



Keep your money safe

Sussex Police fraud newsletter – April 2018

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 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 highlight fake delivery alerts from major retailers, caution when dealing with potential bogus online buyers and fraudulent bailiffs looking to claim unpaid magazine advert subscription fees.

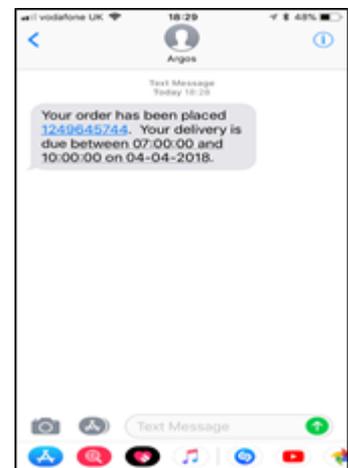
Detective Inspector Peter Billin, Economic Crime Unit, Sussex Police

Fake delivery claims



There have been local reports of people receiving text messages claiming to be from major retailers giving details of a delivery. These contain links followed by a URL which directs you to a website offering free iPhones in exchange for bank details.

Even if you don't enter any information, the criminals may still be able to access personal information from your device via cookies, making it all the more crucial to be extra vigilant.



Online marketplace bogus buyers

Action Fraud which collates details of all fraud committed in the country, has received reports that sellers of items on online marketplace websites are falling victim to fraud by bogus buyers.

Typically, bogus buyers contact the seller wanting to purchase an item for sale and advise they will be sending the requested amount via PayPal or other electronic payment method.

The seller then receives a fake, but official looking email stating they have been paid more than the asking price and to send the difference back to the buyer's bank account. In reality, no money has ever been sent to the seller; the bogus buyer has spoofed an email and purported to be an online payment company. All contact is then severed with the seller.

It is important to remember that selling anything could make you a target to these fraudsters, although it has been identified that **those offering sofas, large furniture and homeware** are particularly vulnerable.

- **Don't assume an email or phone call is authentic.** Remember criminals can imitate any email address. Always use a trusted payment method online, such as Paypal, and have the confidence to refuse unusual requests for payment like bank transfers.
- **Don't be rushed or pressured into making a decision.** Always verify that you have received payment from the buyer before completing a sale.
- **Listen to your instincts.** Criminals will try and make unusual behaviour, like overpaying, seem like a genuine mistake.

Magazine advertisement subscription fraud

We wish to raise awareness of a new fraud where victims receive a telephone call from someone pretending to be a bailiff, who is enforcing a court judgement and attempting to recover funds for a non-existent debt. The fraudsters state the debt originates from the victim not paying a magazine advertisement subscription.

A variety of magazine names and publishers are being used by the fraudsters, who also commonly use the names of certified Bailiff Enforcement Agents such "Scott Davis", "Stephen King" and "Mark Taylor".

The fraudsters request that the debt be repaid by bank transfer, if the victim refuses, they threaten to visit the victim's home or place of work to recover the debt that is owed.

Once the money has been transferred, victims are not provided with receipt details of the payment or contact details. Later when victims make enquiries, they'll discover that the debt did not exist, and often that no advertisement was placed.

This type of fraud is nationwide. Since 2017, there have been 52 Action Fraud Reports relating to this fraud. From the reports received, there are a range of different businesses and individuals being targeted.

If you suspect someone you know may be vulnerable to fraud, please share this newsletter with them and encourage them to look at the 'Little Book of Scams', available on the following link: <http://tinyurl.com/z8khtgh>.

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 report fraud or attempted fraud, you can do so by contacting Action Fraud at www.actionfraud.police.uk/report_fraud or by calling 0300 123 2040. You can also read the latest Action Fraud alerts at www.actionfraud.police.uk/news or by following @actionfrauduk on Twitter. Check latest information online at www.getsafeonline.org.

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