

# Press Release

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For Immediate Release

## Trading Standards “Scamnesty” campaign

East Sussex County Council Trading Standards is launching a month long 'Scamnesty' campaign asking the public to help in the fight against scams, which cost the UK an estimated £3.5 billion a year.

Trading Standards are asking everyone who has received suspicious mailings to hand them in at their local library so that the extent of the problem in East Sussex can be better gauged.

Councillor Bob Tidy, Lead Member for Community Safety, said: “In recent weeks our Trading Standards team has dealt with a number of disturbing reports involving several victims who have sent off their life savings, sometimes tens of thousands of pounds. The losses can be devastating and we want to ensure more people don't fall victim to these scams”.

This “Scamnesty” is an information gathering exercise with the intention of gauging the current problems in the County and also to raise awareness of the seriousness of the problem. The losses can be devastating, and it is not just the elderly that can fall victim to them”.

In one recent incident, the victim, who had already sent away tens of thousands of pounds to the fraudster, was seeking to remortgage their house to raise over £100,000

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more in order to claim a bogus inheritance of millions of pounds. In another, an elderly lady was sending nearly £1,000 a week to the scammers for the best part of a year.

The scams come in many forms, and commonly involve Canadian and Spanish lottery prizes, and increasingly, people who have supposedly died in a foreign country leaving a large unclaimed inheritance. One thing they all have in common is that the “winner” has to part with money in order to claim their money, although this may not always be immediately apparent from the first contact.

If you are told that you have won a prize but have to buy goods, pay ‘taxes’ or other fees before the money can be transferred to you, please stop and think before sending money off as you are almost certainly being conned.

If in doubt, contacting the Consumer Direct advice line, 08454 040506, before sending any money off could save you from losing large sums of money and becoming involved with ruthless criminals.

**ENDS**

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