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Crime Prevention Events and Scams Awareness

**Paul Dowling, Strategic Director, Communities and Environment, Gateshead
Council**

Purpose of the report

This report is to notify the committee of current education events taking place in the region in conjunction with Northumbria Police and Barclays Bank as well as recent scams statistics including a live case study from the North East Region.

1. Trading standards are working with Northumbria Police's Crime Prevention Team and visiting local Barclays branches to offer tips about staying safe online.
2. Community events have been organised and are aimed to help consumers be better informed and protect themselves against fraudsters.
3. Officers are offering advice on a host of issues including
 - banking fraud and scams,
 - spotting fake emails,
 - buying safely online,
 - rogue traders and
 - postal fraud.
4. They have also discussed doorstep crime prevention including courier fraud, distraction burglary and cold calling.
5. Information is also given to staff employed by Barclays on how to deal with unusual activity should a consumer attend a branch to withdraw large amounts of cash which is out of the ordinary.
6. Statistics circulated from the National Trading Standards Scams Team indicate that the average age of scam victims is 73. The total detriment reported nationally is in the region of £15,950,720.75. This equates to an average detriment per person based on the number of scam victims to £1,076.81.
7. A victim from Hartlepool was featured in the National Trading Standards Scams Team newsletter where they had bought shocking amounts of chocolate in an effort to claim a prize. She had gone from having a positive balance in her bank account to being overdrawn and unable to pay her rent or feed herself. It transpired she had been responding to prize draw letters from a number of catalogues for a three year period and had spent around £20k.
8. A Truecall Care unit was fitted to this consumers home. It was locked down to only allow the unit to make calls and to receive them from trusted callers which

had an immediate effect on the number of calls that were received and the state of mind of the consumer.

9. The report from trueCall shows that she was receiving around 70 nuisance calls per month and during the worst month 121 were received.

10. A family member managed to claim back around £12k from the banks and have taken control of her finances.



Recommendation

11. The Committee is asked to note the information and refer any vulnerable residents to trading standards.

Contact: Tracey Johnson, Gateshead Council on 0191 4333934 or email
traceyjohnson@gateshead.gov.uk
