

Sussex Police Fraud Newsletter

September 2017



Each month, we see many incidents of fraudsters targeting Sussex residents in an attempt to defraud them. Operation Signature is our answer to preventing and supporting vulnerable victims of fraud or scams.

By its very nature, fraud is constantly evolving and taking on new forms. By following our tips and encouraging family, friends and colleagues to do so too, you can reduce the risk of becoming a victim.

This month, we return our focus to a growing and persistent crime - courier fraud. Fraudsters pretending to be from trusted organisations like the police - convince vulnerable and elderly people into withdrawing and giving them significant amounts of cash.

Detective Chief Inspector Steven Boniface, Operation Signature, Sussex Police

Be aware of fictitious phone callers

Recently three elderly people were targeted by fictitious telephone callers in the Chichester area.

A 90 year old lady was called by a man telling her he was a police officer from Hammersmith. He said that he was investigating the use of counterfeit money and needed her help. He asked her to call 161 where a female accomplice confirmed he was a genuine officer. The lady was asked to choose a password and then told to withdraw £2500 from her bank account, the money was later collected by a courier. She received a similar call the following day that resulted in another £2500 being withdrawn and collected.

On three separate occasions over a recent four day period, an 85 year old lady received calls from a male purporting to be a detective, again based in Hammersmith. He told her that her PIN number had been compromised and that she needed to make large withdrawals within the branch. She later handed the £7,500 that she had withdrawn to a male who called at her address.

An 85 year old lady received a call from a male who said that he was Detective Sergeant Adam Wright of Holben Police. He told her that she should send £8000 with her bank cards as they were needed to check for fingerprints as someone in Barclays was involved in crime. The cash was subsequently collected by a male who called at her address.

In all of these cases, the victims have been told to tell bank staff that their sons needed the money urgently so as to avert any suspicion.

The police would never contact anyone and ask them to withdraw or hand over cash to officers. People carrying out these frauds are deliberately targeting those they think are vulnerable, so please look out for your friends, family and anyone you feel may be at risk by passing on this message. Whenever there is doubt that a telephone caller is genuine, simply hang up the phone. To find out more about the warning and to get advice, visit the Sussex police website <https://sussex.police.uk/advice/protect-yourself-and-others/fraud/protect-yourself-from-fraud/>

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The right person for the job – spotting rogue traders

Sussex residents continue to report traders who cold-call for business and look to pressurise householders into agreeing to maintenance that normally ends in highly inflated prices and sub-standard work. There have been eight reports over a recent two week period. If you are considering getting a tradesman in to work for you, it's important that you get as many quotes as you can and ask a variety of questions.

The following website serves as a very useful tool in identifying the reputable traders in the area. <https://www.buywithconfidence.gov.uk/>

Checking a reputation of a tradesman on this site means that you will have the peace of mind that they have Trading Standards approval. You can also search by location, occupation, trade and more, giving you the ultimate flexibility in who you choose for your job. Using this site can provide invaluable information and we emphasise the importance of using it before you enter into a contract with anyone.

Your privacy is valuable – here is how to protect it

Do you get annoyed when you fill in a form and have to enter your phone number even when you know that the company doesn't really need it? What are they going to do with it? Who will they give it to?

A company called TrueCall have created a potential solution and called it 'true-Call38'.

- When you are asked to enter your phone number, enter the number **0333 88 88 88 88** (three 3s, eight 8s).

Those cold call culprits will hear a short recorded message:-

- *'trueCall38 is handling my calls. I prefer not to be contacted by phone, so please contact me via my email address. Goodbye!'*
- Some online forms are fussy and won't accept the full trueCall38 number. If the number is rejected then just enter **0333 8888 888** (three 3s, seven 8s) instead.

Contact police online or by calling us on 101 quoting Operation Signature. For further information see Sussex Police website [Operation Signature](#).

If you or someone you know is vulnerable and has been a victim of fraud call Sussex Police on 101 or visit www.sussex.police.uk

If you need to a report fraud or attempted fraud, you can do so by visiting the Action Fraud website or by calling 0300 123 2040.

