

Doorstep crime warning



Police officers in Edinburgh are warning people – particularly the elderly – to be on their guard against fraudsters who commit ‘doorstep crime’, after a number of incidents in recent weeks in which people have lost up to £12,000.

The fraudsters typically turn up unannounced offering to complete minor property repairs and, having gained access to the property, tell the occupier of a woodworm infestation. They then offer to treat the ‘problem’ for an inflated sum and pressure is placed on the occupier to have the unnecessary ‘work’ carried out. The suspects have even driven victims to the bank to withdraw cash.

Detective Constable Jim Philp, who is leading the enquiry, said: “We have had reports from across the city, with victims aged from 74 to 95. It is clear that these fraudsters are targeting the most elderly and vulnerable members of our society, and have stolen sums ranging from £50 to £12,000 with most losses being in the thousands.

“This is a despicable crime, and I while we have had around a dozen reports of fraud and attempted fraud in recent weeks, there could be many more people out there who have fallen victim to their cruel tricks.

“They seem to be operating in a gang of three and have been described as driving ‘Transit’-type vans, or smaller car-derived vans with ladders on their roofs.

“I would urge anyone who has any information about this type of criminality to contact us, and also warn anyone who is approached on their doorstep by people claiming to carry out work not to engage with them, but to call us on 101. You should never be pressurised into having work done on your home

without getting competing quotes from tradespeople you have selected and invited to your home.”