

Keep Your Money Safe



Surrey Police and Sussex Police Fraud Newsletter

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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."

**T/Detective Chief Inspector Simon Doyle,
Surrey Police & Sussex
Police Economic Crime
Unit**

Online Shopping

With Black Friday upcoming and Christmas soon after many of us will look to buy discounted goods and Christmas gifts for loved ones online.

Whilst shopping online provides convenience in buying from a wide range of shops and brands as well as quick delivery options, fraudsters will take the opportunity to scam buyers online by advertising fake or counterfeit goods, asking for extra courier fees to be paid or gaining victims banking and personal information through fake websites.

Sussex and Surrey Police have seen numerous reports of Online Shopping fraud.

In one case, a 32-year-old Female from Surrey found a seller on Instagram advertising handmade gift hampers. The victim messaged the seller asking to purchase 4 hampers and was instructed to bank transfer £32 to the seller's account. The seller then claimed to have posted the hampers via Royal Mail. The victim requested tracking information, but this was not provided. Sadly, the victim never received the hampers, the seller stopped responding to her messages and later deleted their Instagram posts. The victim reported the account to Instagram.



When Shopping Online:



If you're making a purchase from a company or person you don't know and trust, carry out research first. Do they have reviews online? Does the company have a phone number and a genuine address? Ask friends and family for advice before purchasing.



If buying through social media, does the seller have followers / friends? Be wary of an account which has only recently been created.



Consider the offer. Are the goods being heavily discounted and do they sound too good to be true?



Pay with credit card where possible for added protection, or use bank card or PayPal instead of bank transfer.



Use the Get Safe Online 'Check a website' tool [Free Website Scam Checker - Check a website by Get Safe Online](#)

Romance Fraud Webinar

With Romance Fraud one of the highest reported online scams in West Sussex, West Sussex County Council are holding an online webinar on the 10th of November focused solely on this topic. It will include what romance fraud is, how to avoid becoming a victim, what to look out for and what to do if you or a friend/family member becomes a victim. Victim Support will also outline local statistics and provide example case studies of victims of this horrible crime.

To Find out more & book your place: [Romance Scams Tickets](#), Thursday 10 Nov 2022 at 10:00 | [Eventbrite](#)



Phone Contract Offers

Sussex and Surrey Police have received several reports from victims who have been contacted by fraudsters out of the blue offering phone contract deals.


In one case a 38-year-old Female from West Sussex received a call from a male claiming to be from Three mobile's promotion team. The caller was offering the victim a one-time offer on a new mobile phone contract.

The caller then sent the victim an email detailing the offer which appeared genuine and sophisticated. The victim was then asked to provide her personal and banking details to run a credit check and pay a £25 deposit before setting up the contract.


After providing her details and ending the call the victim grew suspicions and contacted her bank who were able to cancel her bank card before any payments were taken.

A few days later, the victim had three phones delivered to her address with O2 contracts. The victim then received another call claiming the phones had been delivered to the wrong address and someone would come to collect them from her. The victim, concerned her personal details had been used, took the phones to an O2 shop to report the fraud.


How to protect yourself:



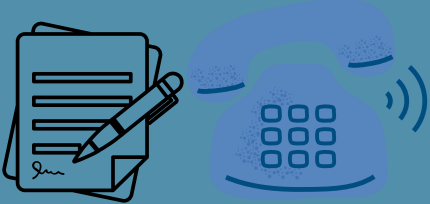
Be extra vigilant when you have an upgrade due, or your contract is due to end as this is a key time for fraudsters to target you with fake contracts and deals.



Be wary of anyone offering you discounted deals out of the blue, telling you to act quickly. If it sounds too good to be true, it probably is.



Avoid giving your personal information over the phone.



SUSPECT YOU OR SOMEONE YOU KNOW HAS BEEN VICTIM TO A SCAM?

REPORT IT TO ACTION FRAUD AT WWW.ACTIONFRAUD.POLICE.UK OR BY CALLING 0300 123 2040.

HOWEVER, WHERE THE VICTIM IS VULNERABLE OR ELDERLY, PLEASE CONTACT SUSSEX OR SURREY POLICE DIRECTLY ON 101.

IF ITS AN EMERGENCY, ALWAYS CALL 999.