

Kent Fraud Alert System



TO STOP FRAUD™

Look out for new cost of living scams

This week we will be seeing increases in Council Tax, heating and water rates and going forward changes in benefits, all of these may lead to an increase in scam emails and text messages.

Criminals are very adept at changing their scams to take advantage of changes in the economy. They may send messages offering reductions in bills or requesting that you renew your benefits by updating your details via links in their messages. They may even contact people by telephone, impersonating well known organisations.

So, it is important to be on your guard and remember the ABC of scam awareness which is Never Assume or Believe a message or call is genuine but Confirm.

If you think that something is suspicious, then report it. You can forward suspicious text messages to 7726 and suspicious emails to report@phishing.gov.uk

Preventing fraud

Together, let's stop scammers.



Remember, ABC:

 never Assume

 never Believe

 always Confirm

What is 159?

The **159** number enables people to connect with their bank safely and securely when they receive an unexpected, suspicious or fraudulent call.

If you think that you may have been a victim of fraud, then contact your bank immediately, which you can do by calling **159**.



Stop, Hang Up,

Ensure that your phone is available for dialing, or alternatively, use another phone, call your bank on **159**.

If you think that you may have been a victim of this or any other type of scam, then contact your Bank immediately, which you can do by calling 159 and report it to Action Fraud at www.actionfraud.police.uk or call 0300 123 2040.

For further information about Fraud, visit our website at [Advice about fraud | Kent Police](#)

You will also find valuable information from the Home Office at [Stop! Think Fraud - How to stay safe from scams](#)

Call **159** if you experience the following:

- Someone contacts you claiming to be from your bank – even if they do not seem suspicious.
- You are contacted by someone claiming to be an authority figure such as the police or HMRC and told to transfer money – even if the request seems genuine.
- You receive a call about a financial matter and it appears suspicious.

Reporting a scam

If you think you or someone you know has been a victim of a scam report it immediately to Action Fraud online actionfraud.police.uk or over the phone **0300 123 2040**.


For more information and advice visit kent.police.uk/fraud or email KFAS@ecis.police.uk



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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**
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Charity fraud

Criminals may take advantage of our generosity when giving to charity. They may claim to be raising money for a fake charity or impersonate a well-known one.

When you meet a fundraiser in-person, whether that be on the street or a someone calling at your address, check their credentials:

- All collectors should wear an ID badge that is clearly visible.
- Any collection buckets should be sealed and undamaged. Most fundraising materials should feature a charity's name, registration number and a landline phone number.
- If in doubt, ask for more information – a genuine fundraiser should be happy to answer your questions.

When giving online, make sure the charity is genuine before giving any financial information:

- Type in the charity website address yourself, rather than clicking on a link, and look for the registered charity number on the website.
- Do not click on the links or attachments in suspicious emails.
- Never respond to unsolicited messages or calls that ask for your personal or financial details.
- Beware of any online advertisements that just feature a mobile number.
- Ignore requests to donate through a money transfer company as this is a popular scam.
- Only donate to online fundraising pages created by a person or organisation you know and trust. If in any doubt, contact the charity directly.

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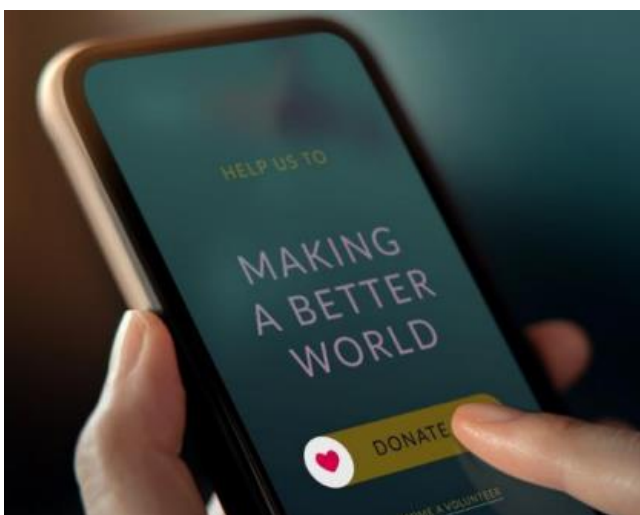
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HMRC Scams

To prevent tax refund scams, HMRC advises that they will **NEVER** request your personal or payment information via email.

If you receive an email claiming to be from HMRC regarding a refund, it is a scam.

Report any such emails immediately to - phishing@hmrc.gov.uk

For further information you can visit the HMRC web site at [Report suspicious HMRC emails, texts, social media accounts and phone calls - GOV.UK](#)

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HMRC
GOVUK:Our records show that your tax refund of £398.90 can now be claime.Please continue via:<https://ukhmrc-tax-refund.com> to claim your refund.



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Increasing us of Voice Cloning to commit Fraud

In voice cloning scams, criminals use Artificial intelligence (AI) technology to copy the voice of an individual. They can get a clip of a person's voice easily from a short chat on the telephone or via social media video and use that sample to generate voice cloning. Once they have the cloned voice, they can use it in a phone call, voicemail etc.

Just because the voice on the phone may sound like your parents, children or best friend it could actually be a criminal impersonating them and if your “loved one” is suddenly asking you for money urgently and out of the blue, it could very well be a criminal impersonating your family member’s voice.

Last year it was reported that some research conducted found that over a quarter (28%) of UK adults say they had been targeted by an AI voice cloning scam at least once in the past year. It means that millions of people in Britain could be at risk from this highly sophisticated scam.

How to protect yourself from voice cloning scams?

People are being urged to set up a ‘safe phrase’ that can be used to verify if the person you are talking to, really is who you think they are. Pick something memorable and only share it with your family and loved ones, that way if you receive an unexpected call and do not hear the ‘safe phrase’ you can remain vigilant.

Failing this, you can always use the ABC of Scam awareness and if you get a call requesting help, disconnect the call and ring the person back using a trusted number.

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AI VOICE CLONING



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Good news Story – Courier Fraud

Recently, you have been receiving a number of alerts in relation to Courier fraud. Our Teams have been working to identify and arrest those involved.

A suspected phone scammer has been arrested in Tunbridge Wells following allegations he posed as a police officer to steal cash from a pensioner.

The man was detained following a foot chase in a supermarket car park, where the victim had been instructed to attend after withdrawing several thousand euros.

Kent Police was initially called at 12.05pm on Tuesday 25 March 2025, to a report a man claiming to work as a fraud investigator had called the victim and told him there was suspicious activity connected to his bank account.

It is alleged the victim, aged in his 70s, was then given instructions to follow which included withdrawing large sums of money to hand over at a meeting place.

Fast track enquiries led officers to a Tesco car park in Pembury, where the suspect was pursued and taken into custody.

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Thai-Rye Wright-Lewis, 24, of Walton Green, New Addington, Croydon was later charged with conspiracy to commit fraud by false representation.

He was remanded in custody to appear before Medway Magistrates' Court on Thursday 27 March.

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Software Service Fraud

We have received reports this week from Kent residents being targeted by this scam.

But what is it?

Computer software service fraud occurs when fraudsters posing as legitimate companies, such as your internet service provider (ISP) or Microsoft, call to tell you that there is a problem with your computer.

They will say something like, there is a virus on your computer or there is something wrong with your computer or your router or internet connection are not performing properly. They might say that they can fix the problem for a fee, or alternatively they can compensate you for the problem you are experiencing. What these fraudsters really want is for you to unwittingly grant them remote access to your computer by installing software or visiting a particular website and for you to give them your payment details.

Legitimate companies like Microsoft and Google will never cold call and ask you for remote access to your computer or for your financial details. They advise anyone who receives such communications to hang up the phone.

If further assurance required, individuals can contact the firm directly using the phone numbers obtained from their contract or other trusted sources.

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