



Keep your money safe

Surrey and Sussex Police Fraud Newsletter January 2021

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

Thinking about making an investment? Think twice...

Investment fraud often starts with a phone call from someone claiming to be from an investment company. They will try to persuade you to invest in something they're selling or have possession of, with the promise of large returns on your money.

Typical investment scams include buying diamonds or rare metals, wine, land and alternative energy.



The scammers have often done background checks on you to trick you into thinking they're from a legitimate organisation because they have your personal details. They're particularly likely to target pensioners who might have large sums of money, but these types of scams come in all different forms, as seen in this case study below.

Male, 66-years-old, Surrey:

The victim found an investment scheme through a Facebook link which his friend had 'liked'. He contacted the company who persuaded him to invest in a stock trading scheme. He was contacted again by the same company who advised him to invest a large sum of money in gas and gold trading. The scammers continued to contact the victim asking him for more money because there was an issue with his initial investments. Following this, the victim contacted his bank who advised him to cut all contact with the investment company, but he had already lost £70,000.

Please remember: never send or give money to someone who has asked you to invest in something over the phone, on your doorstep or online. Before handing over any money, carry out rigorous background checks via an independent financial advisor registered with the Financial Conduct Authority or seek the advice of trusted family and friends first.

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Parcel delivery scams

Parcel delivery scams usually involve fraudsters contacting the victim on the phone and pretending that they have a parcel which hasn't had the correct postage paid for it. What seems like a small amount of money to cover the postage often turns out to be a bigger scam; the fraudster will ask for the victim's bank details in order to take more money from their account.

Please remember: The Royal Mail will post a 'fee to pay' card through your door or contact you via text or email if you need to pay the balance of postage on a parcel, they will never contact you over the phone. To check a request to pay a fee is genuine, contact the Royal Mail. Do not give your banking information to anyone you don't know and trust.

Amazon Prime scam

We're seeing a rise in scams relating to Amazon Prime. They typically include a phone call from someone pretending to be from Amazon and stating that an amount will be taken from their account to renew a subscription. Many victims are advised to press a number on their phone as an option to not pay for the subscription. The scammer will then talk them through installing an app on their phone or tablet, and confirming their personal and banking details in order to stop the payment. This is all an attempt to get the victim to transfer money to the caller's bank account. In this case, the victim was tricked into downloading an app on her mobile after she made an order from Amazon.

Female, 89-years-old, Surrey:

After ordering something from Amazon the day before, the victim was contacted on the phone by a man pretending to be from Amazon trying to sell her Prime. She refused this offer but he persisted and offered to update her recent order, she just needed to download an Amazon support app for him to do so. After doing this and entering the details given by the caller, he was able to take control of her mobile, which she was unable to stop. The victim quickly contacted her bank to make them aware of the scam and they were able to stop any fraudulent transactions. The victim said: "I don't usually fall for these scams but this one made me feel brainwashed – I couldn't believe how intelligent this fraudster was."

Please remember: if you receive a call from someone saying they're from Amazon, it's most probably a scam. The safest thing to do is to hang up the phone. They will also never ask for payment information or for remote access of your device.

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

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