Keep your money safe

Sussex Police fraud newsletter – December 2016

Scams are fraud and fraud is crime, report it – this is our message for Sussex residents. The busy Christmas period can be a time when it's all too easy to let your guard down in the pursuit of seasonal bargains and online offers. We continue to see fraudsters targeting vulnerable people across the county by phone, email and face to face in an attempt to defraud them. Operation Signature is our answer, working together with our partners to prevent fraud and identify and support our most vulnerable victims.

In this newsletter, we share the messages of our partners and latest updates on how you can help protect yourself, and also where to get help and support if you think you’ve been targeted. Be assured that, by following our tips in this newsletter and encouraging family, friends and colleagues to do so too, you will reduce the risk of becoming a victim.

Wishing all of our readers a happy and safe Christmas and New Year.

Detective Chief Inspector Tracy Edwards, Operation Signature, Sussex Police

Warning of automated credit card message

We’ve received numerous reports of a fraudulent phone call, which reads the following automated message:

“Alert alert, your credit card has been compromised. Press 1"

If you receive this call, please hang up and contact Action Fraud or Sussex Police with the details.

How to protect yourself from email scams and malicious software

Fraudsters continue to target Sussex residents using compelling but sneaky methods aimed at getting you to give up your private information. A typical example could be an email, purporting to be from your bank, to say that there has been a security breach at your branch saying you need to update your details via a link provided.

Banks will never do this. **Never** open an email unless you are certain that it is genuine. By clicking on the hyperlink, you may download malicious software onto your computer.

Action Fraud launch their Badvent Calendar – the frauds of Christmas

Throughout December Action Fraud are sharing details of how to avoid the most reported frauds:

- The dangers of counterfeit goods: fake goods are often bad quality and unsafe, for example fake electrical goods are not put through the same vigorous safety checks.
- If you’re using marketplaces to buy items use caution as it is easy for fraudsters to post
pictures of items for sale that either do not exist or are counterfeit.

- Those looking to take a break over the Christmas period should be alert to holiday fraud. Do your research on a holiday company before you part with any money. You can find out more by visiting the Action Fraud website here.

Plagued by nuisance or fraudulent calls? A telephone call blocker could help

If you constantly receive unsolicited phone calls, or you know someone whose phone never stops ringing, you may know that there are devices available which could help. ‘Secured by Design’ True Call devices work by automatically ensuring that only trusted callers can get through. Unrecognised callers are asked for their identity before they are put through to the recipient, meaning that unknown or ‘cold’ callers can be refused.

In Sussex, local policing teams have a small number of these devices available to install in homes, with recipients selected based on their level of vulnerability. If you or someone you know may benefit, please email operation.signature@sussex.pnn.police.uk for more details or call Sussex Police on 101. The approved devices are also available to purchase, for more details see here.

Host of local celebrities come together to support Time to Talk Befriending

Brighton-based charity Time to Talk befriending will receive proceeds from the city’s first ever celebrity charity Christmas single. The charity works to reduce isolation for older people through building lasting friendships. Find out more here.

Remember: banks and police will NEVER call and ask you to transfer funds to a new account, NEVER collect your cards from your home, NEVER ask you to buy high value goods and NEVER ask you to hand over cards or money.

Keep your money safe with these tips:
- Check people are who they say they are. Not sure? Don’t open the door!
- Never send or give money to people you don’t know or trust
- Remember to protect your identity – don’t share your personal information with unexpected callers
- Beware of email and computer scams. Treat all emails from unknown senders with suspicion and never click on links within them
- Never share your PIN number or enter your PIN into a telephone
- If in doubt, phone a relative, friend or someone you know personally
- Remember: if it sounds too good to be true, it could be fraud.

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.