

Kent Fraud Alert System



Courier fraudsters are active Across Kent

We have received a number of reports over the last few days of people being contacted by telephone, with fraudsters impersonating Police and committing “courier fraud.”

TO STOP FRAUD™

Courier Fraud what is it -

Courier fraud occurs when a fraudster contacts victim by telephone purporting to be a police officer or bank official. To substantiate this claim, the caller might be able to confirm some easily obtainable basic details about the victim such as their full name and address. The caller may also offer a telephone number for the victim to telephone or ask the victim to call the number on the back of their bank card to check that they are genuine. In these circumstances, either the number offered will not be genuine or, where a genuine number is suggested, the fraudster will stay on the line and pass the victim to a different individual.

After some trust has been established, the fraudster will then, for example, suggest;

- Some money has been removed from a victim’s bank account and staff at their local bank branch are responsible.
- Suspects have already been arrested but the “police” need money for evidence.
- A business such as a jewellers or currency exchange is operating fraudulently and they require assistance to help secure evidence.

Victims are then asked to co-operate in an investigation by attending their bank and withdrawing money, withdrawing foreign currency from an exchange or purchasing an expensive item to hand over to a courier for examination who will also be a fraudster. At the time of handover, unsuspecting victims are promised the money they’ve handed over or spent will be reimbursed but in reality, there is no further contact and the money is never seen again and it is all a scam.

THE POLICE WILL NEVER –

- Ask you to withdraw cash to hand over for safe keeping.
- Ask you to transfer money out of your account for any reason.
- Send a courier to collect cash or your bank cards.
- Ask you for your PIN or bank details.

If you get a call like this, then contact Police immediately on 101 or if they are due to come to your door on 999.



**Kent
Police**

Contacting Kent Police

Report a non-urgent crime online www.kent.police.uk/report
Talk to us on LiveChat – available 24/7 www.kent.police.uk/contact
In an emergency, if crime is in progress or life is in danger call **999**
If deaf or speech impaired, text ‘**police**’ and your message to **60066**

www.kent.police.uk   

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Charity Scams associated to donations to Ukraine

Sad to say that fraudsters will use the situation in Ukraine to target people for fraud and probably via charitable donations.

Therefore, people looking to donate to causes working in Ukraine and neighbouring countries, should make a few simple checks before giving. The below is advice from the Charity Commission and Fundraising Regulator.

- check the charity's name and registration number at www.gov.uk/checkcharity. Most charities with an annual income of £5,000 or more must be registered, and you can use the advanced search function to identify charities working in specific regions and countries
- make sure the charity is genuine before giving any financial information
- be careful when responding to emails or clicking on links within them
- contact or find out more online about the charity that you're seeking to donate to or work with to understand how they are spending their funds
- look out for the Fundraising Badge on charity fundraising materials, this is the logo which shows that a charity has committed to fundraise in line with the Code of Fundraising Practice

If you think that a collection or appeal is not legitimate, report it to the police. If you think the collection is fraudulent report it to Action Fraud over the phone at 0300 123 2040 or online.

CHARITY COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND AND WALES

Please give safely

www.gov.uk/checkcharity

Preventing fraud

Together, let's stop scammers.



Remember, ABC:



never Assume



never Believe



always Confirm

Get the latest scam advice:



@KentPoliceECU



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Finally a good News Story – Rogue Trader Sentenced to Prison

A prolific rogue trader has been jailed after repeatedly targeting elderly residents living in areas including Swale and Medway.

Tony Saunders tricked and coerced several pensioners into paying for unnecessary work to their properties, amid demands for cash payments totalling thousands of pounds.

Between February and April 2021, Saunders and an accomplice cold called the homes of victims and warned vital repairs were needed to roofs and chimneys. They wore clothing and used a van emblazoned with logos for 'ATS Paving and Building Ltd'. The business appeared to victims to be legitimate, with quality assurances provided on a leaflet handed to them, including claims of Check-a-trade accreditations.

Demands

The reality was very different. Victims were given quotes which rapidly escalated and any work carried out was substandard and often unfinished. In March 2021, a 76-year-old man initially agreed to pay Saunders and his accomplice £7,000 for roof repairs to his Faversham home. After work commenced, he was met with demands for £25,000. The victim became suspicious and challenged the men, following which Saunders threatened to empty a skip onto his driveway and remove all materials if he wasn't paid. In the following month, Kent Police was called to reports Saunders was operating fraudulently in Istead Rise, Gravesend, where two elderly neighbours, both aged in their 80s, had been scammed. Saunders, aged 23, of Spade Lane, Hartlip was arrested at one of their addresses on 7 April, which also led to a Citroen Berlingo van being seized.

Further offences -

An investigation established he had also been operating in areas of Chatham, Sittingbourne and New Romney. Saunders was also investigated for a separate case in 2019, when an unknown suspect knocked at the door of an elderly woman in Chatham and claimed to be from Trading Standards. The person had knowledge the woman was a previous victim to rogue trading and informed her the perpetrators had been arrested and that she was now entitled to compensation. The victim, aged in her 80s, was later contacted by telephone and told before she received the compensation, she would first need to pay for court fees and staff.

Between 4 and 16 April 2019, she made nine withdrawals from her bank account, totalling almost £30,000. Saunders stopped her on multiple occasions whilst she was driving home from the bank, in order to take the cash from her. Saunders pleaded guilty at Maidstone Crown Court to six counts of fraud by false representation with a further two counts taken into consideration, and four counts linked to money



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laundering. He also admitted a further, unrelated, charge of affray. This was linked to his involvement in a fight in Herne Bay, in July 2020. On Friday 25 February 2022, Saunders was sentenced to four years and ten months' imprisonment.

Preyed upon vulnerable

Detective Sergeant Adam Stallard, of the Kent and Essex Serious Crime Directorate, said: 'Saunders preyed upon the elderly and vulnerable under the guise of operating a legitimate business. He invented or exaggerated fears related to the integrity and safety of victims' roofs and chimneys, often demanding instant cash payments for so called urgent repairs.' Site surveys were later completed by a genuine chartered surveyor at the home addresses of victims. All of these surveys found that the works were mostly unnecessary, were to an extremely poor standard and were substantially overpriced.' It is pleasing to see that justice has caught up with Saunders and he is rightly behind bars. We will now use legislation contained under the Proceeds of Crime Act to ensure he doesn't continue to benefit from his crimes when he is released from prison.'



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