

The Oasis Centre - Cornwall

Registered Charity Number 1139355, founded to serve the communities in the parishes of St Columb Major, St Mawgan-in-Pydar, St Eval and St Ervan



Looking Out for Special Offers

Number 31 in a series of notes on important issues.

Almost everyone has a story to tell about how they have managed to find something they particularly wanted to buy. It may have been found in a small shop round the corner, in a store in a neighbouring town or perhaps in the big city. It is excellent value for the money and its discovery has given the finder a lot of satisfaction.

Hunting round the shops or ‘retail therapy’ is an activity that millions of us find rewarding. It takes time however and does not always suit everyone, particularly if time is short or there are mobility issues. The alternative solution is the Internet, where almost anything can be found and purchased with the click of a button from a comfortable chair. Criminals are well aware of this popular shopping alternative and take advantage of it.

There are many stories of unfortunate shopping experiences through the use of the Internet. Goods ordered and paid for may not arrive, may not even have existed or may turn up as a brick in a box. These stories are becoming well known and Internet shoppers are increasingly more cautious. Criminals seek another angle to try. One such angle is to make it more difficult for the shopper to realise that they are being defrauded. Different ‘products’ are offered.

Action Fraud have received reports of posts, pictures and advertisements on social media offering insurance cover at desirable prices. Once money has been transferred to the fraudsters posing as insurance brokers, contact has sometimes been severed with the victim altogether. In other cases, insurance has been purchased on behalf of the victim but immediately cancelled enabling the bogus brokers to pocket the refund.

Some fraudsters seek out victims looking for cheap flights abroad. Victims have booked tickets via websites or a ticket broker only to discover, after payment via bank transfer or electronic wire transfer, that the tickets and booking references are counterfeit. In some cases, all communications have been severed. Those fraudsters have been targeting individuals seeking to travel to African nations and the Middle East, particularly those wishing to travel in time for popular public and religious holidays.

The National Fraud Intelligence Bureau reports that fraudsters target the public, via social media, in relation to football tickets. The fraudster posts pictures or statuses on line telling people to contact a mobile number for football tickets. This leads to a mobile messaging conversation during which bank details are provided to the victim so that the tickets can be purchased. After payment, the fraudster blocks further conversation, leaving the victim without the tickets and out of pocket. This scam could equally apply to other events such as popular concerts.

Jeremy Simmonds – Chair, The Oasis Centre - Cornwall