Kent Fraud Alert System

WhatsApp Scams Targeting Charity and Religious Groups

The scam begins when a criminal gets access to another WhatsApp account which has you listed as a contact.

The criminal posing as your friend or someone that's a member of a WhatsApp group you are a member of will then send you seemingly normal messages to try and start a conversation with you. However, around the same time, you will receive a text message from WhatsApp with a six-digit code. This is because the criminal has been trying to login to WhatsApp using your mobile number. The criminal will claim that they sent you their code by accident and ask you to help them by sending it to them. Once the criminal has this code, they can login to your WhatsApp account and lock you out.

The criminal will then use the same tactic with your WhatsApp contacts in an effort to steal more accounts and use them to perpetrate fraud and will often ask your conatcts to send money to a bank account as a charitable donation but it is all a scam.

What you need to do

- Action Fraud recommend you set up two-step verification to give an extra layer of protection to your account: Tap Settings > Account >Two-step verification > Enable.
- They added: "If a family member or friend makes an unusual request on WhatsApp, always call the person to confirm their identity.
- "Never share your account's activation code (that's the 6 digit code you receive via SMS)
- "You can report spam messages or block a sender within WhatsApp. Press and hold on the message bubble, select 'Report' and then follow the instructions."

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.

Kent Police

Contacting Kent Police

Report a non-urgent crime online **www.kent.police.uk/report**
Talk to us on LiveChat – available 24/7 **www.kent.police.uk/contact**
In an emergency, if crime is in progress or life is in danger call **999**
If deaf or speech impaired, text '**police**' and your message to **60066**
www.kent.police.uk

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Computer Software Service fraud

We have received reports from Kent residents of being contacted by criminals impersonating legitimate companies, such as your internet service provider (ISP) or Microsoft etc. to tell you that there's a problem with your computer.

They will say something like:

- there's a virus on your computer.
- or there is something wrong with your computer.
- or your router or internet connection are not performing properly.

The criminal might say that they can fix the problem for a fee or alternatively they can compensate you for the problem you are experiencing. What they really want is for you to unwittingly grant them remote access to your computer by installing software or visiting a particular website and for you to give them your payment details.

How to protect yourself

- Legitimate companies like Microsoft and Google will never cold call asking for remote access to your computer or for your financial details.
- Always be wary of unsolicited calls. If you're unsure of a caller's identity, hang up.
- Even if the caller can provide you with details such as your full name, don't give out any personal or financial information during a cold call. Never grant the caller remote access to your computer, never go to a website they give you and never install software because of the call.
- If you think you have downloaded a virus, consider having your computer looked at by a trusted technician to determine if malicious software was installed on your machine during the call.

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On line selling scam

If you are selling items online, be on the lookout for this scam. Criminals are posing as buyers on sites. They will often state they are "too busy with work to collect the items" but they will send a courier to your location to collect and pay you the cash for the item at the same time as collection. If you agree to this, the criminal will then ask you to pay an insurance fee on the cash payment which they will advise will be refunded when the item is received by them. The criminal will then send you an email that appears to be from a trusted delivery company. The email contains a link that you are encouraged to click and to pay the fee. However, the link will take you to a convincing looking website under the control of the criminals that is designed to steal your personal and financial information.

- Most legitimate delivery companies do not offer a service where a courier will carry cash payments and pick up an item.
- Be suspicious if a buyer on any online marketplace offers to pay for an item using a courier or another unusual method or if they ask you to pay any kind of insurance/delivery costs.
- Don't click on any links in suspicious emails. If you do click on a link, do not provide bank or security details and never download software on to your device.

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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TAKE FIVE TO STOP FRAUD™

Cost of Living Payments

Some householders in Kent will be eligible to receive the latest £300 cost of living payment directly from the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) between 31 October and 19 November.

You DO NOT need to apply or do anything else to claim the payment If you are eligible, you will automatically receive the money straight into your bank account.

These types of events often provide and opportunity for criminals to contact you and state that you need to apply and they will try to obtain your personal/financial data. If you get a phone call, email or text message like this, it is a SCAM.

You can report suspicious emails by forwarding to report@phishing.gov.uk or forward suspicious Text messages to 7726 (Spells Spam).

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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Finally, The Latest Fake Email Scam

The latest fake email is offering a free IPhone 15 Pro. All you have to do is click on a link within the email and you will be taken to a realistic looking web site, where you will be asked to complete an online survey to receive your free phone.

However, it is a SCAM and the criminals are the only winners as they will obtain all your personal and financial data, whilst you get nothing, except for the fact that they will take over your identity and order goods, take out financial services etc. all in your name for their benefit.

Action Fraud have reported that they have received over 2600 reports of this scam across the UK.

Remember, if it is too good to be true, then it is.

Report suspicious emails by forwarding to report@phishing.gov.uk

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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