

Crime and Disorder Select Committee

SCRUTINY REVIEW OF FRAUD AWARENESS (PERSONAL)

SBC ADULT SAFEGUARDING TEAM

- What is the current status / situation with Action Fraud from the perspective of the Council?

Through the Teeswide Adult Safeguarding Board we have helped identify scams as an area where preventive material was needed that could be used to raise awareness. As you will see there is guidance documents on romance scams (Appendix 1) and online scams (Appendix 2) both which have links to Action Fraud.

- How do the Council make the public aware of how to report fraud (personal)?

Our Adult Safeguarding leaflet (Appendix 3) is accessible to members of the public via the council website. We also routinely provide this to people we come into contact with. This enables 'Adults at risk' to know how to report safeguarding concerns. The Teeswide Safeguarding Adults Board (TSAB) is also a place that would enable people to report abuse. Here is a link to the website <https://www.tsab.org.uk/>. Both the TSAB and Stockton Council are active users of Twitter and Facebook and these social media channels are used to raise awareness.

- Cases of fraud (personal) locally (e.g. any data on prevalence / demographics / types, what your department encounters, case studies (anonymised))

The case studies provided by Trading Standards previously are good examples. As highlighted by the attached leaflets we see all sorts of different scams, there has definitely been a rise in romance scams and scams that involve the person pretending to be from the tax office. We do report on financial abuse where I would be able to provide a breakdown of demographics, however it would be financial abuse as a whole and not just in relation to scams/fraud.

- Partnership-working with other stakeholders (e.g. internally with other Council departments, Police, victim support) around this issue.

As highlighted below we do work very closely with our trading standards team. VCAS referrals are always considered to support any victim who has fallen victim to a crime.

- How does the Council highlight this issue and help in reducing the risk of people becoming a victim of fraud (personal) (e.g. anti-fraud campaigns / messages, examples of best practice from other Local Authorities in tackling this)?

As already highlighted we have assisted in raising this as an emerging issue and our safeguarding board developed accessible guidance that we promote. Social media channels are also used to promote messages and campaigns. We also promote Friends Against Scams awareness raising material (Appendix 4) and will support people to the free call blocking system that is in place through the National Trading Standards team (Appendix 5).

- Any Council-specific support mechanisms in place for fraud (personal) victims?

Adult Safeguarding procedures.

- Impact of COVID-19 on local cases / types?

Via Friends Against Scams some information has been sent to us that can be used to highlight any emerging scams as a result of COVID (Appendix 6). None of which are really being seen.

- Anything else you feel is relevant in relation to this scrutiny topic (linked to the key lines of enquiry on page 2 of the attached scope).

Through our safeguarding boards website there is some E-Learning that has been put together by Friends Against Scams. This can be accessed via the TSAB website.

*SBC Adult Safeguarding Team
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