

April 2018

Kent County Council has launched a countywide campaign urging residents to “Raise-A-Brow” before handing over personal details or money.

Criminals continue to target Kent residents with telephone, postal, doorstep and online scams causing devastation and financial hardship to victims. People are targeted by doorstep criminals and pressurised into paying for something they do not want or need. Everyone is plagued by unwanted telephone calls, postal or email scams and fake websites, all trying to trick us into losing money.

Criminals will use all sorts of tricks to convince people to give them money or personal details. They will:

- claim to be an official such as a Police Officer, HMRC or Trading Standards Officer;
- offer something too good to be true like a product at an unbelievable price or work on your house or garden at a much cheaper price than a reputable business would offer;
- use fear or intimidation to get what they want. For example, saying your bank account has been hacked, your bank card has been compromised or they are investigating a case on your behalf and they need your personal details;
- even send an email claiming to be someone from your family in trouble abroad and they need cash to get home.
- or state there is a problem with your roof that needs urgent attention.

As scams become ever more sophisticated and target people in a variety of ways everyone is at risk of falling for them.

Kent County Council wants to stop criminals prospering from scams and the best way to do this is to make people more aware so they don't respond at all. We're asking people to always question and #RaiseABrow. We want to spread the message about scams, so that every man, woman and child in Kent can spot a scam and not fall victim to it.

Rebecca Law, Public Protection Customer Information Manager at KCC, said: “Scams can be very sophisticated and often catch people out when they least expect it. “We are all at risk. We are urging people to check a website before paying online, say “NO” TO DOORSTEP AND TELEPHONE CALLERS, ask a friend if you are unsure, especially when someone is asking for your personal details or to hand over cash. By looking out for ourselves and each other we can stop these cowardly criminals from prospering. If in doubt, Raise-A-Brow.”

The best way to protect yourself is to always question, #RaiseABrow. Follow our campaign on Twitter [@kentprotect](#) or [Facebook](#) and send us your Raise-A-Brow stories. Everyone has a story to tell! To find out more about the kind of scams out there, how to protect yourself against them and who to report them to, visit: kent.gov.uk/scams

Facts about Scams:

- Anyone using digital tools including email, social media, smart TV's, mobile phones, internet enabled toys, or any other internet connected device is highly likely to be scammed at some point in their lifetime.

- Through the Stop the Scammers project, more than 2,000 postal scam victims have been visited who had been identified on a 'suckers' list – estimated loss to these victims is £608,000.
- Data shows that vulnerable residents in Kent receive about 55 nuisance calls per month and over half of them will be from criminals.
- In April 2017 Public Protection received over 226 reports from Kent residents stating they had lost money to a Cybercrime with a combined loss of £1.1 million. However, this figure is likely to be much higher as many people do not report online crime.
- In April 2017, Kent residents lost over £470,000 to investment and pension scams with one victim losing over £400,000 of their UK pension to a scammer who convinced them to reinvest in an international fund which later went into administration.
- People defrauded in their own homes are 2.5 times more likely to die or go into a care home within a year.
- You are 20 times more likely to be robbed at your computer screen than robbed in the street.
- With very modern cars, with keyless entry and ignition, keep key their fobs in the rear rooms of your house in a metal box, or wrapped in foil, to prevent criminals scanning the fobs codes whilst outside the front of your house, those codes they can use to access your car to drive away.
- Debit / Credit cards with "contactless use" where a PIN is not required for purchases, keep card wrapped in foil, to prevent criminals stealing the card details whilst it is in your wallet or purse. Using a scanner your card details can be grabbed by a criminal simply as they walk pass you.

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