

Keep Your Money Safe



Surrey Police and Sussex Police Fraud Newsletter

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IT'S BACK... WATCH OUT FOR THE CAR PARKING FINE SCAM

Last year, Sussex Police shared a warning with residents about a car parking fine scam which was circulating nationally.

East Sussex residents reported being targeted by the scam, which was received as a text message, containing a link which directed motorists to a convincing copy of the council website to pay a supposed unpaid fine.

Chichester District Council have this month reported to Sussex Police that they have been made aware of a similar scam requesting immediate payment of a Penalty Charge Notice (PCN), directing people to a site similar in appearance to their own council website. Recipients are being threatened that their licence will be revoked if the charge, typically £20, is not paid immediately.

PCNs are issued by placing a notice on the car's windscreen or by being handed to the driver. Fines are never issued by text messages. If you do receive one, please be wary and report it to Action Fraud or forward it for free to 7726, so your provider can investigate the origin of the text and arrange to block or ban the sender if it's found to be malicious.



You can also report a scam text using a screenshot or screen recording and then sending it to report@phishing.gov.uk

HOLIDAY & TICKETING FRAUD: STAY SAFE THIS SUMMER

As the summer season kicks off, many families and individuals across Sussex and Surrey are booking holidays or planning days out at concerts and festivals. Unfortunately, fraudsters are also preparing – targeting people through increasingly sophisticated holiday and ticket scams. From fake accommodation listings to non-existent festival passes, it's crucial to stay alert.

Holiday fraud involves scammers advertising fake travel deals – such as holiday homes, package deals, or flights – that don't exist. Victims often only realise they've been scammed when they arrive at the airport or holiday home and discover nothing has been booked.

Ticketing fraud, on the other hand, sees criminals selling fake or non-existent tickets to high-demand events such as concerts, sporting matches or theatre performances. Victims often find out too late that their tickets are worthless or don't exist.

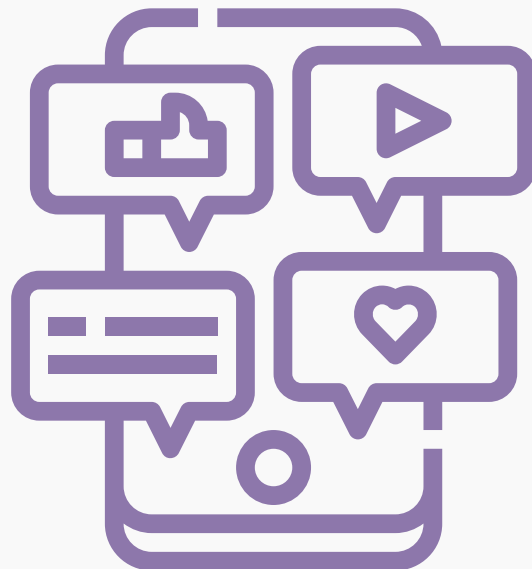
“Each month we see many incidents of fraudsters targeting our residents in an attempt to defraud them. We're working hard to prevent this and support vulnerable victims of fraud or scams. By following our tips and encouraging family, friends and colleagues to do so too, you can reduce the risk of becoming a victim.”

Detective Chief Inspector
Antony Leadbeatter
Surrey Police &
Sussex Police
Economic Crime Unit

The rise of online marketplaces and social platforms has made it easier for criminals to pose as legitimate sellers. With convincing replica websites and fake reviews, many of these scams are hard to spot. Victims not only lose money – often hundreds or even thousands of pounds – but also have to deal with the distress and disappointment of cancelled plans.

Sussex Police and Surrey Police have seen a steady increase in reports to Action Fraud of these scams during peak travel and events seasons.

In a recent Surrey case, a gentleman in his 60s from Walton-on-Thames lost over £1,000 to a scam company posing as a legitimate holiday firm while a couple from Burgess Hill in Sussex sent £4,000 to a company who were not ATOL registered, losing out on the holiday they had believed had been booked.



TOP TIPS TO STAY SAFE



Use Trusted Providers: Book holidays through reputable companies that are members of ABTA or ATOL. Buy tickets only from official box offices or authorised resellers.



Check the Website: Double-check web addresses – fraudsters often mimic well-known sites.



Be cautious of suspicious links promising tempting holiday deals online or on social media.



Do some research first to check that the company is legitimate, especially if you haven't used them before.



Whenever possible, **pay with a credit card**, which often offers greater protection for online purchases.



If your email account is compromised, your holiday booking could be too. Make sure your **email password is strong and unique**.



Enable two-step verification when possible to further protect your details.



Avoid Pressure Tactics: Scammers often try to create a false sense of urgency. Take your time and don't rush into a purchase.

WHAT TO DO IF YOU'VE BEEN SCAMMED

- **REPORT IT TO ACTION FRAUD VIA WWW.ACTIONFRAUD.POLICE.UK OR CALL 0300 123 2040.**
- **CONTACT YOUR BANK IMMEDIATELY ON 159**

STAY ALERT, STAY INFORMED, AND ENJOY A SAFE AND SCAM-FREE SUMMER.



Safe Space Sussex is an online directory of victim support services set up by Police & Crime Commissioner, Katy Bourne OBE.

There are a number of support services and fraud related events in your area, some of which can be attended virtually, listed in the events section. Check it out here: <https://www.safespacesussex.org.uk/about-different-types-of-crime/fraud/>

The Safe Spaces Scheme was set up to form a network of locations across the county offering a safe space for people to go to if they feel threatened or at risk of harm. More information about the scheme and how to sign up to become a safe space can be found in the attached leaflet, or on the website:

<https://www.safespacesussex.org.uk/safe-space-scheme/become-a-safe-space/>

For Surrey support, please visit: <https://victimandwitnesscare.org.uk/find-services>

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

We are looking for volunteers to join our existing Volunteer Fraud Prevention Programme in 2025 in an exciting newly developed role as Community Engagement volunteers. The volunteers will work alongside our Safer Neighbourhood Teams based in local Police stations, delivering fraud prevention advice and guidance to the residents of Surrey.

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 fraud prevention literature and provide advice and education to the public e.g. farmers markets, community centres, libraries etc.

If you feel this is something that you would like to be involved with, please complete the application which will be available from Thursday, 31 July here:

<https://www.surrey.police.uk/police-forces/surrey-police/areas/careers/careers/volunteering/>

