



Keep your money safe

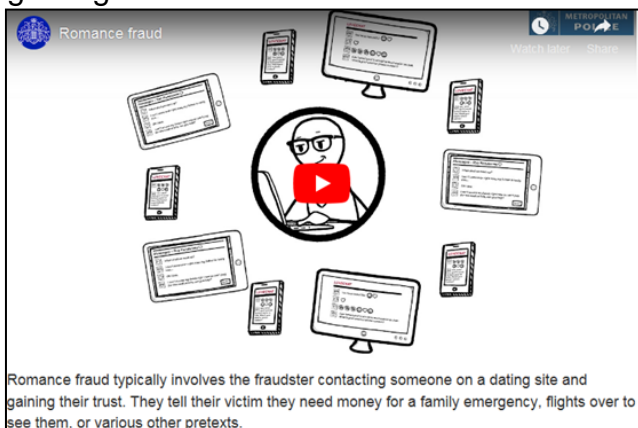
Surrey and Sussex Police Fraud Newsletter November 2018

Each month, we see many incidents of fraudsters targeting our 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.

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

Don't fall for online romance fraud - new police video warning

Romance fraud typically involves the fraudster contacting someone on a dating site and gaining their trust.



They tell their victim they need money for a family emergency, flights over to see them, or various other pretexts.

In nearly 90% of cases the approach is made by Facebook or email.

In Sussex over just one year, 149 victims lost a total of £2,280,000, with an average loss of £18,700 - sadly four out of five attempts succeeded.

57% of victims live alone, their average age is 62. PC Bernadette Lawrie, Finance Abuse Safeguarding Officer at Sussex Police said; "Romance fraud is one of the most despicable crimes we see, and the victims can be among the most challenging to deal with as they are often in denial that the fraudster they are in contact with is not genuine - until it is too late.

PC Lawrie continues: "One of the most difficult conversations we have is telling a victim that not only will they not see their money returned, but that the person they believe they are in a relationship with and are looking forward to a future with, is in fact a criminal posing under a false identity." [Watch the video.](#)

Police advice is: never send or give money to anyone you don't know or trust; check people are who they say they are; don't share your personal information; make decisions in your own time; and if in doubt phone a relative or a friend.

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Fraudster claiming to be from Dyno rod

In Surrey, a woman received a knock on her door from a man identifying himself as 'Gary' from Dyno rod, claiming branches in the drains at the rear of her property needed work to prevent flooding to her property. He requested a deposit of £1200 for equipment to do the required work. When she told him she didn't have the cash, Gary pressured her to withdraw the money on a credit card, and even attempted to log on to her online banking.



The second time 'Gary' called an elderly couple stating a neighbour's problem with sewage would impact on their property if nothing was done. He asked for an initial deposit of £600, followed by £8000 for hiring the equipment and completing the work. Further requests were made for two more deposits amounting to £9000. Gary explained that the problem was worse than he thought and extra costs were incurred even though no surveys were conducted at the property at any time.

An additional £14000 was requested with the victims depositing £7000, but Gary demanded to know where the other £7000 was. Because he threatened the work wouldn't be completed, they returned to the bank to deposit the remaining £7000. By this point the bank intervened and called the police, but the couple had already lost £24,000.

If you're concerned about the trustworthiness of traders who call or knock at your door pretending to be qualified tradespeople, take time to think. Reputable builders would not:

- Call without an appointment
- Ask you to go to the bank to withdraw cash or make a money transfer
- Offer to take you to the bank to withdraw cash for payment
- Ask you to pay in full before the work is complete
- Insist that you make a decision about the work they're offering to do on the spot
- Bully or scare you into doing the work

What is Operation Signature?

Operation Signature is a Surrey Police and Sussex Police campaign to identify and support vulnerable victims of fraud across both counties.

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:

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 www.actionfraud.police.uk/report_fraud or call 0300 123 2040

