



Horsham Weekly Bulletin

Tuesday 24th March 2020

At the moment we have seen a slight rise in thefts from sheds/outbuilding and garages, this is not necessarily specific to Horsham but in general and we would like to remind everyone to secure outbuildings. We have also seen a couple of reports regarding thefts of lead from above doorways and sheds. Please check your outbuildings and report any suspicious activity.

News and appeals

Don't fall victim to coronavirus fraudsters

Police are reminding Sussex residents to stay on the alert as reports come in from elsewhere across the country of frauds or attempts related to the current Covid-19 coronavirus issue.

Only one report has so far been made to Sussex Police, of a suspicious phone call that went no further thanks to the alertness of the resident, but nationally there have been more than 100 reports to Action Fraud since the start of February, with total losses reaching nearly £970,000.

The majority of reports are related to online shopping scams where people have ordered protective face masks, hand sanitiser and other products, which have never arrived.

Other frauds being reported include ticket fraud, romance fraud, charity fraud and lender loan fraud.

There have also been over 200 reports of coronavirus-themed 'phishing' emails. These attempt to trick people into opening malicious attachments which could lead

to fraudsters stealing people's personal information, email logins and passwords, and banking details.

Some of the tactics being used in phishing emails include:

- Fraudsters purporting to be from a research group that mimics the Centre for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and World Health Organisation (WHO). They claim to provide the victim with a list of active infections in their area, but to access this information the victim needs to either click on a link which redirects them to a credential-stealing page or make a donation of support in the form of a payment into a Bitcoin account
- Fraudsters providing articles about the virus outbreak with a link to a fake company website where victims are encouraged to click to subscribe to a daily newsletter for further updates
- Fraudsters sending investment scheme and trading advice encouraging people to take advantage of the coronavirus downturn
- Fraudsters purporting to be from HMRC offering a tax refund and directing victims to a fake website to harvest their personal and financial details. The emails often display the HMRC logo making it look reasonably genuine and convincing

Superintendent Sanjay Andersen, head of the National Fraud Intelligence Bureau, said: "Fraudsters will use any opportunity they can to take money from innocent people. This includes exploiting tragedies and global emergencies.

"The majority of scams we are seeing across the country relate to the online sale of protective items, and items that are in short supply across the country, due to the Covid-19 outbreak. We're advising people not to panic and to think about the purchase they are making. When you're online shopping it's important to do your research and look at reviews of the site you are buying from."

PC Bernadette Lawrie, Surrey and Sussex financial abuse safeguarding officer, said: "The advice is simple, think very carefully before you hand over your money or bankcard and don't give out your personal details unless you are sure who you are dealing with.

"To date we have only seen one report in Sussex, involving an elderly vulnerable lady in Chichester who was phoned by someone impersonating a doctor and advising her that he had her personal details and that she had contracted the coronavirus. She hadn't. The motive was not established, but it was clearly suspicious. No money was lost and officers visited her to give reassurance and guidance on how to remain safe.

"We are working together across law enforcement, government and the private sector to combat this criminal activity and protect the public. If you think you have been a victim you can report to Action Fraud, but if you are elderly or vulnerable report directly to Sussex Police on 101 or online.

"You can protect yourself by:

- Watching out for scam messages - don't click on the links or attachments in

suspicious emails and never respond to unsolicited messages and calls that ask for your personal or financial details

- when shopping online, if you're making a purchase from a company or person you don't know and trust, carry out some research first, and ask a friend or family member for advice before completing the purchase. If you decide to go ahead with the purchase, use a credit card if you have one as most major credit card providers insure online purchases

- Protecting your devices from the latest threats - always install the latest software and app updates to protect your devices from the latest threats. The National Cyber security Centre offers advice on looking after your devices.

Sussex Police's Operation Signature offers further information on how to keep yourself safe from unwanted callers and other approaches.

The NHS and Public Health England websites offer the latest health information and advice about Covid-19.

Katy Bourne, Sussex Police and Crime Commissioner, said: "Times of crisis can bring out the very best in people who are legitimately trying to help, but it also can attract opportunists and callous criminals who seek to capitalise on our most vulnerable and elderly. I urge residents to heed this police advice around 'coronavirus scammers' and to be extra vigilant at this time.

"There has been a very welcome mushrooming of local online networks offering help and advice and some, however well-intentioned, may be incorrect or misleading so this co-ordination of trusted prevention advice will hopefully help to ensure our residents stay scam aware."

<https://www.sussex.police.uk/news/sussex/news/news/dont-fall-victim-to-coronavirus-fraudsters/?u=media>

Alerts/Press Releases sent out this week click the link to see full details.

Help us keep Sussex safe

If you saw or heard anything, or have any information about any incident in this message please [contact us online](#), email us at 101@sussex.pnn.police.uk or call **101**, quoting the reference number provided.

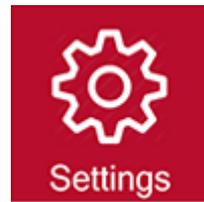
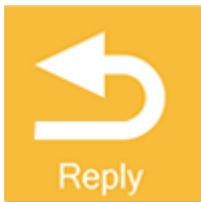
Alternatively you can contact the independent charity **Crimestoppers**, anonymously, on **0800 555 111**, or online at www.crimestoppers-uk.org

Links and attachments: Sussex Police will only ever link you to secure Websites we trust. We will only send you attachments where we believe it is absolutely necessary.

Message Sent By

Janice Brown (Police, Prevention Support & Engagement Officer, Sussex)

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