Renters urged to spot signs of Tenancy Deposit Scheme fraud:

Action Fraud has received reports of fraudsters claiming to be landlords of rented properties online to trick people into paying upfront for ‘rent’.

Prior to viewing the property, the fraudster asks the victim to pay a deposit and in some cases a month’s rent upfront. They claim that the money will be protected by Tenancy Deposit Scheme and that the money is safeguarded under Government legislation. After the individual pays the money, the fraudster sends a bogus email claiming to be from the Tenancy Deposit Scheme confirming they have received their deposit. Victims are later discovering that the money is being sent directly to the fraudster and that they have been left out of pocket and with no home to move into as a result.

What you should do:

- Always make sure you, or a reliable contact, has viewed the property with an agent or landlord before agreeing to rent the property.
- Don’t be rushed or pressured to make a decision. Only transfer funds when you’re satisfied a genuine property, safety certificates and valid contract are in place.
- Only pay for goods or service by bank transfer if you know and trust the person. Payments via bank transfer offer you no protection if you become a victim of fraud.
- Once you’ve paid your deposit, you can check whether it’s protected by entering your tenancy deposit certificate code on the TDS website.

If You Are Affected

If you fall victim to any scam, report to Action Fraud on 0300 123 2040 or http://www.actionfraud.police.uk

If you would like support as a result of becoming a victim of any crime, contact Victim Support on 01926 682 693.

Paws for thought: fake pet adverts lead to over £3 million in losses

Fraudsters are advertising pets and pet accessories on online marketplaces at a lower than expected price in an attempt to attract victims. The fraudsters are then demanding full payment or a deposit for the animal via bank transfer or electronic wire.

Don’t get pugged off:

- If you’re purchasing goods and services from a company or person you don’t know and trust, carry out some research first, or ask friends and family for advice before completing a purchase. Remember, if an offer seems too good to be true, it probably is.
- Ask for photographs or videos of the animal; a responsible seller will understand why the buyer wants photographs and more information before making a purchase.
- Use the online marketplace’s ‘report’ function if you come across suspicious adverts or sellers.
- Sellers offering to meet you ‘halfway’ seems generous but you should only buy the puppy directly from the place where he/she was born and raised.
- When buying a puppy, you must insist on seeing the puppy interacting with its mother and littermates in.
March Cyber Scam Update

Instasham: Fraudulent investments being advertised.

Fraudsters are advertising ‘get rich quick’ investment; victims are then making payments via bank transfer to the fraudster’s bank account. Fraudsters are then sending screenshots of thousands in profit crediting their accounts, which they claim can be released for a fee. Victims have requested to withdraw their funds while they’re still in profit, and at this stage the fraudsters are stopping contact with the victim and closing the Instagram account.

Stay safe when scrolling:

- Never respond to any requests to send money, or have money transferred into your account by someone you don’t know and trust. These types of requests should always raise a red flag. If something feels wrong then it is usually right to question it.
- Don’t immediately agree to any offer that involves an advance payment or having to sign a contract on the spot. Always speak with a friend or family member first.
- Always check the credentials of any financial company on the Financial Conduct Authority’s (FCA) website: it should be on the register. Contact the preferred company directly and reject any offers made through unsolicited communications.

MONTHS TOP TIPS:

MONTHS TOP TIP:

Protect yourself from Viruses and Malware:

- Make sure your computer has a firewall and reputable anti-virus software. Without these, your computer has no defence to block infections.
- Take care downloading files. If you don’t know someone who’s sent you an email with an attachment, or you’re not sure about a website offering a file to download, don’t do it out of curiosity.
- Browse safely on the web. Get to know the risks and use the same level of caution as you would in the real

Keep up to date with the latest updates on Community Safety in Warwickshire.

Like us on Facebook: www.facebook.com/SafeinWarwickshire

Follow us on Twitter: @SafeInWarks

Visit our site: www.safeinwarwickshire.com

Don’t let flight ticket fraudsters take off with your cash

Victims are being cold called by fraudsters purporting to be travel companies. However fraudsters in these cases are using new tactics to gain the victim’s trust. Intelligence suggests they appear to know that the victim has recently been searching to book flights online. Once contacted, the victim wrongly believes the call to be genuine and a deliberately low quote for the desired flights tempts many victims into making payment.

Top Tips:

Action Fraud is urging people to be wary of unsolicited calls, emails and texts offering questionably good deals on flights. Remember, if it sounds too good to be true, it probably is.

If you’re purchasing tickets from a company you don’t know and trust, carry out some research first, such as searching the company’s name on the ABTA and ATOL databases. You can also ask friends or family for advice before you make a purchase.

Avoid paying for tickets by bank transfer as it offers you little protection if you become a victim of fraud. Instead, use a credit card or payment services such as PayPal.

Never reveal any personal or financial details as a result of an unsolicited call, email or text. Even if someone knows your basic details (such as your name and contact details), it doesn’t mean they are genuine.

If You Are Affected

If you fall victim to any scam, report to Action Fraud on 0300 123 2040 or http://www.actionfraud.police.uk

If you would like support as a result of becoming a victim of any crime, contact Victim Support on 01926 682 693.