



Keep your money safe

Sussex Police fraud newsletter – May 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 ask you to be aware of calls that claim they offer government grants for solar panels, leaving victims seriously out of pocket.

We also highlight a fraud that uses Money Saving Expert Martin Lewis to endorse tips on market trading, which has seen one victim invest and lose £9,000.

Detective Inspector Peter Billin, Economic Crime Unit, Sussex Police

Money Saving Expert Martin Lewis warns about fake money making tips



We have received reports of advertisements involving fictitious companies who are looking for people to invest money through them as a market broker. In one case, the victim was using Facebook where he saw an advertisement for 'Martin's Money Tips' with the face of Martin Lewis, the money saving expert regularly seen in the media.

In Sussex, a victim lost £9,000 after investing in a company on the premise that it was a market trading broker. There has since been a considerable amount of publicity involving this company but people are advised to always conduct considerable research and seek professional advice through a reputable company if they are considering any form of investment.

Martin Lewis has recently stated that he never endorses any form of advertisement and if you see any links to him or his website, they are fakes.

Fraudulent adverts for sale of horses

Action Fraud is warning horse buyers about fraudulent 'for sale' adverts. Fraudsters are placing fake adverts on reputable equestrian sale websites to defraud victims out of significant amounts of money. Fraudsters will even support their claims of the horse's existence by supplying copies of relevant ownership documents, pictures and videos of the animal.

Although the adverts claim the horses are located in the UK, victims are later told that they are located elsewhere in Europe and that the shipment of the horse can be arranged via an animal transport company.

On agreeing to buy the horse, victims are then contacted by someone who claims to be an agent of the transport company, who asks them to pay the purchase price and shipping

costs of the animal either by money transfer or a direct transfer of funds into a nominated bank account. In some cases, victims are contacted about problems with the horse's delivery, such as the need for vaccinations, special insurance or costs arising from veterinary fees and requests are made to cover these additional costs.

Fictitious government grants on offer for solar panels



There have been multiple reports of fraud both nationally and locally linked to the targeting of elderly people who have solar panels. Fraudsters are contacting victims advising that they are eligible for a government grant.

Under the pretence of the grant, fraudsters dupe the victim into providing personal information, which allows them to apply for a personal loan in the victim's name.

The victim receives the funds into their account and is asked to transfer it to a third party account to 'fund the work'. The victim does not realise a loan has been taken out until repayments start to be debited.

In the majority of cases identified so far the victims have been based around Wales and South West England, and aged between 60 and 65.

The loan values have been between £2,000 and £3,000 and are for home improvements. There is every chance that this method may spread across the south east and we would urge people to guard against any such calls.

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 a 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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