



Keep your money safe

Surrey and Sussex Police Fraud Newsletter October 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.**

Identities stolen to order mobile phones



An elderly man from East Surrey received a knock on the door from a delivery driver with a mobile phone in his name which he had not ordered.

The man took the parcel in to inspect and then received a call saying that the phone had been delivered to the wrong address and someone would come to collect it.

Quite rightly suspicious, the gentleman called the police and it became clear his identity had been used by criminals to buy the phone.

We have seen this type of fraud in both of our counties, with victims' identities being used to buy goods and their addresses used for delivery.

There's some really comprehensive advice on avoiding becoming a victim of identity theft on Action Fraud's website [here](#), or search 'identity theft Action Fraud.'

Quick support app scam

A man was contacted on the phone, out of the blue, by someone who advised him to download an app called 'Quick Support' via the App Store. The caller said this was to remove a global virus affecting mobile phones. The caller kept the man on the phone for over an hour and a half, during which he did download the app. After this, the caller persistently asked the man to call his bank to see if any money had been taken from his accounts because of this virus.

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Fortunately the victim was suspicious and knew the tricks scammers use such as spoofing official phone numbers and keeping the phone line open at their end to pretend to be the bank, and no crime was committed in this case.

It's wise to assume any call out of the blue from someone you don't know could be a fraudster, and the safest thing to do is put down the phone.

Police impersonation frauds



It's great to hear that more and more people like the man in our last example can spot the tricks and lies that fraudsters employ to lure us in.

But sadly we do continue to hear that fraudsters are telephoning elderly and vulnerable people and persuading them to part with their money, credit cards or personal details by

masquerading as police officers. Over the last month we've heard that criminals have claimed to be DC Simmonds from the Metropolitan Police or DC Martin Rose from Surrey Police.

As you'll know from this newsletter, this is an ongoing issue. We have a really effective scheme across both counties to protect people once they've been preyed on by criminals in this way, but we need to stop it before it happens and the best way of doing that is to simply hang up the phone. There are then various preventative measures you can take, such as changing your phone number or getting a call blocking device for your phone.

PPI (Payment protection insurance) frauds

We've noticed fraudsters calling people saying they are owed a PPI refund of several thousand pounds, but that in order to release the refund they need to pay an upfront 'admin' fee.

Scammers often ask people to make the payment by purchasing a voucher – such as Amazon gift cards or a Paysafe card – and calling them back to give the voucher code numbers. This helps them claim the money without it being traced.

The Financial Conduct Authority has some great advice on [its website](#):

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- Be suspicious of unexpected calls, especially if you're asked to make an upfront payment or to give your bank account details.
 - Avoid making a payment to a company or person that contacts you out of the blue, especially if you're asked to purchase a voucher, pay directly into a bank account or use a money transfer company.
 - Look for signs that a phone call, text message or email may not be genuine, such as a mobile or overseas phone number, or an email address from a hotmail or gmail account. Scam emails and letters often contain spelling mistakes and poor grammar.
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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