

Issue 9

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LONDON

Community Watch magazine



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So when you're thinking about choosing your next tradesperson, take the guess work out of your decision and don't be the victim of a rogue trade.



More than 1000 people may have been scammed in a huge pension fraud

Global pension scam

The Serious Fraud Office has launched an investigation into an alleged £21million global pension fraud affecting 1000 people

By Peter Faulkner

A GLOBAL investigation has been started by the Fraud Squad after more than 1,000 investors lost up to £121 million in an alleged pension fraud.

Police officers and civil servants are among the inexperienced investors who allegedly piled money into so-called storage pod schemes.

The schemes are targeted at those with a locked pension who want a better return or, in some cases, to release some of the pension.

Promoters of the scams persuaded clients to buy a long lease on a storage unit or pod - containers that are used to store belongings - and rent it out in the hope of making a good return which seldom worked out

Investors were guaranteed returns for two years which were much higher than interest rates at the time. But all the funds the investors put their pensions into collapsed.

Now the Serious Fraud Office, working with Spanish authorities, has opened an investigation into the Capita Oak Pension and Henley Retirement Benefit schemes, Self-Invested Personal Pensions as well as other storage pod investment schemes.

Omni Trusts Limited of the West Midlands were trustees of the Henley scheme and were wound up by the Insolvency Service in 2015.

Imperial Trustee Services Ltd, based in Bromley, Kent, was also placed into provisional liquidation in 2015. It was trustee of an occupational pension fund run by Capita Oak Pension Scheme.

The investigation includes the Westminster

Pension Scheme and Trafalgar Multi Asset Fund which also invested in other products. It is understood 1,000 is a conservative estimate for the number of savers affected, and the SFO has asked anyone affected to complete a questionnaire.

The SFO is working with the National Crime Agency and the Pensions Regulator on the investigation. This investigation is part of a group of agencies known as Project Bloom, which was set up to tackle pension freedom fraud after laws introduced in April 2015 meant savers could access their pension pot as cash or reinvest it. But this left them vulnerable to scammers.

Directors of the suspended, Cayman Islands-domiciled Trafalgar Multi Asset Fund agreed to wind it up and to distribute its remaining assets to the trustees representing the investors to whom the assets belong, including STM Fidecs, International Investment understands.

Most of the investors in the fund were informed last year that a wind-up was likely. The fact that the fund is now to be wound up was explained in a letter, seen by International Investment, to the fund's investors, which was dated January 13 and signed by Richard Reinert, a director of the Nascent Fund SPC, an umbrella fund that the Trafalgar Fund is a part of.

Stephen Doran, of Doran + Minehane Ltd, which had carried out the investigation into the fund's status, was appointed voluntary liquidator.

Little is known about the Trafalgar Multi Asset Fund, which was managed by Victory Asset Management, run by James Hadley and Tom Biggar.

Visit of US cops

THE City of London Police welcomed six reserve deputies from the Orange County Sheriff's Office (OCSO) in Florida to the Square Mile as part of a learning exchange between the two police services.

Arriving last month, the Floridian officers first met with Commander Richard Woolford and Special Constabulary Commander James Phipson before touring our control room. The first day of the visit concluded with a guided tour around the Old Bailey.

As part of the trip that focused on sharing information and best practice between the different forces the reserve officers visited the City of London Police public order training facility in Gravesend.

The visit concluded with the visiting officers joining their UK counterparts on patrol in the Square Mile and iconic landmarks such as St Paul's Cathedral.

Earlier in the year, six City of London Police special constables visited the Orange County Sheriff's Office where they toured the central Florida Courthouse, attended demonstrations by OCSO Specialty Units and joined reserve officers out on patrol.

Sex offences

AN Uckfield man has been given a 21-month prison sentence for sexual offences.

John Bartram, 61, retired, of Furnace Way, Uckfield, appeared at Lewes Crown Court having previously pleaded guilty to seven counts; three of making indecent images of children, three of voyeurism and one of taking indecent images.

He was also given a Sexual Harm Prevention Order (SHPO) for ten years, severely restricting his access to children and computers, and will also be a registered sex offender for ten years.

DC Martin Harmer of the Sussex Police Paedophile On-Line Investigation Team (POLIT), said: "Mr Bartram refused to acknowledge the harm of his covert recordings and tried to blame the police for hurting those victims by tracing them and disclosing the facts to them."

Judge Christine Laing said: "This was a gross abuse of trust, particularly with regards to the vulnerable child. You have failed to understand the breach of trust and blamed the police for disclosing to them."

Home and away

It's a load of bales

FARMERS in Lincolnshire are being warned not to be taken in by a scam getting them to store waste bales on their land for cash.

According to police, landowners in the county are currently being targeted to illegally store waste bales on their land in exchange for storage payment.

No official documentation is received in respect of the contract and two farmers have been found to have had hazardous waste left on their land for which they now face a bill of up to £3,000 and £300,000 to have removed.

Lincolnshire Police are warning farmers to ensure that any contact by these contractors is reported to the Environment Agency and the police. You should ensure correct paperwork is in order - Waste Carriers Registration; obtain the name of the carrier and registration details of the transporting vehicle.

Judge in IQ surprise

A MAN with the lowest IQ a judge has ever come across pleaded guilty to cheating state benefits of more than £100,000 - but the judge accepted he had been 'exploited' by his late parents.

Duncan Bangs, 61, of Main Road, Shurdington, Lincolnshire, had undergone several IQ assessments, with the lowest of them being 44. This was the lowest "intelligence quotient" his Honour Judge Tabor QC said he had ever seen.

Bangs pleaded guilty at Gloucester Crown Court to four charges of making a false representation to obtain a benefit, with the offences dated between March 2002 and February 2012.

The judge said Bangs had pleaded to offences that did not have the word "dishon-

esty" in the charges and that these were now much less serious offences than he had originally faced.

As well as having an exceptionally low IQ the court was also told that Bangs could not read or write. The judge remarked that his parents "exploited his vulnerabilities and disabilities."

The court heard that some of the proceeds from the benefit fraud went on expensive motor cars with personalised number plates.

Sentencing Bangs to a 12 month conditional discharge and ordering him to pay compensation of £77,300 within 12 months, the judge said: "Your IQ is the lowest I've ever seen. It is staggeringly low, and in other reports it doesn't get any higher than 65.

Crooks payback time

FOUR businessmen sentenced for running an illegal tobacco plant have been ordered to pay back over £170,000 in profits or face a custodial sentence

James Anderson, 58, from Solihull, Phillip O'Brien, 54, from Stratford upon Avon and Nicholas Edmunds, 54, from Walsall, were running a tobacco factory from industrial units they rented in the Wythall area of Birmingham

During a raid in 2013 HMRC investigators seized more than 1.3 tonnes of raw leaf, shredded and hand rolling tobaccos, as well as equipment to shred, spray and package the products.

A fourth man, Bradley Bailey, 29, laundered the cash for the gang.

At a confiscation hearing at Birmingham Crown Court, Anderson was ordered to pay back £150,000 or face 18 months in prison. O'Brien has to pay back £20,178.70 or face eight months in prison and Edmunds has to pay back £2,367.50 or face two months behind bars.

All three men have three months to pay up!

£21,000 benefit cheat

A TEACHING assistant was convicted of fraud and handed a prison sentence after claiming more than £21,000 in housing benefit and council tax discounts she was not entitled to.

Sonia Reguieg, of Sish Lane, Stevenage, claimed benefits from the borough council by claiming to be a single parent living at her council house between 2007 and 2016.

Stevenage Borough Council became suspicious about her claims in 2016 when she applied to buy her house and declared that her partner had just moved in with her.

A six-month investigation by the Hertfordshire Shared Anti-Fraud Service revealed that Reguieg had been living with her partner continuously since 2007, but she had never declared this.

As a result of being dishonest about her circumstances, she fraudulently obtained more than £21,000 in various benefits and discounts from the council.

Having pleaded guilty to two counts of fraud at Cambridge Crown Court, Reguieg received a seven-month prison sentence that was suspended for 18 months.

Non stop fraudsters

STATISTICS have revealed that around 50 suspected social welfare fraudsters are reported by the public every day.

Figures from the Department of Social Protection which shows that last year they received 18,744 anonymous tip offs about suspected social welfare fraud.

That is just over 50 a day, an increase of 13 per cent on the 2015 figures.

Jobseeker's Allowance was the benefit most often reported, followed by one-parent family benefit.

The report goes on to say that 80 per cent of the reports came via the online report form on the Department's website, with 14 per cent made by phone call.

The remaining six per cent were by letter.

Bank staff stop a scam

BANK staff foiled an scam to persuade a pensioner to pay more than £1,000 for a small amount of gardening.

Two rogue traders called at the woman's house in Barton on Sea and carried out what police described as "minor maintenance" in her garden.

They demanded hundreds of pounds for the job and drove her to a nearby branch of Lloyds Bank so she could withdraw the cash. But staff became suspicious and alerted police. No money changing hands.

A police spokesman said: "Some gardening work was carried out. The elderly woman was taken to the bank to withdraw cash but a bank employee contacted us and the crime was prevented. Two men are suspected to have been involved."

Rise in ID fraud victims

THE number of people falling victim to ID fraud has risen to the highest level since records began.

In 2016 173,000 cases were recorded by 277 banks and businesses, according to Cifas fraud prevention service.

Identity fraud represents over half of all fraud and 88% of this is online fraud. Young people are much more likely to be victims, the number of under-21s being defrauded has risen from 1,343 in 2015 to 1,803 in 2016.

In 2016 Cifas also saw increases in victims over 40, with 1,869 more victims than the year before.



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The illegal extension Zoofshan Malik built to rent out rooms

The rogue landlords

Council's hit dodgy landlords in the pocket with fines approaching £300,000 while one landlord was also ordered to wear a tag

By Peter Faulkner

THREE London councils have sent out a message to rogue landlords that they will be caught and they will be punished.

Snaresbrook Crown Court has just hit **Zoofshan Malik** with a huge £235,000 fine after she illegally built a 37-foot extension - and then illegally rented out rooms at her Barking home.

Just across the river in Battersea, landlord **Joel Zwiebel** from Hackney, and his property company Interpage, found guilty last November of two charges under the Protection from Eviction Act, has now been ordered to wear a tag and pay £5,000 in court costs and compensation.

And at Westminster Magistrates Court, London, **David Symonds** admitted a series of offences under the Housing Act and breaches of HMO regulations and he was fined £57,000 for keeping an unlicensed deathtrap.

Zoofshan Malik's filthy bedsits were described Councillor Laila Butt, Barking and Dagenham Council cabinet member for community safety, as "not looking out of place in a Rio slum".

She said living conditions were so bad they were like a Rio favela and Malik was raking in £2,850 every month from the bedsits.

Barking and Dagenham council officers raided the property after they received an anonymous allegation about the 37ft extension.

They discovered the four flats in "filthy conditions", which Ms Malik rented out through her company Emerson Knight Estates Ltd.

The 47-year-old, of Upney Lane, Barking, was ordered to pay a £222,000 in three months or spend two years in prison. Malik was also fined £2,000 for the illegal extension with three months to pay or face 30 days in jail and ordered Malik to pay £11,649 in costs.

South London landlord **Joel Zwiebel** has now

been fitted with an electronic tag after "unforgivable" treatment against Ms Angela Agyemang, after she complained the damp conditions in her south London flat were damaging her son's health.

Ms Agyemang had briefly refused to pay her rent when multiple calls about leaks and damp in the Battersea property went unanswered by Zwiebel.

Wandsworth council brokered a deal for her to clear her arrears in exchange for repairs. But Zwiebel reneged on the agreement and she came home from church one day to find he had sent round Derrick Stuart — previously the subject of a BBC Rogue Traders investigation — to rip out her fuse box and gas meter.

She suffered campaign of harassment that included turning off her electricity and heating in the middle of winter.

Even worse, he finally locked her out of the flat with all her possessions inside, leaving the pair homeless.

Interpage, which had already been fined £4,000, was told to pay increased costs of £3,500 and £1,000 compensation. Stuart, who did not appeal, was fined £1,500 and ordered to pay £2,500 costs and £1,000 compensation.

David Symonds was the landlord of a 1950s four-storey, mid-terraced building, was let to six tenants in Kensington & Chelsea.

Environmental health officers from the Borough inspected the flat after being alerted by the fire brigade, which had been called out to a fire at the property.

Though the property did have a battery-operated smoke detector in the ground floor hallway, officers found a number of safety breaches that included dangerous wiring, no safety gas certificate and escape routes blocked, in one case by a gas cylinder.

Officer sacked

A MEMBER of police staff has been sentenced for theft and possession of indecent images.

Adrian Milton, 48, a property officer based on Croydon Borough was imprisoned for two years for theft at Croydon Crown Court.

He was also sentenced to eight months in prison for four offences of possession of indecent images of children and one count of possessing extreme pornography.

The sentences are to be served consecutively.

The charges followed a Directorate of Professional Standards (DPS) investigation that related to two mobile phones and shotgun ammunition believed to have been stolen from a criminal exhibits store.

Dip squad axed

BRITISH Transport Police's specialist 'Dip Squad', which targeted thieves operating on London Underground, has been axed.

The work of the squad, which has clocked up hundreds of arrests of pickpockets in recent years, will now be divided between two teams.

A spokeswoman said: "We'll have a dedicated team of detectives responsible for investigating theft of passenger property in London and the South East."

"We'll have six 'proactive' teams in London, responsible for carrying out patrols to target offenders and reduce crime. Previously, all of this work was done by the Dip Squad."

Body cameras

OFFICERS from Hackney have taken to the streets wearing Body Worn Video (BWV), following the borough's official launch.

The Body Worn Video is being issued to around 500 of Hackney's frontline police officers and Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs).

Additional cameras will also be available for specialist departments. The cameras have already shown they can help bring speedier justice for victims.

Case histories

EAST LONDON

CHADWELL Ward in Redbridge received reports from residents regarding suspicious activity at a house and police found a fully functioning cannabis factory - the third factory in Chadwell within the last 18 months.

ESSEX

A 38-year old man was arrested on suspicion of cultivating cannabis after a complex growing operation was uncovered by police in Thorndon, Brentwood. Outbuildings contained sophisticated drug-growing set-up, including hydroponic lighting.

KENT

POLICE swooped on a house in Welling, Kent, last year after a tip from Crimestoppers and found 200 cannabis plants, all of which were destroyed along with hydroponic equipment.

MIDLANDS

A RAID on a £600,000 house in the posh suburb of Gillhurst Road, Birmingham, uncovered over £300,000 worth of cannabis.

CAMBRIDGE

A TIP-off from a member of the public led police to discover a cannabis factory at a house in the Cambridgeshire village of Arrington. They found 100 plants valued at £115,000.

SURREY

A quantity of cannabis plants and bagged cannabis were found at a property on Chipstead Valley Road, South Croydon, during a drugs raid in February. It was discovered by an officer on the beat.

SUFFOLK

THREE men were arrested after a cannabis factory in Lowestoft in Suffolk was raided and plants valued at £300,000 seized.

BUCKS

LARGE quantities of cannabis were seized by police during a raid on an Aylesbury house in 2012 as part of ongoing operations against drugs in the town. Three hundred plants were taken away.

How to kick up a stink

Cannabis farms and factories are springing up across the country, now police are offering advice on how to detect one in your area



By Peter Faulkner

CANNABIS factories have been uncovered across London as well as in Essex, Kent, Surrey, Suffolk, Sussex, Thames Valley and across the Midlands. But how can you spot a factory where you live?

Police say cannabis growers are moving away from commercial and industrial sites towards ordinary houses. But how can you spot a cannabis farm in your street?

Cannabis growing in the suburbs is soaring, with about 21 farms or factories being discovered every day, a new report by the Association of Chief Police Officers says.

The problem has persisted for a while, with insurer Aviva reporting a 30% year-on-year increase in cannabis damage claims as criminals turned to rented houses to cultivate plants.

Now the Association of Chief Police Officers says most of the cannabis consumed in Britain is home-grown and is urging the public to keep an eye out for suspicious behaviour in their neighbourhood.

In 2009 almost 7,000 cannabis farms were raided and in 2011 the figure rose to nearly 8,000. And householders might just want to know for their own sake too.

So how can you spot an illegal drug farm on your doorstep?

Unlike many criminal enterprises, there are telltale signs of cannabis cultivation, according to commander Allan Gibson, Acpo's lead officer on the subject.

The first thing to look out for is people setting up shop, he says.

"Most of the properties are rented accommodation, and when they move in, they'll bring a lot of equipment with them.

"It will be ventilation equipment and lighting equipment for irrigation, grow bags, soil - it should stand out as unusual, which is why criminals tend to try and move in when they will be unobserved," he says.

Gibson says the next thing cannabis growing gangs tend to do is adapt the premises - often by creating venting through floors or re-wiring - but this can easily go unnoticed as plenty of new tenants renovate properties.

Another thing cannabis growers' neighbours might notice is their absence - or their coming and going at odd hours.

"They won't be sociable neighbours, they will want to keep a low profile," says Gibson.

"So if cannabis growers live in permanently, they will barely be seen - and if they are maintaining more than one growth site, they will come and go in the early hours or at night," he says.

The other is covered-up windows - often constantly pulled curtains or black-out blinds - so nobody can see into the premises and the right temperature is maintained.

Rick Stephens, from West Midlands Police's cannabis disposal team, agrees windows - usually blackened or "polythened" - are a common giveaway, but he says criminals are getting increasingly sophisticated about covering their tracks.

He says initially plants require about 12 hours of artificial light every 24 hours. Growers tend to do this at night, which means it can sometimes be spotted.

Concerned neighbours can also look out for condensation on windows, unusual levels of heat coming from a property or compost and soil in plastic bags, dumped by rubbish bins.

By Peter Faulkner

ONE in 10 people are now a victim of fraud or online offences. Figures show that you are now 20 times more likely to be robbed while at your computer by a criminal based overseas than being held up in the street.

The explosion in online fraud and cyber-crime saw almost six million offences committed last year, meaning around one in ten adults in the population fell victim.

Fraud has now become the most prevalent crime in the country with people ten times more likely to become a victim than they are to suffer a theft.

Unlike many traditional crimes, the victims of cyber offences are drawn from all ages, all social backgrounds and all areas of the country, meaning that no-one who uses a computer regularly can feel safe.

Four common cyber crimes:

1. Phishing – The aim is to trick people into handing over their card details or access to protected systems. Emails are sent out that contain either links or attachments that either take you to a website that looks like your bank's, or installs malware on your system.

2. Identity theft – According to fraud protection agency Cifas, the number of victims rose by 31 per cent to 32,058 in the first three months of 2015. Criminals use online 'fraud forums' to buy and sell credit cards, email addresses and passports.

3. Hacking – In a Verizon study of security breaches there were 285 million data exposures, which works out to about nine records exposed every second. 26% of these attacks were executed internally within organisations. It is estimated that 90% of all data records that were used in a crime was a result of hackers employed by organised crime.

4. Online harassment – Over half of adolescents and teens have been bullied online, while 73% of adult users have seen someone harassed in some way online and 40% have experienced it.

It is the first time an official estimate of the scale of the problem has been collated after questions about fraud and cyber offences were added to the Crime Survey of England and Wales.

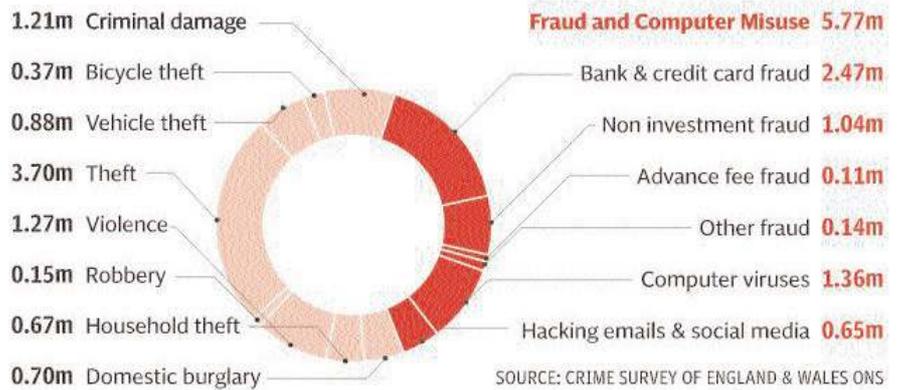
One in ten people are now victims of cyber attacks and fraud. Taking out the figures for fraud and cyber offences, crime generally dropped by six per cent over the past 12 months, with 6.3 million people reporting that they had been a victim of some sort of offence, even if they did not report it.

However the figures for murder, knife and gun crime and sex offences were all up, year on year.

Unlike with traditional crime, criminals can target their victims from miles away and clear their bank accounts without ever coming into contact with them.

Cyber-crime covers a wide range of offences including bank and credit card fraud, online shopping rip-offs, hacking and even so-called

Fraud & cyber-offences shown as a proportion of overall crime



Robbed, by laptop crooks overseas



Commander Chris Greany

romance scams where people are persuaded to part with thousands of pounds by people posing as their lovers online.

In many cases the perpetrators are based overseas, but are able to gain access to people's bank accounts remotely by conning them into revealing personal details and passwords.

The victims are sometimes not even aware they have been targeted until they realise their savings have been raided, by which point it is often too late.

If you're a victim of fraud:

Victims are told to first report the scam or fraud to Action Fraud, the national reporting centre for cyber crime and fraud.

Action Fraud passes the report to the National Fraud Intelligence Bureau. The NFBI then analyses the case to find out if there are any viable lines of enquiry. If there are, the report is sent to the police for investigation.

The police unit may not have the resources to dedicate to investigating the fraud even if it

receives the report.

According to independent charity, the Fraud Advisory Panel, victims outside of London have even less chance of their fraud cases being investigated.

If there are insufficient viable lines of enquiry for an investigation, the NFBI holds the report in case new leads emerge.

Figures collated by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) only cover the last six months, so are still regarded as "experimental" by statisticians. But indications are that fraud and computer misuse accounted for 5.8 million crimes last year.

Of those, 2.5 million were bank and credit card fraud, one million consisted of online shopping scams and around 108,000 were romance type scams.

Around 1.4 million people suffered computer virus attacks, with almost 650,000 people reporting that their email or social media profile had been hacked.

Because so many cyber criminals are based overseas, it makes it extremely difficult for the police to investigate and bring the perpetrators to justice. Computer users are therefore urged to take precautions when liaising with other people online and engaging in financial transactions.

Commander Chris Greany, of the City of London Police said: "Fraud and cyber-crime is something which is perpetrated from all corners of the globe.

"Unlike with traditional crime, criminals can target their victims from miles away and clear their bank accounts without ever coming into contact with them.

"Given the nature of this threat, victims must do everything they can to protect themselves; always being wary about who they are interacting with online and taking time to think before making any online transactions".

London court news

New judge admits dyslexia makes life more difficult

An Indian-origin woman has become the first non-white judge to sit at the Old Bailey Court of London. Anuja Ravindra Dhir, who was advised to take up hairdressing by a teacher at her high school, is also the youngest circuit judge currently to sit at the court.

The 49-year-old was called to the bar in 1989 where she practised for 23 years as both prosecutor and defence counsel. She said that she is often mistaken for a witness or a defendant since she entered the legal profession.

"I remember going to a crown court out of London and the man at the gate didn't believe I was a barrister. In the end I had to show him my wig and gown before they would actually let me into the building," she said.

"I'm dyslexic so I find it difficult to read and write. And when I went to school in the 1970s in Scotland, women were not encouraged to aim high.

"When I first said to a teacher at school I wanted to go to university when I was older, she told me that I should aim a little lower and suggested I try hairdressing instead," she recalls.

Dhir donned her judge's robes as a circuit judge at the Central Criminal Courts, known as at the Old Bailey, in London earlier this year.



Anuja Ravindra Dhir

Knives on the streets

A TERRIFYING "zombie-slayer" knife was being carried on the streets of Ealing by a teenager and is a frightening example of how youngsters go armed today

The 17-year-old boy, who cannot be identified for legal reasons, was arrested in October last year after he was seen carrying the weapon .

He was spotted with the blade among a large group of people fighting in Kenilworth Gardens, Southall , the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) said.

The teenager was found guilty of possessing an offensive weapon at Ealing Magistrates Court.

He was also found guilty of using threatening and abusive words, before he was sentenced to an 18-month detention and training order last month. The court gave him a three-year criminal behaviour order

A betrayal of trust

A MAN who betrayed his position of trust to sexually abuse two girls has been jailed. Stephen Thomas, 30, of Sedgcombe Avenue in Kenton, was sentenced to 17 years' imprisonment at Isleworth Crown Court.

Thomas was found guilty of four counts of sexual activity with a child, one count of rape of a female under 16 years of age and one count of inciting a child to engage in sexual activity following a two week trial.

In January 2015, Thomas started a sexual relationship with a 13-year-old girl [Victim 1] from Hounslow. The girl's father had suspicions of sexual activity between the two after seeing his messages on his daughter's Facebook account.

On 8 June 2015, the father caught Thomas

sexually assaulting his daughter and he called the police. Thomas was arrested that day and bailed pending further enquiries.

During the investigation, it was reported that Thomas had a sexual relationship in 2008 with a 15-year-old girl (victim 2) who was a pupil at the Hounslow school where he worked at the time.

He was no longer working at the school in 2015 when he started abusing victim 1. Thomas was charged with various sexual offences on 22 April 2016, including rape.

Profiteering tenant

A COUNCIL tenant who illegally sublet her house has been given a suspended prison sentence.

Lisa McDermott made a profit of nearly £16,500 during a two-year period by leasing out her property in Earl's Court .

She had moved out of the home in July 2013 after buying a property with her husband in Battersea.

McDermott, was given a nine-month prison sentence suspended for two years.

She had failed to declare that she was no longer living at Hunter House in Old Brompton Road , having purchased a new home in Wynter Street, Battersea in July 2013.

The 37-year-old sublet her Kensington and Chelsea property until March 2015, when the deception was uncovered.

Homophobic rant

A MAN who shouted homophobic abuse at a walker to scare him off Barnes Common and assaulted another man has been sentenced to an 18-month community order.

Robbie Wohanka, 29, was convicted of one

count of assault by beating, and one of using threatening/abusive/insulting words, after a trial at Wimbledon Magistrates Court on 10 March.

He was sentenced to an 18-month community order with a 200 hour unpaid work requirement over the incidents which took place in March and April 2016.

The court applied an uplift to the sentence after the CPS successfully argued that the offences were motivated partly or wholly by the victims perceived sexual orientation.

Possession of a gun

A MAN has been jailed for the possession of a firearm with intent to endanger life and a string of other offences.

Kyle Kiffin, 21, of Hermitage Road, Crystal Palace, was also convicted of possession of ammunition, the supply of Class B drugs and possession of Class A drugs having previously pleaded not guilty at Kingston Crown Court and was sentenced to 12 years and eight months.

On 5 September 2016, officers from the Met's London Crime Squad attended the home address of one of Kiffin's associates on Field Way in New Addington to complete a firearms search warrant.

During the search of the house a loaded .22 calibre pistol was recovered and the woman who lived at the address was then arrested.

Kiffin was stopped by armed officers as he made his getaway and upon being searched was found to be in possession of four rounds of live ammunition, 25 wraps of cannabis and a quantity of suspected Class A drugs.

The ammunition was of the same calibre as the firearm and matched the ammunition found loaded within the gun.



Criminals will access our computer then demand a bitcoin ransom

Don't pay the ransom

Make sure you take precautions and keep your computer updated if you don't want to become a victim of the latest ransomware

NEARLY 100 countries are thought to have been affected by the ransomware cyber attack that crippled the NHS, and disrupted banks and telecommunications companies globally.

It is believed to have been the biggest attack of its kind ever recorded.

Russia appeared to be the hardest hit with its interior and emergencies ministries and biggest bank, Sberbank, being targeted and around 1,000 computers infected.

Researchers with security software maker Avast said they had observed 57,000 infections in 99 countries, also citing Taiwan among the top targets.

Spain's Telefonica, a global broadband and telecommunications company, was among the companies hit while Portugal Telecom and Telefonica Argentina both said they were also targeted.

International shipper FedEx Corp said some of its Windows computers were also infected while Ukraine and India were also on the hit list.

And as the virus began to spread Japanese computer experts said around 2,000 PCs had been affected while the Chinese news agency Xinhua reported that almost 30,000 had been hit.

What is ransomware?

Ransomware is a virus which can take over any device or computer and freezes its files.

Hackers then use it to hold the recipient to ransom, asking for money in return for access to their documents. The ransomware is spread when a victim clicks a bad link.

It can also be shared in an email or in some cases hackers could booby-trap a website they know employees will visit, like a government portal.

The ransom is generally paid in bitcoin, a digital currency which offers relative anonymity to people who receive payments.

Security experts always advise against paying a ransom, as hackers will sometimes destroy the files anyway.

The WannaCry ransomware, which locks computer systems and demands \$300 (£230) in Bitcoins, hit over 200,000 computers in one day and the impact continued to be felt across the following weekend.

Thousands of pounds has already been paid out in ransoms according to analysis of Bitcoin wallets.

Criminal gangs have been known to send out thousands of these emails, called phishing scams, in the hope that just a few will click on the link.

Ransomware notices come with a link where the victim can deposit bitcoins.

Personal computers, laptops and mobile phones are also prone to attack and we have listed opposite the steps you can take to make sure you are not a victim.

Handy hints

Tips on how to prevent infections by ransomware:

TIP 1

Have security software installed and up to date. With new malware variants running every day, having a set of old virus definitions is almost as bad as having no protection.

TIP 2

Make sure all the software on your system is up to date. This includes the operating system, the browser and all of the plug-ins. Keeping software up to date helps minimize the likelihood that your system has an exposed vulnerability on it.

TIP 3

Make sure you are leveraging the full set of protection features delivered in your security product. Symantec and Norton products include five distinct layers of protection: Network (Intrusion Prevention), File (traditional AntiVirus, Reputation (Insight), Behavioural (SONAR) and Repair (ERASER and Norton Power Eraser).

TIP 4

If you are running XP then make sure you download the emergency Windows XP patch. This will protect you from the Wannacry attack that hit 100 countries.

TIP 5

Back up your computer. If you have a back-up copy of your files, the ransomware threat rings hollow. And think beyond ransomware. Over time, your computer's file system faces a growing chance of becoming corrupted and unreadable.

TIP 6

Be aware of security risks. Follow basic security protocol. Don't click on questionable links or open suspicious attachments.

TIP 7

If hit, act immediately and shut down your network.

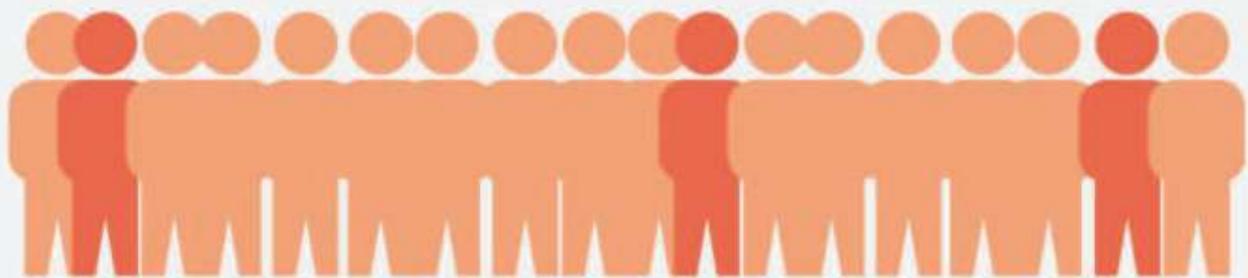
TIP 8

If you face a ransom demand experts say don't pay it because it doesn't guarantee your files will be restored.

Checkatrade.com

Where reputation matters

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When you need work doing around your home, finding reputable trades is difficult. Can you really trust them? Since 1998 Checkatrade has been a FREE service giving you the background information you need to make a confident decision when inviting trades into your home.

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So when you're thinking about choosing your next tradesperson, take the guess work out of your decision and don't be the victim of a rogue trade.



Holidaymakers enjoying the sun in Benidorm

The travel fraudsters

British tourists to Spain may soon be asked to prove that they have food poisoning in a bid to stop a claims epidemic

By Peter Faulkner

BRITISH holidaymakers are facing a backlash in Spain for making up food poisoning allegations, backed by now-in, no fee companies.

Spanish hotels have decided they have had enough of British dishonesty and are fighting back to weed out the cheats.

The scam has become so widespread since summer 2016 that Benidorm's hotel association, Hosbec, has demanded that British tourists should have to produce a prescription in food poisoning cases "to provide evidence that the complaint is real and not a scam".

And one of the top operators, Jet2, has hired private detectives to tour Spanish hotspots popular with Brits including the Costa del Sol, Majorca and Tenerife, and weed out the cowboy claims management companies.

According to the Hospitality Business Association of Benidorm and the Hotel Business Federation of Mallorca, Brits are fleecing the industry of more than £50million a year with dodgy gastroenteritis compensation claims.

And the latter is backing hoteliers calls for a block on Brits taking popular all-in breaks. In Benidorm hotel owners have asked chemists not to sell tummy upset cures to Brits unless they have a prescription amid fears receipts will be used for over-inflated illness claims.

Until now the dishonest tourists have waited till they got home to England to make a claim – with no-win no-fee solicitors queuing up to line their pockets.

Under new proposals British tourists would have to get a prescription for common over-the-counter sickness medications to show that a doctor has diagnosed food poisoning.

Affecting the whole sector Hosbec President

Antoni Mayor told Spanish daily newspaper El Mundo that the step is also being considered by other destinations popular with Brits.

"There can be no sense of impunity because it is a problem that we cannot allow to go any further," Mr Mayor said. "It is not just something that is happening in Benidorm or the Costa Blanca, but something that is affecting the entire sector."

The scam involves British tourists claiming poor quality hotel food has given them food poisoning in a bid to get their money refunded.

They often wait until they have returned to the UK – too late to obtain proof of the food poisoning from a local Spanish doctor – and then file cases with small claims courts or complain directly to their tour operators.

Some unscrupulous no-win, no-fee solicitors have even left Spain and there have been reports of lawyers driving around popular resorts in vans with signs such as "claims clinic".

Contracts between British tour operators and hotels state that the financial responsibility rests with the hotel, so if the travel operator refunds the customer the hotel pays the price. This leaves Spanish hotels and resorts in an extremely vulnerable position.

It is estimated the Spanish hotel industry has lost /60 million (£52 million) in the last year alone.

On its website the Foreign Office warns British holidaymakers of legal action if they are found to have made false claims.

"You should only consider pursuing a complaint or claim if you have genuinely suffered from injury or illness. If you make a false or fraudulent claim, you may face legal proceedings in the UK or Spain," said the website.

Sexual predator

A MAN from Fulham has been sentenced to a total of 14 years in jail for raping two transgender sex workers.

Jorge Gil Jawhar, 24, a Spanish national who lived on Merrington Road had pleaded guilty to two charges of rape, one attempted rape and one charge of theft. He was sentenced at Isleworth Crown Court.

He attacked his two victims at their home addresses after arranging to meet for sex.

Detective Inspector Suzanne Jordan of the Met's Sexual Offences Exploitation and Child Abuse, who led the investigation, said: "Jawhar is a dangerous sexual predator who used violence against his vulnerable victims for his own gratification and I am pleased that he will now spend a long time behind bars.

"He targeted his victims and thought that because of the nature of their work, his offending would go unreported.

"I would like to stress that the Met is committed to seeking justice for all victims of sexual offences.

"It is quite possible that there are other victims of Jawhar who chose not to report the crimes. We would urge them to come forward and speak to police."

Vicious attack

TWO men who randomly targeted a pair of middle-aged brothers walking home at night in a violent attack have been sentenced to a total of 20 years in prison.

Jamal Hislop-Whall, 24, of Copleston Road, Southwark, and Derron Brown, 24, of Harewood Gardens, Croydon, were both jailed for ten years each at Inner London Crown Court.

They were each previously convicted of two counts of robbery, one count of grievous bodily harm, and one count of actual bodily harm, at the same court in March.

The original attack happened on 25 September, 2016, just after midnight, when the victims, two brothers aged 57 and 34, were walking back home to Longfield Estate, in Bermondsey, following a family party.

Both brothers were viciously attacked, being repeatedly punched and kicked. The elder of the two was dragged down the concrete steps of the block and left unconscious, requiring urgent medical assistance by London Air Ambulance.

Female burglar

A WOMAN has been jailed for four years after committing a distraction burglary against a vulnerable 83-year-old woman which led to her falling down the stairs.

Rachel Dineen, 35, of Well Street, Hackney, was sentenced at Wood Green Crown Court to four years' imprisonment after pleading guilty to burglary.

On Monday March 27, the victim was at her home address in Lauriston Road, Hackney, when she heard a knock on her door.

She was confronted by Dineen who claimed that someone had died in an upstairs premises and asked the victim to use her telephone.

Without warning, she then entered and walked immediately into the victim's bedroom. After several moments she emerged attempting to conceal the victim's handbag which she had stolen.

When challenged by the victim, Dineen, a self-confessed drug addict, made a bid to leave the flat.

The victim attempted to retrieve her handbag which led to her falling down the stairs.

Dineen then fled the scene, ignoring the victim's plight and failing to seek medical assistance for her.

Fortunately, the victim was able to summon assistance from neighbours who immediately alerted police. She was taken to hospital and required stitches to a leg injury.

20 year sentence

A 20-year-old drug-runner from London has been sentenced to 20 years behind bars for murdering a Norwich man.

Hassiem Baqir, from Howberry Road, Thornton Heath, was found guilty of murdering 38-year-old Steve Stannard at Norwich Crown Court.

Steve Stannard was found dead outside his flat in Bowers Avenue on Saturday November 5, 2016. He had been stabbed six times.

The court heard Baqir had travelled from London to Norwich to deal drugs from Steve Stannard's home in Bowers Avenue. It was during Baqir's visit that he was murdered.

A magnificent effort

Watch group and OWL messaging service have raised £10,000 for the Macmillan nursing service from their online store



Sandra Jackson and Gary Fenton (volunteers), and Georgia Clark (Macmillan Cancer Support)

NEIGHBOURHOOD Watch volunteers in Hertfordshire have helped people protect themselves from becoming a victim of crime while also raising funds for good causes.

In September 2016, volunteers set up an online store so the public could buy home security and personal safety products at a discount and profits would be given to good causes.

Founder of www.OwlProtect.uk, Gary Fenton, said: "We're thrilled to have raised £10,000 for Macmillan across the UK, which is a cause close to my heart. Sadly, everyone knows someone who has, or had, cancer and realises what an awful time it is for them and their family.

"Macmillan nurses are like angels who have the time and skills to support the family. I would like everyone who needs a Macmillan nurse to have access to one.

"To raise money we sell low-cost security products to keep people safe from contactless credit card theft, burglary, phone scams and other crimes.

"It's run by volunteers and many products have national police approval. If people buy from our online shop to improve their own safety they're also helping to fund good causes."

Popular products include nuisance telephone call blockers, Patlock door security devices (recently featured on BBC's Dragons Den), window vibration alarms and OWL Card Minders which are

credit/debit card protectors that prevent contactless theft without the owner's knowledge and which were featured on BBC's Rip Off Britain last Autumn with national treasure Angela Rippon.

Volunteer Sandra Jackson, of Kings Langley in Hertfordshire, said: "It's been really rewarding being involved sending out orders across the UK, knowing that people will be less likely to be a victim of crime.

"Since September I've posted nearly 21,000 OWL Card Minders across the UK - from the top of Scotland to the Channel Islands, and from Northern Ireland to East Anglia.

"Knowing so many people are better protected from being a victim of crime is very satisfying"

Macmillan's Fundraising Manager, Georgia Clark said: "Just one of the ways we could use the money that www.OwlProtect.uk has raised this year is to keep a typical Macmillan Information and Support Centre stocked with all the information resources

"it needs to support people affected by cancer for three years. These resources would include booklets, guides, directories and leaflets.

"We are grateful to www.OwlProtect.uk who have chosen to support Macmillan as one of their local charities."

The online security shop at www.OwlProtect.uk continues to donate all profits and welcomes new customers wishing to improve their safety and see good causes benefit.

Spotlight on Southfields Neighbourhood Watch

This article was submitted by Southfields Neighbourhood Watch and highlights the excellent work done by both the Watch and by local Safer Neighbourhood Teams. If you feel your Watch is worth publicising please send us an article, with photographs, to: Peter Faulkner at peterfau67@gmail.com



‘It’s about community and care’

THE Safer Neighbourhood Teams in Hanger Hill, South Acton, Acton Central, East Acton, and Southfields are never short of crimes and problems to solve and their recent successes include - taking a drug dealer off the streets; catching a registered sex offender breaching his licence; shutting down an illegal tenancy; visiting schools and combatting street drinking and begging; evicting travellers; bringing thefts down at a kids fun centre.

It's all in a days work for them, but the police will acknowledge that their success can only be due to the eyes and ears of residents – or collectively, the local neighbourhood watch.

Enter Dr Suzanne Tanswell who knows that becoming involved with a Neighbourhood Watch group and dragging it into the 21st century takes determination, it takes commitment, it takes energy.

That's exactly what Dr Tanswell did when she was approached by Southfield Safer

Neighbourhood Team to set up a watch group in the area. Having run the Southfields Park Triangle Residents Association, where together, residents and committee members, worked with the Council Safer Community Team and the Police to improve safety in the neighbourhood, Suzanne knew how to organise

In a recent interview for the Acton News newsletter, she explained how she has helped to develop a successful Watch group and what her aims and ambitions are. Then interview was carried out by PCSO Stuart Honey (Southfield/Ealing)

“The real value of Neighbourhood Watch is to be able to provide 360° feedback between the community and the police, to increase vigilance, to share any advices that help reduce opportunities for crime to be committed, and indeed to encourage the reporting of “anything that is unusual”.

“Neighbourhood Watch is also not just about crime and disorder, it also brings a sense of community and care. When there is care the crime rate will drop.”

Why do you think this revamp of Neighbourhood Watch was necessary?

“From my feedback, it seemed that the public’s confidence in the police was weak and residents felt that the police had become distant.

“They received little or no feedback about local crime and consequently had no real involvement in community protection.”

What are the most important things that you have been able to introduce in the wards where you are engaged so far?

“I always believed that the public has a vital role in intelligence gathering and sharing and in increasing community vigilance. Both are critical components required to help the police in their fight against crime.

“My aim was therefore to recruit and to galvanise new active watch co-ordinators, to have a fresh start, and to give all SNTs a platform to inspire confidence in local policing.

“Furthermore, we have

been able to provide the police with regular opportunities to engage with the public especially in residents associations questions and answer sessions, just to be there to talk, to give advice, and to provide answers to any local concerns.”

What has this actually achieved?

“We have seen many benefits. Burglaries have gone down in Southfield and the police have most recently made two arrests in two weeks directly as a result of information provided by members of our network. Local feedback now indicates that our neighbourhoods have started to see the police as members of the community and we have got a real readiness from the communities to engage and to support our local Police Team.”

What else is NHW doing to benefit the community?

“Watch coordinators contribute a great deal and we have now have redefined the role to include support for victims of crime which in itself is a means of enhancing cohesion in the community.

“In Southfield, the NW team assisted the police and registered over 400 Smartwater kits and when I say registered, I emphasize that co-ordinators actually sat down with their neighbours and completed the registration but more importantly demonstrated the kit and marked two-three items for each household.

“Watch co-ordinators meet regularly to share good practice and their success stories with the police also attending these meetings. They listen to the co-ordinators’ feedback and provide the latest crime related insights.

“We have already had four meetings in our first year in Southfield. This is an activity which when replicated it will reap benefits across the entire Cluster . The streets covered by ‘Neighbourhood Watch’ now have windows stickers and lamppost signs (and of course Smartwater stickers) all of which make our area far less inviting for potential offenders and even we hope, one day, a NO-GO area for criminals.”

What ideally would you like to see in the Cluster?

“Another 200 Neighbourhood Watch volunteers! With the support of all the Sergeants and dedicated ward officers I would like to expand Neighbourhood Watch and help it achieve its full potential right across the cluster. Together we can make a difference!”



Dr Suzanne Tanswell



Criminals are using Sir Richard Branson's name to sell dodgy investments

'Don't let crooks win'

Virgin boss is warning residents to be vigilant when considering investments because they could easily lose their life savings

SIR Richard Branson, one of the world's richest men, has issued a warning to people across the country who are considering putting their money into investments.

The founder of the Virgin Group, wants people to be vigilant about investing money when he revealed criminals are using his name to trick people and steal their savings.

It comes at a time when binary fraud is rising and City of London Police warns that criminals are using is warning the public about the growing problem of criminals using the reputation of prominent people to give investments credibility

Sir Richard Branson has spoken out after growing increasingly frustrated by fraudsters claiming that he, or his companies, are involved or invested in them.

Sir Richard said: "I am determined to prevent anyone being confused into giving money or their personal information away on a false pretence. My advice is don't fall for this scam.

"These scams can be terrifyingly deceptive and I would urge everyone to look out for these stories and report them as soon as you see them."

Victims have contacted Sir Richard Branson when they have discovered that their investments are worthless or non-existent.

Fraudsters often use aggressive sales techniques or names of prominent people or business locations to entice victims to invest.

Action Fraud, the national fraud and cyber crime reporting centre, has seen a large increase in reports of binary options fraud with the num-

ber of reports tripling in the last financial year, with the financial losses increasing from £2million to £13million during the same period. Binary Options are not currently regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA), so investments in them are not protected by the UK's financial services complaints and compensation scheme.

Some countries have banned the trading of binary options.

Fraudsters posing as Binary Options traders on social networks often use the promise of unrealistically high returns on 'investments' to lure potential victims.

Detective Superintendent Glenn Maleary said: "We seen an increase in binary options fraud in the last two of years. Opportunist fraudsters have taken advantage of an unregulated market and done everything can to defraud unsuspecting investors.

"Anyone who invests in binary options should be vigilant about who they are trading with and should follow our protection advice to ensure that they don't fall victim to what is becoming a commonplace investment scam".

Fraud may be occurring if trading platforms:

Offer a higher than average return; refuse to credit customer accounts; break all contact with the customer; manipulate software to distort prices and payouts.

Protect yourself against Binary Options fraud and always remember: if it seems too good to be true, then it probably is.

If you think you have been a victim of fraud you should report it to Action Fraud.

Brits targeted

FRAUDULENT calls made to the UK by international criminal gangs are on the rise, having almost doubled in the last 12 months.

According to a new report from fraud protection and authentication company Pindrop, 52 per cent of fraudulent calls made to UK financial institutions in 2016 originated from countries outside of the UK.

This is up 24 per cent compared to 2015, indicating the growing prominence of call centre fraud as an international crime.

According to the 2017 report, almost 90 per cent of fraudulent calls made to the UK used mobile phones and internet calls, suggesting these go-to tools for fraudsters have further facilitated the international reach of the calls made.

Of the calls analysed it was also found that almost none of the calls hitting UK call centres oriented from landlines

A novel idea

ELDERLY people who own shares have been warned to be alert to investment fraudsters offering "too good to be true" deals.

There has been a spate of attempts by swindlers from overseas companies cold-calling investors and trying to scam money from them.

The con artists tend to target people over the age of 55 and use psychological games to trap unwitting victims.

They will also use pressure tactics, like forcing share owners to act quick or make decisions on a "special deal".

The Irish Stock Exchange and the Central Bank have warned people with investments to be on their guard.

Lloyds payout

LLOYDS Banking Group expects compensation payouts for victims of fraud at the hands of former HBOS staff to total around £100 million.

The lender said that it will pay compensation for "economic losses, distress and inconvenience" as part of a package of measures to assist victims.

This includes providing interim payments on a case-by-case basis to help those in day-to-day financial difficulty as a result of the fraud covering "reasonable" fees for professional advice



PA spent company cash on visits abroad, including holidays in Rome

PA stole company cash

Agency worker spent £34,000 of her company's income on luxury holidays, designer clothes, taxis and five star hotels

PERSONAL assistant Sophie Franklin was the envy of many workmates with her expensive designer clothes and luxury holidays to Milan, Rome, the Greek island of Pathos, Tahiti, Bora Bora and Hong Kong.

Besides jetting round the world in style, she also stayed at top class hotels and took taxis everywhere.

What her friends didn't know, until now, was that the £34,000 spree was all done on a company credit card which her Bermondsey bosses, Circle Square Agency, knew nothing about.

Miss Franklin, 30, from Basildon, Essex, revealed all when she first appeared at Inner London Crown Court where Judge Owen Davies refused to send her to prison. Instead he deferred the hearing for four months to monitor her progress in paying back the stolen money.

Franklin defrauded Circle Square Agency over two years while working as the office manager, but was rumbled in February last year when she left the agency and her replacement discovered a catalogue of black holes in the company accounts.

When she returned to court, the judge stuck to his promise not to jail Franklin, telling her "hate sending women to prison. You should be in the community where you belong.

"The picture I get is you have learned your lesson, you have become a lot more mature since the making of these fraudulent transactions", he said, sentencing her to 18-months in prison suspended for two years and 100 hours of community service.

"The punitive element should not be incarceration for a woman of 31 who has no previous convictions and has not offended before - you

should be in the community where you belong."

Franklin, who wiped away tears as the sentence was passed, has paid back £34,000, largely thanks to donations from friends and family, but still owes the ad agency another £4000 which it spent investigating her fraudulent payments.

The court heard she racked up more than £7,000 in taxi fares, £4,418 on phone bills, and more than £1000 on Apple products.

She had been employed as office manager and personal assistant to the managing directors, handling travel and accommodation, office supplies, signing off expenses, and paying mobile phone bills.

"You have consistently used your position to use the funds available to you to live a life beyond what you were paid for", said the judge. "The sum of money that was paid by the firm and which you defrauded did not in any way reflect what you needed to have."

Franklin's barrister said she had a new job at advertising agency FCB Inferno in Covent Garden as a senior talent partner and her bosses were standing by her despite the fraud conviction.

But Judge Davies said he had been contacted by FCB Inferno who said they only learnt of the conviction when it was reported in the press.

He said it was possible Franklin had been "economical with the truth", but said he would sentence on the basis she had told her new employers about the criminal case.

The court heard Franklin was dismissed by FCB Inferno after the last court hearing in January and is now working as a waitress.

She was ordered to pay the remaining money back to Circle Square within the next year.

Pavement parking

LAWS allowing local authorities to ban pavement parking in London should be rolled out across the country to crack down on inconsiderate motorists endangering lives, councils say.

The Local Government Association (LGA), which represents more than 370 councils in England and Wales, says all councils need extra flexibility to introduce bans if needed.

This could free up congested pavements and stop pedestrians – particularly the blind and parents with prams and babies – from having to walk out into roads and risk their lives.

Disgraced GP

DISGRACED doctor Sanjay Chatterjee, placed on the sex offenders register in 2011 after being convicted of, sexually assaulting a patient, has been back in the dock.

Under the terms of the order, the 52-year-old, of Perch Close, Larkfield, Kent, needed permission from the authorities if he wished to travel abroad, and also had to notify them of any changes to personal documents, including passports.

But last January, he took a trip to Kolkata, India, following the death of his father to sort out family affairs then returned to India in July to accompany his sick mother-in-law.

Then his wife took him to Portugal on holiday and also travelled to Kolkata in July – all on a new passport..

Chatterjee appeared before Sevenoaks Magistrates' Court, where he admitted four counts of failing to comply with these requirements.

The bench said he showed no regard for the law and he was sentenced to 84 days in prison, suspended for a year, given 200 hours of unpaid work and told to pay £200 costs.

CONTACT US

London Community Watch is published by Who Can You Trust and produced by County Media Enterprises. Contact editor Peter Faulkner on 07958-475392 or 01268 566743 or email him at peterfau67@gmail.com

London mayor Sadiq Khan warns the terrorists will not win

LONDON was back on terror alert this month for the second time this year after bombers went on another killing spree in Borough Market, Vauxhall and London Bridge.

As we went to press seven people had lost their lives and almost 50 were being treated in hospital.

The attack followed the cowardly bombing at Manchester Arena that claimed 22 lives and left more than 60 people injured.

That prompted Prime Minister Theresa May to raise the threat level to critical, the highest it has been for 10 years.

Now three attackers drove a vehicle at people on London Bridge then began stabbing people randomly in Borough Market.

It came just a couple of months after six people were killed by a suicide bomber on Westminster Bridge.

In response the Metropolitan Police have put in place pre-planned responses to make London a hostile environment for terrorists, to provide reassurance to local communities and to maintain our usual service to the public.

Their response included the deployment of the military to provide static armed guards at key sites such as Buckingham Palace, Downing Street, Embassies and the palace of Westminster.

· They are also providing additional police patrols at certain locations, such as transport hubs, places of worship, school routes and crowded places like football and concert stadiums.

More armed officers have been patrolling on foot and in vehicles. The locations, deployments and tactics employed will vary continuously in order to avoid predictability.

· They are reviewing security arrangements for upcoming events and there will be additional measures in place at many of these events in the coming days.

Meanwhile, specially trained officers are providing security advice to businesses, event organisers and venues across London.

"We know that some of our communities will feel a heightened sense of concern," said a Met spokesman.

"Borough police across London are engaging with their local stakeholders and through their local networks, providing support and reassurance to vulnerable communities, with the business community, schools and faith premises.

· "Safer Schools officers will be reaching out and available to reassure pupils and answer questions they have.

"As well as reaching out to reassure local partners and communities, local police are actively monitoring community tensions.

· "We encourage people to report any hate crime to police. The message remains as it always has been; we will not tolerate hate crime and will investigate all reports that are



Soldiers arrive in London to keep the capital's residents safe from terror

Police step up war on terror on London's streets



Mayor Sadiq Khan

made to us. The public are encouraged to remain calm but vigilant

· "We need our communities and key partners to help us to keep London safe and to thwart the terrorists who seek to divide us and undermine our way of life.

· "We need all our partners to encourage communities to remain calm but vigilant.

Community intelligence is a key part of our response and we are urging people to immediately report anything that causes them concern or raises their suspicions.

· "If the public see something suspicious we ask them to ACT. Action Counters Terrorism; report anything you've heard that could identify a terrorist threat by calling 0800 789 321. In an emergency always call 999 - #ActionCountersTerrorism.

Mayor Sadiq Khan said: "I want to reassure all Londoners and visitors that we are doing everything possible to protect our city.

"I am in constant contact with the Metropolitan Police and we are liaising closely with the Government and security services.

"Our emergency services prepare day in, day out for these situations. Our plans are well rehearsed and well prepared.

"I would urge all Londoners and visitors to remain calm and vigilant, and to report anything suspicious to the police.

"London stands in solidarity with the people of Manchester. Those who seek to harm and divide us through barbaric acts of terrorism will never succeed. We will never be cowed by terrorism."