



## Keep your money safe

### Surrey and Sussex Police Fraud Newsletter January 2020

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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**

#### Amazon Echo and mobile phone scams



A 75 year old woman from East Sussex was setting up her Amazon Echo device on her laptop when a pop up chat appeared on her screen. The woman began speaking with a man on the live chat. After asking for her address and Amazon password, the man instructed her to type a sequence of keys on her computer which gained him access to the device.

Thankfully due to being unable to understand the man and frustration with his instructions the woman ended the chat before doing anything more.

A 53 year old woman from East Surrey was called by someone claiming to be from Carphone Warehouse offering her a phone upgrade. She accepted the offer, but was then called back by someone again claiming to be from Carphone Warehouse, who apologised and asked for the phone to be returned. The woman did so but the promised replacement phone did not arrive. She then received a letter from EE acknowledging her direct debit set up for a new phone. The victim had never spoken with EE or been to a store.



#### **Avoid becoming a victim of scams like these with our advice:**

- Take time to install security measures on your devices.
- Security updates are designed to fix weaknesses in software and apps which could be used by hackers to attack your device and steal your identity. Installing them as soon as possible helps to keep your device secure.

## Keep your money safe

- Always question uninvited approaches in case it's a scam. Instead, contact the company directly using a known email or phone number.
- Have the confidence to refuse unusual requests for personal, or financial information. It's easy to feel embarrassed when faced with unexpected or complex conversations. But it's okay to stop the discussion if you do not feel in control of it.

### Money mules – help us warn young people about the dangers

We have had several instances of banks and local schools highlighting unusual activity concerning young people, with multiple accounts being set up in their names and large sums of money passing through these accounts.

This practice, when young people in particular are targeted by criminals wishing to conceal or move the profits of their crimes, is known as being a money mule. Young people are increasingly being approached online or in person, including through social media, at school, college or sports clubs or through acquaintances. Mules will usually be unaware of where the money comes from – commonly fraud and scams – and that it can go on to fund crimes such as drug dealing and people trafficking.

### Being a money mule is illegal

When someone is caught, their bank account will be closed, and they will have problems getting student loans, mobile phone contracts and credit in the future. They could even face arrest for money laundering which carries a maximum sentence of 14 years in prison.

### What to look out for

Tell-tale signs that someone might be involved could be them suddenly having extra cash, buying expensive new clothes or top-of-the-range mobile phones and gadgets with very little explanation as to how they got the money. They may also become more secretive, withdrawn or appear stressed.



You can learn more and get advice by visiting [www.moneymules.co.uk](http://www.moneymules.co.uk).

### National courier fraud focus during January

From Monday, 13 January for three weeks, there will be a national awareness campaign, and an extra operational focus from police forces, on tackling courier fraud.

This is when a criminal contacts their victim by phone, purporting to be a police officer, or bank worker, and asks their victim to hand over money or bank cards, often as part of an investigation. A courier is then sent to the victim's home address to collect the money.

# Keep your money safe

To avoid being a victim of courier fraud, remember:



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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](http://www.surrey.police.uk)

Sussex Police on 101 or visit [www.sussex.police.uk](http://www.sussex.police.uk)

Report fraud or attempted fraud, by contacting Action Fraud at [http://www.actionfraud.police.uk/report\\_fraud](http://www.actionfraud.police.uk/report_fraud) or call 0300 123 2040