



SCAM and FRAUD ALERT

From Hampshire and IOW Neighbourhood Watch

Investment Fraud

Between Sept 2019 and Sept 2020, Action Fraud reported that losses due to investment fraud totalled £657.4m. Across Hampshire, cases of investment fraud spiked during the summer months when people spent more time indoors due to the global pandemic, culminating in losses of approximately £10.3m to local residents – a 24% increase on the previous reporting period.

How to keep safe from investment fraud

1. Be suspicious if you are contacted out the blue about an investment opportunity. This could be via a cold-call, an e-mail or an approach on social media.
2. Don't be rushed into making an investment. No legitimate organisation will pressure you into making a transaction, or committing to something on the spot. Take time to do your research.
3. Seek advice from trusted friends, family members or independent professional advice services before making a significant financial decision. Even genuine investment schemes can be high risk.
4. Use a financial advisor accredited by the Financial Conduct Authority. Paying for professional advice may seem like an unnecessary expense, but it will help prevent you from being scammed.
5. Use the Financial Conduct Authority's register and warning list to check if a company is regulated www.fca.org.uk/scamsmart. If you deal with a firm or individual that isn't regulated, you may not be able to get your money back if something goes wrong and it is more likely to be a scam.
6. Just because a company has a glossy website and glowing reviews from 'high net worth' investors does not mean it is genuine – fraudsters will go to great lengths to convince you they are not a scam.
7. Think twice before handing over bank account details or sensitive information. Remember, if something sounds too good to be true, it probably is.

If you think you've been a victim of an investment fraud, report it to Action Fraud online at www.actionfraud.police.uk or by calling 0300 123 2040.