

Today, a local resident became the victim of a card scam at Tescos in Kettering.

The lady in question had paid for goods both at Tesco pharmacy and the main checkout. Having left the store, unloaded the shopping into her car, and returned the trolley to the trolley park, she was asked by a 40-ish man in a suit to help him with directions to Oakley having a large map of the UK open on an adjacent car. She had placed her bag on the passenger seat (zipped up), and had to return to the car to get reading glasses. Closing the door, but leaving the bag on the seat, she tried to assist the man.

She was one parking bay away from her car, and spoke to the man for no more than two minutes. He thanked her and walked away. He spoke English quite well with an Eastern European accent, and was very polite.

Upon returning home (25mins later), her bank called her to say her credit card had been used to try to get £500 in cash at Tescos ATM. On checking her bag, and her purse, she found 3 bank cards had been stolen, a debit card and credit card with one bank and a debit card from a different bank. Cash had been untouched in the purse. The debit card had been used immediately after the credit card, and £300 was successfully taken from her account. It had been the debit card she had used in the store.

The bank that had called immediately cancelled both cards. She called 101 to report the crime to the police, as the bank wanted a crime number. When she called the bank back with this number, they reported that the debit card had been refused at both Next and Argos in Kettering. This within one hour of the theft. The bank credited her account with the stolen money.

The other bank was contacted to cancel that card.

Tesco Kettering security was contacted (the number is on the receipt) who also wanted the crime number. They said they would review cctv footage of the car park and both tills, but not every camera records all the time (!).

It is clear that at least two people were involved in this crime. It is clear also that she was targetted. At no time was her purse left in an unzipped bag. She is always very careful when using her cards. The PIN will have been observed at one of the checkouts, but the criminals did not observe which card had been used. It is also clear from Tesco that this is not an unusual crime. "We know what we are looking for" was the comment. The police stated that these criminals are very slick, and usually very successful.

For the lady in question, no financial loss was suffered, but the inconvenience of cancelling 3 cards, awaiting their replacement, and all the calls involved plus the "I've been robbed" factor (and cannot use cards for a few days) is very disruptive.

Please be aware next time you use your cards.