

Devon, Somerset and Torbay  
Trading Standards Service



# Scams

How you can help your community to  
stand up against them.

Presentation by  
Janet Quinn and Ros Cummings  
Devon, Somerset and Torbay Trading  
Standards Service.



## What are they?

- Uninvited contact by email, letter, phone or in person
- Making false promises to con people out of money
- Fake lotteries, prize draws, computer support scams, romance scams....
- Also includes doorstep crime
- **All** crimes that can have a huge effect on victims' lives

## **An example**

- Grieving son discovers that his deceased Mum had lost her £100,000 life savings to postal lottery scammers
  - They sent her 100 letters a week for six years
  - Scammers told her to keep her 'winnings' a secret from relatives
  - Scammers sell each other victim contact details
- Her son discovered the crime 2 months after she died

## **Victim in North Devon**

- Very eloquent and meticulous lady (aged 82)
- Retired teacher
- Lives alone – not known to us or Police, minimal previous social services contact
- No financial worries – work pension etc
- Was promised increasing competition winnings, up to £980,000

## **Victim in North Devon**

- Over 6 months received a string of calls wanting taxes, insurance, duty, customs fees to release prizes...
- She sent money transfers to Spain and other locations
- Total loss: **£113,600**

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## The Scale of the problem



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- We have local cases where victims have lost up to £400,000
- At least 6 locally who have lost in excess of £100,000
- Average age of victim: **75**
- Average local loss: approximately £2500
- Nationally, estimated £5 to £10 billion lost per annum
- Only 5% of people report the crime
- 3.2 million adults - 1 in every 15 people - fall victim to scams each year



## **A typical victim – anyone!**

- People aged between 30 and 40 are more likely to report being scammed
- Social Media and email targets younger audiences
- People who are over 60 are more likely to be targets for scammers
- Anyone who is lonely or isolated
- Recently bereaved
- Change in circumstances – moved home, new job

## **Impacts**

- Shame and Embarrassment
- Can't afford living costs
- Depression
- Don't believe are being scammed
- Around 95% of our victims are not known to Social Services – we are often first people to discover them
- More likely to need authority support in the future
- May also need funding as they have lost their savings and sometimes property to scammers.

## **Impact on Resources**

Care Act 2014 puts all local authorities under a duty to safeguard and prevent individuals from financial abuse

- An adult with savings exceeding £23,500 is liable for 100% of their care costs

## Impact on Resources

- In a 2011 report “Unit Costs of Health and Social Care” the local authority cost of providing residential care for an adult is £1005 per week
- Keeping just ten adults out of full time residential care would save the authority over £5 million over a ten year period

## **Trading Standards' Role**

- One of our key priority areas - Supporting victims and preventing new ones
- We also have a wide variety of other roles:
  - Fair Trading, Food Standards, Product Safety
  - Animal Health & Welfare and Agriculture
  - Explosives & Petroleum safety
  - Weights and Measures

## **The National TS Scams Team**

- We have worked with the National TS Scams Team since 2014
- “Friends Against Scams” scheme raises awareness to prevent new victims
- Works with the police and other agencies seizing scam material to find details of potential victims.
- Seizing money sent to scammers to return to victims.
- We contact local victims to offer help and support

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## What are we doing?

Most scams originate from outside of the UK

### Support and prevention

- Share intelligence with the Police
- Working with Social Services and Safeguarding Boards to support and joint visits to victims
- Talks & awareness events with partner agencies and banks
- Sharing prevention messages – social media, press and media
- Awareness talks to Royal Mail staff

### Enforcement

- National Scams Team are working with foreign agencies to close down PO Box addresses and seizing scam mail.
- We respond to live doorstep crime incidents, and prosecute criminals who are based within the UK.

# Doorstep Crime

- The National Banking Protocol
  - Bank staff contact Police/Trading Standards when they think customers are withdrawing cash to pay a scammer or rogue doorstep trader
- We have had a significant increase in doorstep crime calls since its introduction
  - enables us to respond to live incidents of doorstep crime more effectively



# Devon, Somerset and Torbay Trading Standards Service Doorstep Crime



- [Taxi driver saves woman, 87, from losing her entire savings to scammers](#)

A taxi driver saved an elderly woman from losing her entire savings to scammers.

Don Welby, from Nailsea and Backwell Taxis, said alarm bells started ringing when the 87-year-old said she was about to withdraw all the money from her bank account. His quick-thinking then stopped the fraudsters from duping the potential victim.

Don said they were chatting in his taxi while he drove her to Natwest in [Clevedon](#).

## Romance Scams

- **Women 'victims in 63% of romance scams'**

**Victims of romance scams - the majority of whom are women - lost an average of £11,145 each last year, according to new figures.**

The data, from police reporting centre Action Fraud, showed that £50m was lost in these scams in 2018 when fraudsters pretend to be romantically attached.

Fraudsters trick victims into sending money or gather enough personal information to steal their identities.

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# Mass Marketing Scams

[Think Jessica](#)

<https://youtu.be/ZwXMsG2xkcM>

**The charity committed to protecting  
elderly and vulnerable people from fraud**

**Marylin Baldwin OBE Founder of the Charity.**

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## Buy With Confidence

- Improves consumer protection by providing the public with a choice of businesses they can trust and marginalises rogue traders.
- Promotes and supports good, reliable and trustworthy local businesses who are scheme members.
- Raises the standard of trading across Devon, Somerset and Torbay.



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- National scheme to prevent people becoming victims by raising awareness
- Enables communities and organisations to share prevention and protection messages.
- Minister of State for Security officially launched the campaign

## What can You do?



- Sign up to be a “[Scamchampion](#)”
- Promote scams and doorstep crime awareness in your community
- Work to address loneliness and isolation
- Encourage people to talk and learn about scams to stop them being victims
- Be a point of contact to help people report scams

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# What can You do?

<https://www.friendsagainstscams.org.uk/>



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## Contacts



To report a **fraud**, contact:

**Action Fraud** on **0300 123 2040**

To get **advice**, contact:

**Citizen Advice** Consumer Helpline on **03454 04 05 06**

