay on the line.

"We will also never ask to take money from people so please don't hand over cash to anyone claiming to be working for the police."

Suffolk police officers have spoken to both women and are currently carrying out investigations. If you believe that you or someone you know may have been affected by a scam such as this, or similar, please call the police on 101 or 999 if it is an emergency.