



Keep your money safe

Surrey and Sussex Police Fraud Newsletter December 2020

Each month we see many incidents of fraudsters targeting our residents in an attempt to defraud them. We're working hard to prevent this and support vulnerable victims of fraud or scams. By following our tips and encouraging family, friends and colleagues to do so too, you can reduce the risk of becoming a victim.

T/Detective Chief Inspector Rob Walker, Surrey & Sussex Police Economic Crime Unit

Courier fraud – have you received an unsolicited phone call?

There has been a rise in courier fraud across both Surrey and Sussex in recent months.

Courier fraud is when a fraudster calls the victim pretending to be from the police or a bank and asks for money under false pretences. They will arrange for someone to pick up the money from the victim's home, leaving the victim out of pocket. They may also ask for their PIN number or bank details and steal money this way.



We've seen several cases whereby the fraudster will claim to be a police officer and tell the victim that their family member is in police custody. They then request a sum of money to help their family member which is collected from the victim's home by the suspect later that day.

Please remember: the police and the bank will never ask you to withdraw or transfer money and they will never ask for your PIN number or bank details. Do not give money or your bank details to anyone you don't know and trust.

Online shopping

Last year Action Fraud recorded a total of £13.5 million lost to online fraud from November 2019 to January 2020. With virtual shopping a must for most of us this Christmas, we're reminding people to protect themselves from online fraud over the festive season.

Keep your money safe

Here are our top tips for shopping safely online:

- Check that the website you're buying from is secure – it will start with <https://> and have a padlock icon to the left of the address bar
- If a deal looks too good to be true, it probably is, particularly with electronic goods
- Avoid transferring money to a bank account and pay via PayPal or a credit card wherever you can, they can give you an extra layer of protection should the worse happen
- Use two-factor authentication (2FA) wherever possible. 2FA means that you're required to enter another password before you purchase to verify your identity
- Use strong passwords for your online accounts – a mix of three random words is best
- Check your bank statements regularly to make sure there aren't any unexpected purchases

Identity fraud

Identity theft involves the misuse of someone's personal details in order to commit crime. Your details are valuable to fraudsters who can make money from selling them onto others. This type of crime is stressful for victims, as you can see in our real-life case study:

Male, Brighton and Hove

The victim and his wife were notified by two banks that someone had opened credit card accounts in their name. They also received a fake invoice in the post addressed to them asking for payment. The victims were expecting credit card statements in the post which did not arrive. This caused them to suspect someone was intercepting their mail and stealing their details. The victim reported this to Royal Mail. Thankfully the victims were able to intercept all these frauds before any loss occurred by reporting to the bank, Royal Mail and registering their frauds on fraud prevention service CIFAS.

There are lots of things you can do to protect yourself from identity theft, some of them are:

- Sign up to the Telephone Preference Service (<https://www.tpsonline.org.uk/>) to prevent marketing phone calls
- Dispose of documents containing your personal details with a cross shredder
- Never reply to unsolicited texts or emails e.g. texts referring to accident claims
- Use up to date anti-virus software on your devices

How you can help us

If you or someone you know is vulnerable and has been a victim of fraud call:

Surrey Police on 101 or visit www.surrey.police.uk

Sussex Police on 101 or visit www.sussex.police.uk

Report fraud or attempted fraud, by contacting Action Fraud at http://www.actionfraud.police.uk/report_fraud or call 0300 123 2040