

Kent Fraud Alert System



TO STOP FRAUD™

Mobile Phone Scam

A member of the Public (MOP) receives a call from a criminal impersonating their telecommunications company. They inform them that they are eligible for a special offer due to them being classed as a loyal customer. They offer them a new sim for a low cost or even a new phone upgrade. Once they have agreed, details are taken to set up the new contract and direct debit. The criminal uses these details to enter into a contract with a phone provider for a new phone. This phone will be different to any that the victim agreed to. This new device is delivered to the MOP address who then contacts the offender to state they have received a phone they did not order. The offender, still posing as a member of staff from the phone company apologies for the mistake and advises them they will order the correct device and send it out now but the victim has to return the device they have. The offender arranges for a courier to collect the package. This package is then delivered to the criminals and no new phone is ever ordered for the victim.

Remember our scam awareness message of ABC and Never Assume or Believe a call is Genuine and Always Confirm. If you get a call from a company, always ring them back via a trusted number and confirm that the offer is genuine.

If you are asked to return a device to a private address, then it is likely to be a scam.

Preventing fraud

Together,
let's stop
scammers.



Remember, ABC:



never Assume



never Believe



always Confirm



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](#)



**Kent
Police**

Report a non-urgent crime online www.kent.police.uk/report

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Action Fraud Alert – Booking.Com

Those using the platform Booking.com to book their holidays or accommodation are being warned they could be targeted with emails or messages requesting payments from hotels who have had their account taken over by fraudsters. Between June 2023 and September 2024, Action Fraud received 532 reports from individuals, with a total of £370,000 lost. Insight from Action Fraud reports suggests the individuals were defrauded after receiving unexpected messages and emails from a Booking.com account belonging to a hotel they had a reservation with, which had been taken over by a criminal. Using this account, the criminals send in-app messages, emails, and WhatsApp messages to customers, deceiving them into making payment and/or requesting credit card details.

The specific account takeovers are likely to be the result of a targeted phishing attack against the hotel or accommodation provider, and not Booking.com's backend system or infrastructure.

Booking.com and Action Fraud are providing the following advice on how to spot signs of fraud and protect your Booking.com account:

- No legitimate Booking.com transaction will ever require a customer to provide their credit card details by phone, email, or text message (including WhatsApp).
- Sometimes a hotel provider will manage their own payment and may reach out to request payment information, like credit card details – before providing any information, always verify the authenticity of communication between yourself and the hotel's account.
- If you receive any urgent payment requests that require immediate attention, like a booking cancellation, immediately reach out to the Booking.com Customer Service team via the details on the official Booking.com website and/or app to confirm.
- Any payment requests that do not match the information in the original booking confirmation should also be double checked and confirmed with Booking.com Customer Service before proceeding.
- Any messages purporting to be from Booking.com that contain instructions to follow links and/or open/download files should be treated with caution.
- If you have any doubts about a message, contact Booking.com directly. Do not use the numbers or address in the suspicious message and use the details from their official website.



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Courier Fraud

We have received a number of reports since in the last week of criminals telephoning and impersonating Police, in particular those in the Tunbridge Wells. There have also been reports in Tonbridge, Edenbridge, Maidstone and Sevenoaks.

The criminals are employing various methods from stating that they have arrested someone in possession of the victim's bank card to requesting financial information or asking victims to withdraw cash for a courier to collect as evidence. If you get any calls like this, STOP, it is a scam. The Police will NEVER ask you for financial details on the phone or request to collect your card or cash or gold as part of an investigation.

Remember the ABC of Scam Awareness and Never Assume or Believe a call is genuine and always Confirm.

If you get an expected call from someone claiming to be Police or any other organisation, then take their details and end the call. Then call back using a different phone if available. If another phone is not available, then wait 5 minutes and ring a family member or friend to ensure the line has been disconnected and then ring 101. Never call a number they have supplied and never ring 999 whilst still on the call with them. You must always disconnect the call first before ringing 101.

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.

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Have you been asked to withdraw cash by the police?

This is a scam.



The police or your bank will **never**:

- ask for your bank details or PIN
- ask you to transfer or withdraw and handover sums of money
- send a courier to collect your bank cards, cash or PIN

If you are unsure about a call or visitor you have received:

- Don't give out any personal or financial information.
- Hang up or close your front door to check the caller's identity.
- If they phoned you, wait 10 minutes before you use the phone again (or use a different telephone) in case they stay on the line.
- Contact their company yourself or dial 101 for the police – do not call a number they have provided.
- Report suspicious activity straight away.



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Fake Email Impersonating TotalAV

Action Fraud has received over 8,000 reports of emails purporting to be from TotalAV. For those of you not familiar with this name, they provide anti-virus software.

The email speaks about renewing your membership and asks you to click on a link.

However, this takes you to a malicious site designed to steal your personal information or even infect your device with malware. The scammers use official looking branding and language to make the email look convincing.

If you get an email like this or any other suspicious looking emails, you can report these by forwarding to report@phishing.gov.uk

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Romance Scams

We are seeing increasing reports of victims of Romance Scams where they believe they are in a relationship with a celebrity.

Criminals are experts at impersonating people. They spend hours researching, especially when committing romance fraud.

Additionally, they can also use the latest AI technology like Deep fake.

Deepfakes are digitally created and altered content often in the form of fake images, videos and audio recordings. In some cases, this deep faked content can take on the exact likeness of a real person EG a celebrity.

To find out how the criminals work and the signs of Romance Scams go to - [Romance scams | Action Fraud](#)

Remember, never send money or Gift Cards to a person that you have never met in person, particularly a celebrity.

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