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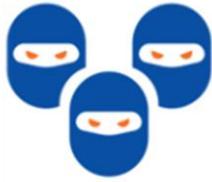
(Artwork courtesy of Bexhill Academy)

Serious and organised criminals operating in the UK ruthlessly target the most vulnerable, ruining lives and blighting communities. Their activities cost us at least £37 billion each year. They are able to reap the benefits of their crimes and to fund lavish lifestyles while all of us, and particularly their direct victims, suffer the consequences. Serious organised crime almost always involves the exploitation of vulnerable adults for financial gain.

Protecting elderly and vulnerable victims of fraud and rogue trading is a priority area of work for the East Sussex Safer Communities Partnership. *Through effective partnership working and information sharing with statutory and voluntary agencies, we raise awareness of the risks to vulnerable victims of fraud and ensure effective preventative support is in place to address this.*

This newsletter focuses on the work being carried out and developed nationally and locally to keep vulnerable adults safe.

Serious Organised Crime



ORGANISED CRIME
GROUPS



CRIMINAL NETWORKS



CRIMINAL EXPERTS

A year ago the Government launched its **Serious and Organised Crime Strategy** which set out the government's approach to prevent and defend against serious and organised crime. The aim of the Strategy is to substantially reduce the level of serious and organised crime affecting the UK and its interests.

Investment, pension and dating fraud represent fraud types with the highest potential impact on individuals. Reports of dating fraud, in particular, increased over the past year, with over £50 million lost to romance fraud in 2018, according to Action Fraud. This represents an average loss of £11,145 per victim.

Fraud remains the most commonly experienced crime in the UK, with an estimated overall cost of £190 billion. It covers a wide range of activity, with fraudsters targeting individuals as well as businesses, charities and the public sector through a range of criminal techniques.

The use of cyber tools to commit fraud allows offenders to target the UK from almost anywhere in the world, and to transfer the proceeds overseas. The use of dark web platforms and virtual private networks continues, allowing offenders to hide their identity and location.

Many people are not aware of the links to organised crime in relation to scams/financial exploitation and the many ways vulnerable adults are targeted. Prevention efforts continue and are frequently changed to keep abreast of new tactics criminals use. Everyone has a part to play in protecting vulnerable adults whether in a professional capacity or within their own family/friendship circles.

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East Sussex has a population of 515,000 people, 98,100 of which are aged 70 or over. There are over 10,100 people known to have a form of dementia, and also a large number of people residing in residential care settings. Given that 34% of people in East Sussex live alone in single occupancy accommodation; the risk of people being susceptible to financial abuse and exploitation is high.

In 2018 there were 147 scam victims recorded by East Sussex Trading Standards, who between them lost more than £1,360,000 to scammers.

Even small losses have the potential for significant impact when considered in context with a person's overall wealth or income, and whether or not they have access to the right support. Many victims report losing their entire lifetime's savings through fraud and it's not just the financial loss that creates harm. The psychological and emotional damage caused by fraud can be enormous.

The harm from fraud is not just limited to the direct harm caused by each offence. The proceeds from fraud can be used to fund serious organised crime and, in some cases, terrorism. In 2017, the UK Fraud Costs Measurement Committee estimated the total cost of fraud to the United Kingdom economy to be £190 billion – which is nearly 10 percent of gross domestic product.

Depending on the nature of the case, fraud investigations may be carried out by a local force, a regional organised crime unit or the National Crime Agency.



A huge amount of prevention and enforcement work has been undertaken locally and nationally and continues to be developed. We all need to take positive action and help more vulnerable members in our communities feel safer and better protected. The campaigns, initiatives and information in this edition will hopefully help you to do that.

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Communities Against Exploitation

This year the Safer East Sussex Team, Stop the Traffik and Rother Voluntary Action have been working together to raise awareness of the different types of exploitation affecting our communities.

Many people do not realise they are being used by criminals. Some people are more likely to become victims than others and we all need to be better informed on how this can look when we go about our day to day activities— whether it's in the town we live or place we work. We all have a role to play in seeing it, recognising it and doing something.

The Communities Against Exploitation Campaign aims to lift the veil on methods used by these criminals by showing you what it can look like and how to spot the signs of exploitation.

In September we took our *Communities Against Exploitation* campaign to the Festival of the Sea Event, which takes place annually in Bexhill and attracts thousands of visitors. It was a chance for us to share information with the public on what exploitation is, what it can look like and how to report it.

James Veale (Brighton University), Rother Voluntary Action Intern, who has helped promote this campaign and designed many of the campaign materials, attended both days and helped spread the message along with Laurie Church from Stop the Traffik and Lucy Spencer from the Safer East Sussex Team.



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A Communities Against Exploitation Session was also delivered at St Barnabas Church Bexhill in September which was aimed at local organisations and helped raise awareness of the different types of exploitation locally.

Following the session 50% of attendees agreed they would be confident about reporting or sharing information if they thought someone was being exploited and 50% of attendees strongly agreed they would be confident about reporting or sharing information.

“Thank you for the time and energy you and your colleagues put into this valuable workshop.

I found the workshop very interesting and, although I was aware of many of the issues, I still learned more and the interaction with other professionals at the workshop was also informative. Thank you for the time and energy you and your colleagues put into this valuable workshop”.

Street Coordinator - Rother Neighbourhood Watch

Taking place on Wednesday 4th December will be a Communities Against Exploitation event for local businesses in the Rother area - ***how to keep your business safe from financial exploitation and fraud***. Aimed at small to medium businesses it will cover:

- Awareness of how financial exploitation and fraud can impact on your business
- Tactics and current methods used by organised crime groups against businesses
- How to better protect their business and improve identifying scams and fraud
- The use of Modern Slavery in business and manufacturing

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COMMUNITIES AGAINST EXPLOITATION WORKSHOP



This workshop raises awareness of the different types of **exploitation** affecting **our communities**.

Whether it's in the town we live or place we work, we all have a role to play in seeing, recognising and doing something about exploitation.

Communities Against Exploitation aims to show the methods used by exploitation criminals and how to spot the signs of exploitation.



Keeping your Business Safe from Financial Exploitation and Fraud



For small to medium sized businesses

What is this event about?

- Raising awareness of how financial exploitation and fraud can impact on your business
- Tactics and current methods used by organised crime groups against businesses
- How you can better protect your business and improve identifying scams and fraud
- The use of Modern Slavery in business and manufacturing

Key speakers from

Hastings Direct, NatWest, Stop the Traffik and Sussex Police

Wednesday 4th December 10am – 1pm

(Including refreshments and light lunch)

**The Waterfront, 2 Marina Court,
Bexhill, TN40 1BN**

To secure a place please email:
lucy.spencer@eastsussex.gov.uk
(Quoting CAE)

This event is kindly being
sponsored by:

Hastings DIRECT

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SUPPORTED BY



During anti-slavery week in October Bexhill College kindly hosted the award winning production of **'My Mind is Free'** performed by the Rah Rah Theatre Company.

Over 180 professionals, residents and College students attended the production which was a thought provoking and powerful interpretation of the degradations of modern slavery and human trafficking experienced by four different people.

Marking the start of Anti-Slavery week it explored the realities of exploitation and trafficking, and helped the audience to spot the signs.

Following the performance an answer and question session was held for the audience. Staff from the Safer East Sussex Team, Stop the Traffik, Sussex Police Discovery and actors discussed points and shared further information on the local picture with the audience.

"Thank you for shining a light on these stories. It is so important they are heard! I really hope you are able to get out there again to open people's eyes".

"The play was so moving and has made me think about what I thought had been abolished is so alive today. It should be shown more and especially to teenagers".



Dates and further details on events will be available via twitter @CAEpartnership. Please follow us and keep up to date on what is happening. Thank you

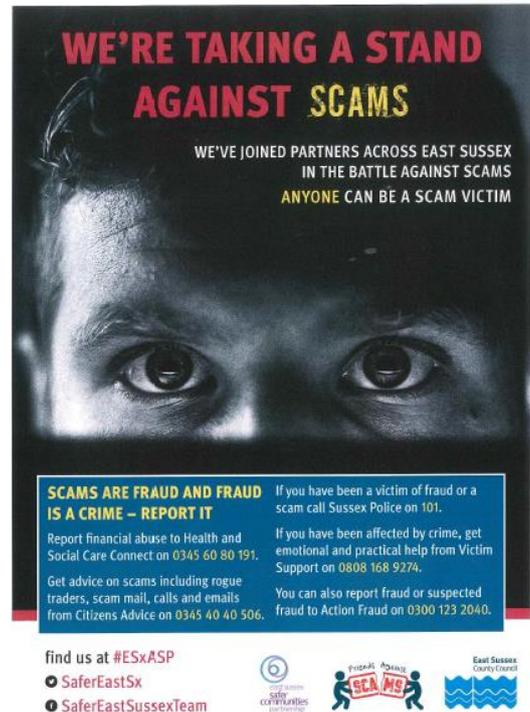
If you would like further information or interested in working with us please email lucy.spencer@eastsussex.gov.uk

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The East Sussex Against Scams

Partnership is a group of local organisations (i.e. businesses, charities, clubs, community enterprises, councils, societies, voluntary groups and others) who are helping to raise awareness about scams / fraud and is coordinated and supported by the Safer East Sussex Team.

105 partners have “signed up” to the ESASP Charter, pledging activities to help support each other’s efforts in an aim to make East Sussex a scam-free county.



Was does the Partnership do?

- Helps raise awareness about scams so people realise scams are fraud and fraud is a crime;
- Helps prevent people from becoming victims by giving them the knowledge and information about what to look out for; and
- Finds improved ways of identifying and recording scams via Action Fraud so there is a clearer understanding of the true scale and impact of scams upon our residents.

Partners are asked to "sign up" to a Charter, pledging their support by committing to undertake actions, all of which will help take a stand against scams. Examples could include:

- Displaying posters (see example above) and / or literature;
- Sharing scams-related key messages via social media channels;
- Running Friends Against Scams awareness raising sessions for staff, family and friends, members and volunteers. For further details, visit www.friendsagainstscams.org.uk .

In early 2020 the Safer East Sussex Team will be holding a networking event with presentations from the National Trading Standards Scams Team, Elder Abuse Recovery Service and the Involvement Matters Team.

For further details on the Charter and how you can take a stand against scams, contact: Sam Harman, Strategy & Partnership Officer, Safer Communities Partnership Telephone: 01323 464186 E-mail: sam.harman@eastsussex.gov.uk

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Scams Awareness 2019

Scams Awareness is a yearly campaign which aims to create a network of confident, alert consumers who know what to do when they see a scam. This year's campaign took place from the 10th-23rd June.



The case of a 95-year-old East Sussex woman conned out of hundreds of pounds was used to highlight the dangers of scams for this year's campaign.

Doris, who lives alone in Eastbourne, was left more than £500 out of pocket after being tricked by telephone cold callers. Doris had signed 12 new contracts with different companies last year for services and products she didn't need, after being pressurised by telephone cold callers.

With help from East Sussex trading Standards, £568.95 was recovered and returned to Doris, her personal details were taken off companies' databases and a call blocker was installed on her phone to prevent future scam calls. This case had a very good ending but every 15 seconds someone in the UK loses money through phone, text, email or doorstep scams

During Scams Awareness 2019 officers spoke and gave advice to 80 people. Teams from Trading Standards visited East Sussex Libraries with the aim to increase awareness of scams, how to stop them and how to report them.

Events held in libraries over the fortnight gave residents the chance to find out about the different types of scams, and speak to Trading Standards officers and a community banker from NatWest.

Scams Awareness is coordinated by Citizens Advice. Further information can be found [here](#).



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Friends Against Scams



Friends Against Scams is a National Trading Standards Scams Team initiative which aims to protect and prevent people from becoming victims of scams by empowering people to take a stand against scams.

Friends Against Scams is designed to inspire action, highlight the scale of the problem, change the perceptions of why people fall for scams and make scams a community, regional and national topic.

- By attending a Friends Against Scams awareness session or completing the online learning, anyone can learn about the different types of scams and how to spot and support a victim.
- With increased knowledge and awareness, people can make scams part of everyday conversation with their family, friends and neighbours, which will enable them to protect themselves and others.
- Anyone can be a Friend Against Scams and make a difference in their own way.

This autumn Friends Against Scams are celebrating their third anniversary since launching the initiative.

Alongside the team's aspirational goal of reaching One Million Friends by 2020, the team are hoping to hit 333,333 Friends during the anniversary week- so your support would be greatly appreciated.

If you would like to become a Friend Against Scams, you can complete [the online awareness session](#).



**NATIONAL
TRADING
STANDARDS**
Scams Team

Friends Against Scams is a National Trading Standards Scams Team initiative

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National Trading Standards Scams Team

Call Blocker Project

**NATIONAL
TRADING
STANDARDS**

Scams Team



Friends Against
SCAMS

trueCallTM
STOPS NUISANCE CALLS

**NATIONAL
TRADING
STANDARDS**
Scams Team

**ARE YOU OR
SOMEONE YOU KNOW
INDUNDATED WITH
SCAM CALLS?**

Apply for a free call blocker at:

www.FriendsAgainstScams.org.uk/callblocker

f @FriendsAgainst t @AgainstScams You Tube Friends Against Scams
www.friendsagainstscams.org.uk

The National Trading Standards (NTS) Scams Team has some exciting news to share with you!

This year, following on from the success of the team's previous call blocking work, the Department for Culture Media and Sport (DCMS) committed further funding to the team in order to supply and fit free call blocking units for people who receive scam and nuisance phone calls.

- Local authorities and care providers are expected to apply on behalf of victims – and individual applications from victims or family members will also be available.
- To apply, you will need the person's consent (prior to application) and to then successfully complete the online application via the Friends Against Scams website: www.FriendsAgainstScams.org.uk/callblocker .
- The team has a limited number of units which will be released on a first come first served basis so we encourage you to apply as soon as possible if you know of someone who would benefit from having a unit.
- For an application to be successful, the individual will need to be receiving scam or nuisance phone calls and be potentially susceptible to these calls due to their personal circumstances.

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While the telephone is an essential lifeline, it can also bring problems for older people and vulnerable adults:

Some older relatives or vulnerable adults can be confused by telemarketing calls, agree to order products they don't need, or may be taken advantage of by unscrupulous sales people and scammers. A call blocker device stops these callers in their tracks.

Bill is a gentleman who lives on his own and is 92 years old and has the early stages of dementia.

Bills daughter contacted Trading Standards and said her Dad was receiving a lot of scam phone calls which had resulted in 2 payments of £900 going out of his bank via his debit card. His bank did refund the money but his daughter and Trading Standards did not want this to happen again.

Trading Standards fitted a call blocker for Bill in March 2019. This small device that sits in between the phone line and the telephone stops all scam calls from being received. The call blocker was set at the higher level so that anyone calling the number would need to know a code in order to speak to Bill.

However a scam company e-mailed Bill recently and said they had tried to phone him but could not get through. Bill then emailed the code to them which potentially would cause further problems.

Trading Standards were able to change the code so that no further contact from scam companies could get through. Bill does not know the new code and his daughter has changed his email address.



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Elder Abuse Recovery Service - EARS



There has been very little focus on the long-term effects abuse has on older victims and how they cope with life after the abuse. Many victims are left isolated and traumatised by their experiences and are in need of structured support to reach full recovery. Often however, this structured support is not available. Elder abuse is defined as:

‘A single or repeated act or lack of appropriate action, occurring within any relationship where there is an expectation of trust, which causes harm or distress to an older person’.



It has at its heart the ‘expectation of trust’ that an older person may rightly establish with another person, but which may be subsequently violated. For this reason, Action on Elder Abuse do not get involved with actions that relate to strangers, unless those strangers have exploited the expectation of trust.

Action on Elder Abuse are operating recovery services in a number of areas including Sussex. Weekly one-to-one sessions are held between the elder abuse survivor and their carefully matched designated supporter. Sessions focus on listening to the survivor, assisting them in switching focus from the effects and circumstances of the abuse toward how they would like their life to develop; drawing out their strengths and positive life experiences; supporting them in setting realistic improvement goals and making choices and decisions; as well as exercises around promoting hope, visualisation and confidence building.

You can find out more about the service [here](#).

If you or someone you know is an older person who could benefit from the service in East Sussex, please contact gailshanahan@elderabuse.org.uk to find out more.

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Financial Abuse Resources

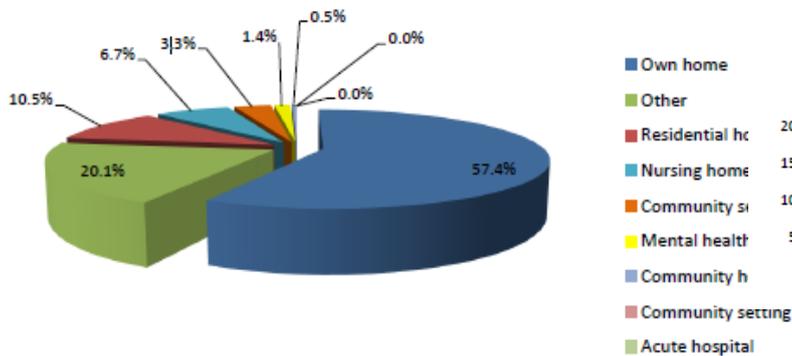
Financial abuse is most frequently perpetrated by a person acting in a trusted capacity. This can include family members, friends and neighbours, or care workers and other professionals.

Financial abuse may also be perpetrated by individuals who are initially strangers and seek out vulnerable adults with the intention of exploitation. Reported incidents of financial abuse are on the increase, both nationally and locally.

This is illustrated by the diagrams below which show the number of financial enquiries undertaken by adult social care. Increased awareness and better levels of reporting may explain the increase but research shows that much of this type of abuse can go undetected for a variety of reasons.

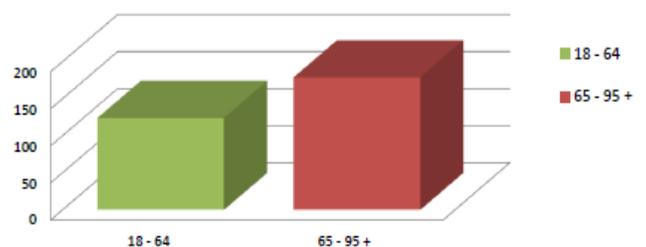
Number of completed Financial abuse enquiries by location

(01/04/17 to 28/02/2018)



Number of completed financial abuse enquiries by age of adult at risk

(01/04/17 to 28/02/2018)



Multi-agency **guidance** to support adults at high risk of financial abuse has been produced by the Safeguarding Adults Board for all agencies working with adults who have care and support needs, and have been assessed, using the Financial Abuse Screening **Tool**, as being at high risk of financial abuse and / or there are significant professional concerns regarding the risk of financial abuse.

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The guidance does not replace but supports the Sussex Safeguarding Adults Policy and Procedures and can be used alongside the **Financial Abuse Toolkit** (please click on the image to access) which provides information to inform responses to suspected cases of financial abuse.

This toolkit is intended to be used by Adult Social Care & Health (ASC&H) staff, partner agencies, providers and members of the public. It provides information you need to respond appropriately to suspected cases of financial abuse.



The Toolkit:

- Provides advice on when to raise a safeguarding concern.
- Provides information on the indicators of financial abuse, and who is vulnerable to financial abuse.
- Provides a range of preventative measures.
- Emphasise the importance of partnership working.
- Provides case examples that demonstrate how financial abuse enquiries can be conducted effectively.
- Provides information on additional resources for further reading, and sharing with adults who may be vulnerable to financial abuse and partner agencies.

Service providers and members of the public should raise a safeguarding concern when financial abuse is suspected and contact Adult Social Care to report it.

Phone: 0345 60 80 191, 8am to 8pm 7 days a week including bank holidays or you can [email](#)

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OPERATION **SIGNATURE**

Protecting Vulnerable Victims of Fraud

Operation Signature is the Sussex Police force campaign to identify and support vulnerable victims of fraud. The force has a process for recognising victims of all fraud as victims of crime and providing preventative measures to support and protect them from further targeting.

This can include helping them to change their phone number to an ex-directory number, contacting family to suggest Power of Attorney, mail re-direction, offering them advice on call blocking devices and referring them to other support services.

Earlier this year a national report on fraud investigation praised Operation Signature. The [Report](#), 'Fraud; Time to Choose', published by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire Rescue Services (HMICFRS) examined the national police response to fraud. It highlighted and praised Operation Signature as a good example of law enforcement agencies in identifying and responding to vulnerability.

The Sussex Police Crime Commissioners Office funds two vulnerable victims of fraud caseworkers under Victim Support. They receive referrals through the Operation Signature process and provide face to face support, advocacy and signposting to those with high needs. In the last 6 months they have received 295 referrals and supported 336 new cases.

The next time you visit someone elderly or vulnerable, ask yourself: could they be a victim of fraud or scams?

***Spot the warning signs of fraud and scams -
Operation Signature***

In this video (to view please click on the image)
Sussex Police urge viewers to contact them on 101 or
via www.sussex.police.uk if they think someone
vulnerable is a victim.



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The Banking Protocol

The Banking Protocol is a ground-breaking rapid response scheme and has led to 197 arrests and prevented almost £25 million of attempted fraud since being introduced in Sussex in 2017.



The scheme trains bank staff to spot when someone is about to fall victim to a scam and try to prevent them from withdrawing cash to give to a fraudster, after which they can request an immediate police response to the branch

The scheme means branch staff can immediately alert police and Trading Standards to suspected frauds taking place. If the bank has concerns about a customers' request, they can contact the police and 'freeze' the funds for 72 hours while officers attempt to engage with the individual and ascertain whether or not the transaction is fraudulent.

- 3,682 emergency calls have now been placed and responded to, with the average prevention per call equating to £6,720
- The scheme has now been rolled out across the entire UK, with all 45 police forces using the process since March 2018
- A total of 38 arrests have been made so far by Sussex Police through the initiative.

Sussex Police always advise:

- Be wary of any calls, texts or emails purporting to be from the police asking for your personal or financial details, or for you to transfer money.
- If you are approached, or feel something is suspicious, hang up the phone and don't reply. Then report it to Action Fraud and your bank on their advertised number.
- 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.

For further help and information please visit the Sussex Police [Website](#)

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Action Fraud

Action Fraud is the UK's national reporting centre for fraud and cybercrime where you should report fraud if you have been scammed, defrauded or experienced cybercrime in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.



Action Fraud is not responsible for the investigation of offences. That duty remains with the local police force or other appropriate law enforcement agency.

The National Fraud Intelligence Bureau processes the information received by Action Fraud and provides forces and agencies with intelligence products. These include:

- **Victim care packages** – these relate to particularly vulnerable individuals, who have reported a crime or information, and are sent to the victim's local force to provide additional support.
- **Monthly victim lists** – these contain the details of all the victims reporting to Action Fraud residing in each specific police force (based on the address provided by the victim in the report). A monthly schedule of this information is forwarded to every police force and includes crime type, the victim's details and the impact of the offence on the victim.
- **Six-monthly force profiles** – these are produced biannually and provide statistical analysis of crime trends, crime types and emerging crime techniques used by offenders within that force area and nationally.
- **Threat updates** – these support a national profiling of current and emerging fraud, and the prevention advice to the public that sits alongside this profiling.

The Action Fraud [website](#) provides a wealth of information and resources



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Tell us what YOU Think

Many thanks for reading our newsletters, being a subscriber and sharing the newsletter with other colleagues and friends.

We want to make sure the newsletter is what people want and remains interesting and helpful to all our readers.

We would like you take part in our very short survey which consists of 6 questions.

There is an opportunity in the survey to add further comments/feedback good or bad so please take the time to let us know your thoughts – thank you

<https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/LCNBBFK>