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National initiative comes to the rescue of Moray scam victims

A number of people in Moray who have fallen victim to postal scams have got their money back thanks to a national initiative.

Over the past few weeks, 15 items of mail posted in Moray in response to scams have been intercepted by the national scams team as part of a much larger seizure.

Several of the envelopes included cheques, postal orders or bank card details.

The national scams team – part of National Trading Standards - forwarded them to Moray Council’s trading standards staff who are in the process of returning the mail to the senders.

“This is the first batch of mail we have had returned to us and the total value of the orders was just over £100,” said trading standards officer Stuart Duncan.

“But that is really only the tip of the iceberg and doesn’t reflect the scale of the exploitation of vulnerable victims. Nearly all the victims to whom we are returning the mail are in their 70s or older.”

He added: “The only sure way not to get caught out is to put scam mail where it belongs – in the bin – and not reply to it. If you think that a friend or family member has been the victim of a scam, please contact the Citizens Advice Consumer Service on 03454 04 05 06.”

Most of the mail from Moray which was intercepted by the national scams team related to bogus prize draws.

In addition, nearly 30 householders in Moray are being contacted as part of a joint initiative set up last year by Royal Mail and trading standards at a national level to encourage postal staff to be on the alert for residents who they suspect may be the victims of scam mail.

Staff are asked to look out for frequent or unusual deliveries to residential addresses and to inform their managers if they suspect the deliveries are scam-related.

Potential victims identified in this way are contacted by trading standards to provide the appropriate advice and assistance.

Mr Duncan said: “One elderly man we have been assisting paid out more than £400 in one month alone in scams. We don’t know how long he has been replying to scam mail but we believe it is around five years.”

* Stuart Duncan pictured with some of the returned mail

Moray Council area stretches from Tomintoul in the south to the shores of the Moray Firth, from Keith in the east to Forres in the west. The council and its 4,500 employees respond to the needs of 92,500 residents in this beautiful part of Scotland, which nestles between Aberdeenshire and the Highlands.

Headquartered in Elgin, the administrative capital of Moray.

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