

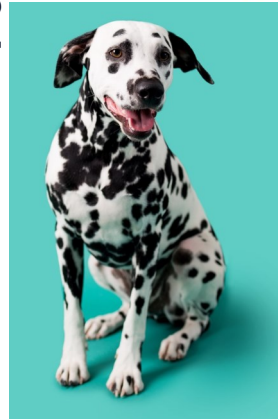
Essex Police Fraud Alert System

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30th July 2021

RUFF TIME FOR ANIMAL LOVERS AS SCALE OF PANDEMIC PET FRAUD UNLEASHED

Action Fraud is reminding animal lovers to take extra care when buying a pet online, as new figures show more than £2.5 million has been lost to criminals through fake pet adverts.



#PetFraud 🐾

Could you spot the signs of pet fraud?

ActionFraud
www.actionfraud.police.uk

Capitalising on the rise in people getting pets due to the national lockdowns caused by coronavirus, criminals have been posting fake adverts on social media, online marketplaces and specific pet-selling platforms.

Unsuspecting victims will be asked to pay a deposit for the pet without seeing it in person first, with many criminals using the restrictions caused by the pandemic as a reason why. After the initial payment is made, more and more funds will be requested to cover additional costs such as insurance, vaccinations and even delivery of the pet.

How to protect yourself

- **Do your research** - especially if you're making a purchase from a website or person you don't know and trust. Look up reviews of the website or person you're buying from. Or check the seller's feedback history
- **Trust your instincts** - if you're unable to view the animal in person, ask for a video call. If you're buying a young animal, make sure you're able to see the mother and rest of the litter. Any responsible seller will understand why you want to view the animal in person. If the seller declines, challenge them on why. If you have any suspicions, do not pay any money until you're certain it's genuine.
- **Choose your payment method wisely** - always avoid paying by bank transfer. Credit card or payment services such as PayPal give you a better chance of recovering your money if you become a victim of fraud.
- **If things go wrong** - Anyone can fall victim to fraud. If you think you've been a victim of fraud, contact your bank immediately and report it to Action Fraud online at [actionfraud.police.uk](https://www.actionfraud.police.uk) or by calling 0300 123 2040.



If you or someone you know is vulnerable and has been a victim of fraud, please call **Essex Police** on 101
Report fraud or attempted fraud by contacting **Action Fraud** at [actionfraud.police.uk](https://www.actionfraud.police.uk) or call 0300 123 2040

Keep up to date with fraud and
do **even more** Online **at** [essex.police.uk](https://www.essex.police.uk)

