



Keep your money safe

Surrey and Sussex Police Fraud Newsletter September 2019

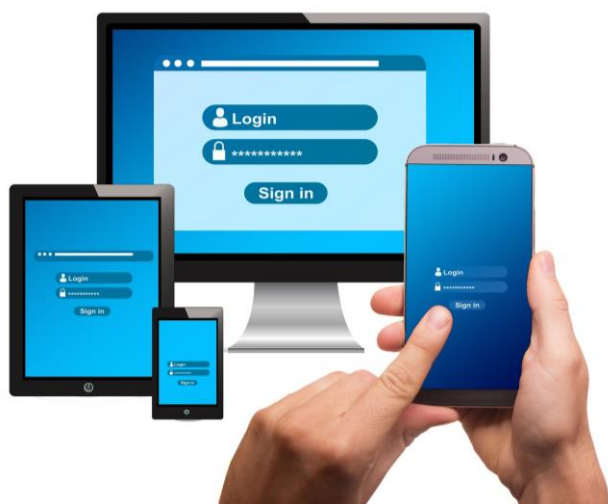
Each month we see many incidents of fraudsters targeting our residents in an attempt to defraud them. We're working hard to prevent this and support vulnerable victims of fraud or scams. By following our tips and encouraging family, friends and colleagues to do so too, you can reduce the risk of becoming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

**Detective Chief Inspector Andy Richardson, Surrey & Sussex Police
Economic Crime Unit.**

Help secure your online accounts with these strong password tips

Picking a strong password is a vital part of your online security. Often online security is breached because a password has not been changed for years, or used multiple times for different accounts.

There are a number of ways to make your passwords more secure and protect yourself from a potential hack:



- Make a password as long as possible. The more characters it has, the harder it is to crack
 - Use different types of characters including numbers, symbols and punctuation marks
 - Try not to include only dictionary words in your password as this makes them easier to crack
 - Try to avoid personal names, like family, pets, or sports teams.
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- Use different passwords for different accounts, especially for your personal email account. This way, if one password is compromised then at least only one account can be hacked.

Check to see if you have an account that has been previously compromised in a data breach by entering your email address on this email checker tool website:

<https://haveibeenpwned.com>

You may want to review your password security as a result!

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Don't be fooled by fraudsters posing as your Facebook friends

In Sussex, a female victim received a Facebook message, from what she thought was one of her friends, saying she could access £90,000 worth of grant from a charity. Trusting the information provided by her friend, she clicked on the link provided in the message to find out more.

The victim was then contacted by a male supposedly working for the charity saying that if she sent over £600 for security purposes she would receive the grant money. She was instructed to buy six £100 amazon vouchers, scratch off the code and message the codes to him. He also asked for her Facebook password, which she gave.

The grant money was never received by the victim and contact with the charity worker stopped. Her friends Facebook account had been hacked to send this scam message out to various people on her friends list.

Sat nav computer scam

A man in East Sussex plugged his Sat Nav into his computer to update the maps. Shortly afterwards he received a call from someone from Garmin, his sat nav provider. The caller said he had access to view to the victim's bank account and that he would put £300 into it for the victim to transfer back. The victim provided the sort code for his bank account, but no other information. The victim's partner thankfully intervened and told him not to proceed as this as it didn't sound correct protocol, the victim hung up the call and no further contact was made.

Please remember our advice that if something seems too good to be true, it usually is. Trust your instincts. Never send money, in any form such as vouchers, or give personal details such as passwords to organisations before verifying who they are and always question unexpected calls, texts, emails or messages.

Buying a car on eBay, Facebook, or Gumtree?

There have been a number of reports from Surrey residents who have bought vehicles via eBay, Facebook, or Gumtree, transferred the money to the seller's bank account without even seeing the vehicle, which then never materialises on the prearranged delivery date. The seller then cannot be contacted and the victim loses all their money.

To avoid this:

- Don't let the excitement of buying, or selling, a vehicle compromise your safety or that of your money. Never, ever transfer any money to anyone – no matter how pleasant they seem, or legitimate their company seems – without having seen the car first.
- Put yourself in the shoes of the seller: would you offer a complete stranger a massive bargain? Or ask them for half the money up front?
- Ultimately, our advice is to buy from a reputable car dealer for complete safety: the guarantees you get far outweigh the few hundred pounds you might save buying privately.

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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