

Keep Your Money Safe



Surrey Police and Sussex Police Fraud Newsletter

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FAMILY MESSAGING SCAM

Sussex Police and Surrey Police continue to see reports relating to family messaging WhatsApp scams.

In this fraudulent occasion, the fraudster will pretend to be a family member. The message will come from a different number which they will provide a believable explanation for like their phone broke so they're messaging from a different number. They may then move to a different messaging platform.

Once they feel that the victim believes them, they will then request money or gift cards in payment.

Sussex Police recently received a report from a woman who received a message from someone claiming to be their daughter stating that they were in financial hardship. Keen to support her daughter through this, she sent nearly £1,000.

It was only when the call was made to confirm that the payment was received that the victim was made aware it was a scam. Fortunately, the victim in this case got their money back from their bank and there was no financial impact to them.

However, we still see regular reports of family messaging fraud with nearly 50 people reporting this in the last year alone. This was followed by vulnerable visits conducted by Sussex Police and Surrey Police.

Hey Dad hope you're well. My phone's completely ruined, Could you let me know when you get this. I'm using my old phone for the time being.



TOP TIPS

- ✓ Verify the source - Contact the person on their usual number to verify that they have contacted you.
- ? "Hi Mum/Dad" - Is this how they would usually begin a message to you? Is it the name they would use?
- ! Stop! Think Fraud! - Don't feel pressured into sending money. Confirm with them that they have requested this by the usual contact method.
- ? Check the text - You can report suspicious texts to 7726.
- ! Look out for others - make fraud part of everyday conversations.
- ✓ Two-step verification - ensure you have added protection of additional verification on your device and apps.

YOU CAN FIND MORE INFORMATION HERE AT STOP! THINK FRAUD
[HTTPS://STOPTHINKFRAUD.CAMPAIGN.GOV.UK/HOW-TO-SPOT-FRAUD/HOW-TO-SPOT-A-FAKE-TEXT-MESSAGE/](https://stopthinkfraud.campaign.gov.uk/how-to-spot-fraud/how-to-spot-a-fake-text-message/)

“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
 Antony Leadbeatter
 Surrey Police &
 Sussex Police
 Economic Crime Unit

GIFT CARDS



Increasingly fraud is becoming more complex with fraudsters changing and evolving their processes to ensure that their victims are bypassing security measures that have been implemented to protect them.

One way in which they have done this is by asking their victims to purchase gift cards and provide them with the codes to access the funds immediately. They will often request high amounts, typically over £100, and the request may be repeated. If this happens, this is likely to be fraud.

Scammers will contact their victims, usually by phone, where they instill panic urging the victim to make a payment by purchasing vouchers and gift cards from their nearest retailer. Often victims will go to their local supermarket.

Once the cards have been purchased, the scammer accesses the money by asking the victim to share the code on the back of the voucher.

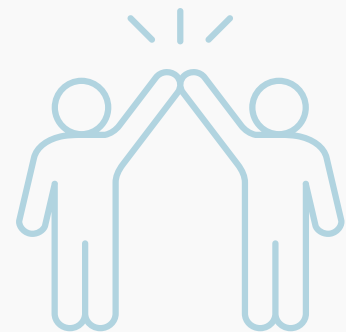
Scammers are very good at manipulating their victims to believe they need help, where victims do not realise that vouchers could be used for anything other than helping their family members.

Companies that are being used frequently, such as Apple for their iTunes vouchers, have begun to additionally provide safeguarding advice and what to do if you have been a victim of a scam through this method. Read more here: <https://support.apple.com/en-gb/120933>



FRAUD PREVENTION IN THE COMMUNITY IS THIS VOLUNTEERING ROLE FOR YOU?

We are looking for volunteers to join our existing Volunteer Fraud Prevention Programme in an exciting new role as a community engagement volunteer. The volunteers will work alongside our Neighbourhood Policing Teams based in local police stations, delivering fraud prevention advice and guidance to residents in Sussex.



This will include engaging with the public in a variety of different settings such as delivering fraud presentations and attending events/key locations to hand out to our fraud prevention literature and provide advice and education to the public e.g. Farmers markets, community centres and libraries.

If you feel that this is something that you would like to be involved with advert goes live on 2 June 2025, please complete the application on the Sussex Police website under Volunteers and Special Constables or use the following link: <https://www.sussex.police.uk/police-forces/sussex-police/areas/careers/jobs/>

FRAUD PREVENTION IN THE COMMUNITY

Book your free cyber prevention with the South East Cyber Crime Unit webinars - https://www.eventbrite.com/o/police-south-east-cyber-crime-unit-77121396093?_gl=1*tz1xtl*_up*MQ..*_ga*MTAxODIwNTM4Mi4xNzQ3NzQ5MDM0*_ga_TQVES5V6SH*_czE3NDc3NDkwMzMkbzEkZzAkDDE3NDc3NDkwMzMkajAkBDaKaDAkZGNEbkEzY2tEU1ZCSUQ2Q2S5X1VzVVctUm5UdGd5SkZabIE.

Surrey Police and partners will be providing fraud prevention advice with a focus on doorstep crime at the following locations -

Farnham 24 June at Waitrose Car Park.

Dorking 26 June 2025 at St. Martins Walk Car Park.

With even more to follow! You can email SussexandSurreyFraudPreventionEngagements@surrey.police.uk to learn about the latest events.



KEEPING OUR COMMUNITIES SAFE FROM FRAUD FREE TAILORED EVENTS

If you or your organisation in Sussex or Surrey feels that you could benefit from having a free tailored fraud prevention in person engagement, please contact Sussex Police and Surrey Police directly on SussexandSurreyFraudPreventionEngagements@surrey.police.uk for further information.