



Keep your money safe

Surrey Police and Sussex Police Fraud Newsletter June 2019

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.

Detective Chief Inspector Andy Richardson, Surrey Police & Sussex Police Economic Crime Unit.

Help Scamalytics create a global blacklist of romance fraudsters



Surrey Police and Sussex Police are encouraging victims of romance fraud to report the fraudster who has targeted them, anonymously, via an online form.

The forces have linked up with Scamalytics who have produced a form which, once completed free of charge, will be sent to genuine dating services so they can detect suspected romance fraudsters and prevent others falling victim to them.

Romance fraud is a fast growing issue which affects both men and women.

Fraudsters will prey on their victims by building what feels like a loving relationship before asking for money to help with a problem they are experiencing.

Once the initial payment is made, the fraudster will normally ask for more money or cut all contact with the victim.

Reports made to Action Fraud reveal that £50,766,602 was lost to romance fraud in 2018 – an average of £11,145 per victim and a 27% increase on the previous year.

Remember, when you're meeting potential partners online:

- Be wary of giving out personal information
- Never agree to keep your online relationship a secret
- Get to know the person and not the profile
- Never send money or share your bank details on the platform

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- Stay on the dating messenger service until confident the person is who they say they are
- Run a search on the internet for their name or any picture they have sent along with the term 'scam'

For more information on romance fraud and how to report via the [Scamalytics](#) form please click [here](#) or go to www.surrey.police.uk/romancefraud.

A new example of romance fraud

A man in Sussex had been speaking to another man via Streamate.com, a website that allows you to pay by the minute to see others over video chat. The victim had spent up to £7000 on the website video chatting. After some time the victim made contact with the befriended man on WhatsApp and via text. The victim formed an open relationship with the male and others from the website. The man he had befriended then started to demand money each month from the victim to continue their relationship. The fraudster suggested the victim used his parents' credit card to pay this. Thankfully the victim realised this was not right and contacted the police.

Fraudsters will usually attempt to steer you away from chatting on a legitimate dating site that can be monitored. Our advice is to stay on the platform that you started using initially, rather than switching to email, text or phone.

Fraudsters masquerading as DC Collins from Surrey Police

We have had some new examples of phone fraudsters posing as police officers this month, largely centred on Epsom, Surrey, but as usual because of the nature of this crime we're asking people in both counties to be vigilant. Variations on this scenario are happening across the country.

A police officer called Collins telephones and says he is investigating fraudulent activity or counterfeiting and asks the victim to withdraw money to help with the investigation. A courier is sent to collect the money. The fraudster gives the illusion of being official by arranging code words or passwords to say when the 'courier' turns up, and even asking victims to call 999 or 161 to check their identity (but then remaining on the line so that when you make the call, you're unknowingly connected straight back to them or their friends.)

Please remember under no circumstances would the bank or police request a card PIN or security details over the telephone, or arrange collection of bank cards or money from a home address

If you suspect that you have been caught in one of these scams but the money hasn't been collected and you believe the courier is **on their way** to you, call 999 and we will send officers out to you. Don't be embarrassed about reporting a scam - the scammers are cunning and clever; there's no shame in being deceived.

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How you can help us

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’](#)

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

Report fraud or attempted fraud, by contacting Action Fraud at
http://www.actionfraud.police.uk/report_fraud or call 0300 123 2040