

Essex Police Fraud Alert System

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14th August 2020

Sellers urged to be aware of car buying scam

We have been made aware of a scam targeting car sellers, involving oil being poured into the water reservoir of the vehicle they are looking to purchase.

In a case in Colchester, three individuals came to look at the vehicle in question. Whilst two kept the seller distracted at the rear of the car, the third is believed to have poured oil into the water reserve. Following a short test drive the buyers then proceeded to request a large discount on the price of the vehicle due to 'damage'.



The garage that proceeded to fix the vehicle has stated that this is a common scam used to pay a lower price. Those selling vehicles are advised to be vigilant when conducting viewings.

Potential Moonpig Data Breach



moonpig

We are seeing many reports of suspicious transactions on individuals Moonpig accounts. People are reporting their accounts being 'hacked' and criminals are using them to order large amounts of alcohol, flowers and chocolates.

Residents are advised to update Moonpig passwords and security settings to prevent them falling victim.

If you believe you have been a victim of this fraud, you should :

- **Contact Moonpig**—Customer services line 0345 450 0100 (9:30am-5:30pm, Mon-Sun)
- **Contact your bank**—if you are unable to contact Moonpig, contact your bank who may be able to stop the payment
- **Contact Action Fraud**—report to action fraud via their website (www.actionfraud.police.uk) or their phone line, 0300 123 2040

Instagram users lose over £350,000 to investment scams

Action Fraud received 164 reports during June 2020 of ‘money flipping’ resulting in a loss of over £350,000.

These investment scams involve users being approached via the instant messaging feature offering an ‘investment opportunity’ that will only cost a few hundred pounds.

Once the money is ‘invested’ a variety of excuses are provided as to why their money and returns cannot be returned. Finally, all contact is severed and the victim is blocked by the suspect. The money is often requested via bank transfer or cryptocurrency which makes the money virtually impossible to retrieve.

Investment schemes are usually associated with older people and significantly larger losses, however this scheme is targeting people in their 20s and 30s looking for a quick and easy way to make money.



Spot the signs:

- **Unsolicited offers**

Never respond to messages to send money or have money transferred through your account, especially by someone you don't know or trust and has messaged out of the blue

- **Investment Opportunities**

Don't be rushed into investing—legitimate organisations will never rush or pressure you into making a transaction on the spot.

How to protect yourself:

- **Seek advice first**

Speak with a trusted friend or family member, and seek independent financial advice.

- **FCA Register**

Use the register provided by the Financial Conduct Authority to check if the company is registered and regulated.

For more information read the full Action Fraud article here:

<https://www.actionfraud.police.uk/alert/164-instagram-users-report-losing-over-350000-to-investment-scams>