

PRESS RELEASE



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: THURSDAY 24 MARCH 2016

Victim blaming is not helpful in fight against fraud, says Fraud Advisory Panel

Independent fraud watchdog, the Fraud Advisory Panel, raises concerns about blaming the victims of online fraud.

Responding to comments reportedly made by Metropolitan Police commissioner Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe today that banks should not refund victims of online fraud because it rewards them for bad behaviour and lax security, David Clarke, a director of the Fraud Advisory Panel, said:

“We are concerned that this comes dangerously close to ‘blaming the victim’ which is unhelpful in the fight against fraud. It also takes too little account of how cunning and sophisticated fraudsters can be in preying on UK consumers and businesses¹ – especially the elderly and vulnerable.

Basic online hygiene is more important than ever before and consumers need to be educated about this. We urge Government to work closely with the banks to create a well-thought-out, well-executed and well-funded public awareness campaign to warn everyone about the risks of online fraud. We hope that this will be a priority for the newly announced fraud taskforce consisting of police, banks and government officials.² Only once this has been properly achieved will it be more realistic for banks to expect their customers to take reasonable steps to protect themselves and their purchases online.”

Further information can be found at www.fraudadvisorypanel.org

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Notes for editors:

1. Action Fraud receives on average 8,000 reports of phishing scams per month. These emails masquerade as trustworthy organisations designed to look as convincing as possible. <https://www.cityoflondon.police.uk/advice-and-support/fraud-and-economic-crime/nfib/nfib-news/Pages/phishing-scams.aspx>
2. On 10 February the Home Secretary launched a new joint fraud taskforce made up of representatives from government, law enforcement and the banking sector. The work of the taskforce is expected to include the more efficient identification of victims and potential victims, including national roll-out of intervention training for bank staff. <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/home-secretary-launches-new-joint-fraud-taskforce>
3. The **Fraud Advisory Panel** is the respected, influential and independent voice of the fraud-fighting community. It seeks to make a tangible, practical difference in the fight against fraud and financial crime by championing anti-fraud best practice and helping people and organisations to increase their fraud resilience and risk awareness.
4. Members are drawn from all sectors – public, private and voluntary – and many different professions who are united by a common concern about fraud and a shared determination to do something about it.
5. The Panel is a registered charity. It was established in 1998 by the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales (ICAEW) which continues to provide valuable support.