

Targeting scams and frauds in North Yorkshire:

Ruth Andrews, Head of Investigations &
Safeguarding, Trading Standards

Forms of financial abuse:

- **Doorstep crime and distraction burglaries**
- **Scam mail** – lottery / prize draws, pills.
- **“Boiler room” / investment frauds** – diamonds, wine, land, shares etc
- **Abuse by family members, carers and POAs**
- Other vulnerable adults
- **Abuse by those in a position of trust**
- **Romance frauds**
- **Courier frauds, on-line frauds**
- Scale of the problem?



Please help me if you are able
I have suffered a serious collapse at
Home and I am now unable to drive
my car for another 2 weeks at least.
This makes it difficult to get to the
Post Office with an eleven mile round
trip for stamps etc but I hope that
I can make the time table.

Kindest regards and may I say
- that I have always been very happy
with my purchases from
"My Shopping Corner."



North Yorkshire
County Council

Many Thanks to You for being so patient &
I am in no position to ignore a wonderful
prize of much needed money

My Dear Wife has been very ill for a
long time. Because of her condition
I must give her as much attention as
I am able. I see this as a Privilege & be
able to do so.

Before the illness, about ten years ago
we enjoyed a very happy life in a beautiful
country house in a beautiful part of North Yorkshire.
Despite the address, Laxingham is about 40 miles
from York City. Life is now quite hard and
to win a large sum of Money would help what we
have left to be enjoyable.

I hope that I will soon be sending You my way
of saying THANK YOU.

That astral child must not remain "glued" to you for two reasons:

- 1 - That deprives you of good things because he is involuntarily feeding off all the energy that is being transmitted to you by the astral forces.
- 2 - He deserves to be free because he does not enjoy being blocked like that. He is sad to be depriving you of your rewards and would like to be able to help you turn the page and experience the sweeter, wonderful and happy life that you deserve.

So as you can see, I am writing to you today in order to help you free that child. I am here to support you and to accompany you on that journey, but also to guide you and to show you the way.. With my help, you cannot fail, and I guarantee you that you will succeed in freeing him.

THAT CHILD WILL BE FREE IN JUST 48 HOURS!

*Today you just have to agree to my help,
let me prepare a ritual in your name, and agree to receive
The Liberation Rattle that you will be able to use when
you follow my instructions for freeing your child!*

Once you have carried out that great liberation, you will be able to receive all the good luck, happiness and fortune you deserve, and your child will be at peace. He will no longer be "glued" to you and as a result he will no longer have to feed off the good energy directed at you! You will be free to become rich, to experience happiness, and above all **TO RECEIVE THE 8 MILLION POUNDS that I will help you win in the next 30 days!**

For the time being, you have to act fast. You must agree to my help to free your child, and once your good deed has been done, you can focus on your fortune and on the 8,000,000 pounds that await you.

I am counting on you to act fast. Please, do not waste any more time because your child is counting on you.

Your sincere and devoted friend,

Stella Angelstone

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Operation Tapir:

EMST THURSDAY @Pennington

INVESTIGATES

...From the fishy

YOU can help bust rogue trader gangs

Local hero shows value of vigilance over targeting of elderly



NICKED (Clockwise from top left) George Flannigan, Shaun Doyle, Andrew Hardy, William Stewart, James and Paul Masterton, Graham Thom and Mark Genery

IT'S a crying shame there are so many rogue traders that I can regularly run a "Cowboy of the Week".

We can all help fight these bottom feeders - all we have to do is keep an eye out for people who might be targeted by them.

If you see a suspicious builder's van outside the home of a vulnerable neighbour, don't be afraid to ask questions. This sort of well-intentioned interference is the last thing that cowboys want, and just before Christmas it helped nail an eight-strong gang.

The investigation began after an 89-year-old man was driven three times in the gang's van to banks in Darlington to transfer a total of £17,000. A concerned member of the public who was in the bank on the final occasion overheard the transaction and called the police.

The case was passed to Operation

Gauntlet, a multi-agency safeguarding team based at North Yorkshire County Council Trading Standards.

A surveyor examined the man's roof for trading standards and valued the work at just £600, including £400 for scaffold hire, calling it "unnecessary, incomplete and inadequate".

The investigation identified more victims - a man aged 75 who paid £18,500 for roofing work and a 73-year-old who was hit for £10,700 and has since died, and a 77-year-old man who lost £9,500.

Two people initially arrested for money laundering refused to name accomplices, leading to a prolonged and ultimately successful fraud investigation.

His Honour Judge Morris said in sentencing the gang at Teesside Crown Court: "I've seen the victims and the impact it has had upon them.

They are people in the late coverings of their lives, who are only confused. It is quite clear there was deliberate targeting of them because they were very vulnerable, frail, fearful, forgetful and over-trusting."

George Flannigan, 25, of Milnathort, Scotland, was jailed for three years 11 months. Shaun Doyle, 33, of Darlington, got three years five months; and Andrew Hardy, 32, of no fixed address, got three years three months.

William Stewart, 23, of Holmesdale, Trarllers Stn, York, got two years nine months, as did Mark Genery, 39, of Stockton, while Graham Thom, 27, of Turriff, Scotland, got one year 11 months.

Paul Masterton, 67, of Newcastle,

admitted forgery and his son James admitted money laundering. They were each given 250 hours unpaid work.

North Yorkshire councillor Andrew Loe said after the case: "This has been the most complex investigation we have ever undertaken, but we were determined to get justice for these victims."

Proceeds of Crime action against the culprits is underway.

It's worth pointing out that a 91-year-old man would also have fallen victim, but worried neighbours phoned the police.

So one of my wishes for 2019 is for more busybodies like those nosy neighbours and the concerned customer in the bank to speak up if they are suspicious.

A couple of questions from local heroes like these is all it takes to prevent someone from losing their savings, and to set in motion the wheels of justice.

“Customer overheard gang in the bank and called police”



See faces of cowboy builders sent down for roof repair scam



A 'DESPICABLE' duo have been jailed after preying on vulnerable victims and defrauding them of more than £10,000 in property repair scams.

A lengthy operation led by North Yorkshire County Council's Trading Standards team ended in the sentencing of Ricky Smith and William Gaskin, who will each serve three years and nine months in prison after pleading guilty to conspiring to defraud elderly and disabled people.

The pair were sentenced at Thessida Crown Court following an investigation spearheaded by the family of an elderly North Yorkshire woman who wrote them cheques for £4,000 for work that should have cost £2,000.

The court heard Smith and Gaskin pretended to be the wife of about 80, who paid them £10,000 for £1,000 worth of work, and another elderly couple who paid £26,000 for work that should have cost £2,000.

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The family uncovered the cheques after the 86-year-old was admitted to hospital and flagged up concerns that eventually saw the multi-agency Operation Gaudium uncover victims UK-wide.

'Despicable' duo jailed for defrauding elderly people

By Joanna Morris
Staff Reporter
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Smith, from a travellers' site in Castlethorpe and Gaskin, of a site in Lincolnshire, plead guilty to conspiring to defraud the elderly woman - who lived alone in Flay - and others. The woman died before the pair could face justice, while another victim - a recent school leaver - became suicidal.

Elsewhere, Smith and Gaskin targeted a disabled couple in their 60s, who paid them £10,000 for £1,000 worth of work, and another elderly couple who paid £26,000 for work that should have cost £2,000.

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FRIDAY: Ricky Smith and the accomplice William Gaskin have been locked up for three years and nine months after admitting to a property repair scam.

individuals, you use them. You and your families should be advised of what you have done. Just look at those people who you have ripped off - without thought or compassion, and imagine if they were your own elderly parents and someone like you was taking advantage of them.

"When you persuaded them to let you carry out work, you went back and back and continued to go back until almost all their money was gone."

A statement from the Flay woman's family said their relief over the pair pleading guilty was topped with sadness, knowing their relative had passed away without knowing that justice had been done.

It added: "The last two years have been stressful and upsetting, knowing and seeing what they had done was so cruelly cruel. We felt angry, vulnerable and older members of the family were scared and intimidated."

Roofer who targeted elderly and vulnerable in Scarborough jailed



Christopher Dunne

0 comment

A ROOFER who targeted elderly and vulnerable people, charging thousands of pounds for work that often did not need carrying out, has been jailed after a successful prosecution by North Yorkshire's Trading Standards team.

Patrick Christopher Dunne, 20, of Griff Park Travellers' Site, Nuneaton, Warwickshire, was sentenced to two years and nine months at York Crown Court on Friday, 21 June, after pleading guilty to 34 counts of fraud and consumer protection offences. He also admitted laundering the proceeds of his offending.



Rogue traders frightened customers into paying bills

By Neil Hunter
Crime Correspondent
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A GANG of rogue traders were jailed for a total of 14 years for defrauding house holders and businesses across large parts of northern England while doing tarmac works at their premises.

The men - Shaun Thomas Sr, 50, his sons Shaun Thomas Jr, 26, and Henry Harley Thomas, 25, all of Holmesdale travellers' site, Eborac, York, and Malin Road, Darlington - and their associate Thomas Mounsey, 66, of Durham Road, Bishop Auckland, were convicted after a three-week trial.

Shaun Thomas Sr, Henry Thomas and Thomas Mounsey were also convicted at Thessida Crown Court of money laundering offences in relation to the proceeds of the offending.

The investigation was conducted by Operation Gaudium, the multi-agency safeguarding team based at North Yorkshire County Council's Trading Standards.

It began in July 2016 after complaints were received from residents about false statements being made by the men when they cold-called offering tarmac services.

Prosecutor Richard Bennett told the court they claimed they were working for the Highways Agency or local councils doing legitimate road repairs nearby, but had material left over so could do driveways and parking areas at a knock-down price.

Thinking they were getting a good deal and were concerned with legitimate traders, the residents unwittingly agreed to employ the fraudsters.

Mr Bennett said work was carried out to areas which were not agreed to, and when jobs were completed the men demanded significantly higher prices - in most cases, the prices were inflated tenfold.

In the first report to police on completion of the job, he was presented with an invoice for more than £20,000, and when he queried the price and refused to pay, he was bombarded with threatening phone calls from Henry Thomas and Thomas Mounsey.

In another case, a disabled woman living near Fickersing, North Yorkshire, agreed to work on her parking area after calculating from the quoted price that the final bill would be around £200. On completion of the job, he was presented with an invoice for more than £20,000, and when he queried the price and refused to pay, he was bombarded with threatening phone calls from Henry Thomas and Thomas Mounsey.



BEHIND BARS: Clockwise, Henry Harley Thomas, Shaun Thomas Sr, Shaun Thomas Jr and Thomas Mounsey, rogue traders who were jailed for a total of 14 years for fraud

The job was finished, she was told the price was £2,000 plus VAT. She described being shocked and telling the men they were mistaken. They insisted the price was right, and told her she needed to pay that day, but if she paid in cash they wouldn't charge the VAT. She had to borrow £2,000 from a relative to pay the bill and described feeling "totally ripped off".

The men traded as Frankly Direct Ltd, HRT Trading Ltd and TNT Asphalt Services, using business addresses in Darlington.

Jailing each of the gang to three-and-a-half years, Judge Sean Morris said: "I have had to see witnesses eye-to-eye in this case who were scared. They'd been deceived by the fraudsters."

"Where people didn't come up with what you wanted, if necessary a lot of pressure was applied. It was as near as dammit to a blackmail case or robbery."

Last 3 years:

- 44 defendants prosecuted for fraud, conspiracy to defraud, money laundering and distraction burglaries.
- All guilty pleas, no trials, no victims to court - until November 2018! Four convicted after trial.
- 87 years 5 mths imprisonment to date.
- Criminal Behaviour Orders to control future behaviour.
- Proceeds of Crime Act confiscation cases to compensate victims.

Last 3 years:

- Now over 630 No Cold Call Zones in the County.
- True Call devices installed for high risk victims / potential victims.
- Hundreds of safeguarding visits undertaken to victims of scam mail.
- Talks, presentations and community events, bank sessions etc.

On-going challenges:

- On-going funding and continuation of team.
- Scale of the problem and capacity.
- GP Co-operation.
- Financial sector.
- Cases where “victim” has capacity and continues to be defrauded.

Questions?

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