

July 2016

Dear Parents, Carers and Students

In 2015, just fewer than 24,000 people aged 30 and under were victims of identity fraud. This is up from 15,766 in 2014, and is more than double the 11,000 victims in this age bracket in 2010. The figures have been published on the same day as a new short film launched online to raise awareness of this type of fraud.

Filmed in a London coffee shop in March this year, the film uses hidden cameras to capture baffled reactions from people caught in a stunt where their personal data, all found on public websites, is revealed to them live on a coffee cup.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yrjT8m0hcKU>

What is identity fraud?

Identity fraud happens when a fraudster pretends to be an innocent individual to buy a product or take out a loan in their name. Often victims do not even realise that they have been targeted until a bill arrives for something they did not buy or they experience problems with their credit rating.

To carry out this kind of fraud successfully, fraudsters usually have access to their victim's personal information such as name, date of birth, address, their bank and who they hold accounts with. Fraudsters get hold of this in a variety of ways, including through hacking and data loss, as well as using social media to put the pieces of someone's identity together. 86% of all identity frauds in 2015 were perpetrated online.

You should [act fast](#) if you have been a victim of identity fraud and [protect your personal information](#).

Simon Dukes, Cifas, Chief Executive said: "Fraudsters are opportunists. As banks and lenders have become more adept at detecting false identities, fraudsters have focused on stealing and using genuine people's details instead. Society, government and industry all have a role in preventing fraud, however our concern is that the lack of awareness about identity fraud is making it even easier for fraudsters to obtain the information they need.

"The likes of Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and other online platforms are much more than just social media sites - they are now a hunting ground for identity thieves. We are urging people to check their privacy settings today and think twice about what they share. Social media is fantastic and the way we live our lives online gives us huge opportunities. Taking a few simple steps will help us to enjoy the benefits while reducing the risks. To a fraudster, the information we put online is a goldmine."

Commander Chris Greany, City of London Police and national co-ordinator for economic crime said: "We have known for some time that identity fraud has become the engine that drives much of today's criminality and so it is vitally important that people keep their personal information safe and secure. In the fight against fraud, education is key and it's great that Cifas and its members are taking identity fraud seriously and working together to raise awareness of how the issue is now increasingly affecting young people through the launch of this film."

To report a fraud and receive a police crime reference number, call Action Fraud on 0300 123 2040 or use our [online fraud reporting tool](#).

Yours sincerely

Mrs C Pride
Deputy Head