

Scam Marshal Newsletter

February 2024

Total Scam Marshals across the UK: 2,629



**NATIONAL
TRADING
STANDARDS**

Scams Team

Greetings readers and welcome to this February Newsletter.

Let's start this month of February with a rundown of what the National Trading Standards (NTS) Scams Team has been up to throughout October, November and December 2023.

The NTS Scams Team plays a vital role in identifying and referring individual victims of postal scams to local authority Trading Standards teams. The team collaborates with various partners to reduce harm and actively participates in multiple fraud programs.

Throughout the last three months of 2023, our investigations, preventive efforts, and disruptive actions, in conjunction with local authority support, have resulted in a financial saving of **£1,719,824**.

A few months ago, the team, worked with Barclays Fraud Team, and conducted two events in Bromley and Kettering aimed at raising awareness of scams among the public and local businesses. This initiative, which engaged over 800 individuals, involved spreading **Friends Against Scams** literature, providing advice on safeguarding personal information, and creating a platform for individuals to share their financial fraud experiences.

A notable accomplishment of the NTS Scams Team and its partners is the prevention of 2,502 clairvoyant-style mailings targeting elderly consumers. These mailings, demanding cash payments ranging from £40 to £80, have an average recipient age of 81. The team has successfully recovered over **£83,000** and is actively investigating the enablers of these mailings, identifying UK-based facilitators to disrupt the criminals behind them.

Additionally, the team is working with providers of serviced offices used to receive scam mailings, engaging with companies to close down accounts, and collaborating on investigations with the US Postal Service and Europol. The team has contributed evidence for the prosecution of two suspects extradited to the USA, and ongoing efforts aim to identify further UK suspects.

Furthermore, a joint effort with Kent Trading Standards and UK Border Force led to the interception of over 11,000 scam mailings intended for UK consumers. The carrier, based in Poland, terminated its contract with the sender in Romania. Intelligence suggests that these targeted mailings were directed at individuals who had previously become victim to scams.

Our dedicated team is diligently working behind the scenes to ensure your safety. With your backing and the support of local authorities, together we can create a positive impact.

Return address: FREEPOST, NTSST, MAIL MARSHALS

Scam Marshals! When sending in your scam mail, please remember to keep the letter/s in their original envelope and write the date it was received as it can help with our investigations! Thank You!

Unveiling the Tactics: How Criminals Secure Your Trust.

Perpetrators of fraud employ a variety of techniques to steal money and personal details. Interestingly, many of these schemes depend on a handful of fundamental psychological techniques.

Consider this: fraudsters often aim to create a sense of obligation in their targets by coordinating situations where victims feel obliged to reciprocate a kindness. For instance, in romance scams, criminals might shower individuals with affection and emotional support, fostering a sense of indebtedness that makes victims more susceptible to assisting when financial issues are introduced.

Fraud
address to
woman
- ORIGIN FROM
fraud /fro:
tended to
of thing:
PRIVATE

6 ways criminals win your trust.

Gain insight into the fundamental psychological tactics that form the basis of most frauds.

Reciprocity: Criminals aim to create a psychological impulse in victims to reciprocate a favour from someone they perceive as acting lovingly or generously.

Consistency: Criminals exploit our desire to demonstrate consistency in our behaviour over time. They achieve this by initially making modest requests and progressively increasing their demands.

Social norms: Criminals exploit our inclination to adopt certain beliefs or behaviours when it appears that others share the same beliefs or engage in similar behaviour." For example, most individuals tend to immediately help those in distress, especially when it involves their own children.

Liking: Criminals know that we tend to trust people who appear likeable and similar to ourselves. They might claim shared interests and launch a charm offensive, pretending to be genuinely interested in your life and showering you with flattery.

Authority: People tend to trust and comply with the requests of those perceived to be in a position of authority.

Scarcity: The habit to believe that rare goods, services, and opportunities are better than those that are abundant. For example, fake shopping websites use a large hourglass or timer to indicate the deal is about to end, panicking you into making a purchase before you've done any checks.

Action Fraud – 0300 123 2040 – www.Actionfraud.police.uk

Police Scotland – 101 (from within Scotland) - www.scotland.police.uk

Citizens Advice – 0808 223 1133 – www.citizensadvice.org.uk

Citizens Advice Scotland - 0800 028 1456 - www.cas.org.uk

www.FriendsAgainstScams.org.uk