

Vital Signs

Welcome to Hampshire's Vital Signs for 2016, this year's report is based on **crime against vulnerable older people** living in our communities.

Vital Signs involves working with our neighbourhoods in new kinds of discussions about the issues facing our local communities. We combine this information with national statistics, allowing us to create a clearer picture of where there is need and to direct our attention and resources to target the important issues in our communities.

HIWCF has chosen to shine a spotlight on how changing crime is impacting on our vulnerable older people – no longer is it good enough to have a strong lock on the front door as today crime reaches directly into the home. Figures from the Office of National Statistics (ONS) for the first

half of 2016 indicate that fraud and computer misuse has increased sharply, accounting for 5.8 million crimes last year and in Britain people are now 20 times more likely to be robbed while sitting at their computer than being mugged while walking down the street. On the issue of doorstep crime locally, Action Fraud confirmed that only 53 cases of door to door sales and bogus tradesmen offences against over 65's had been reported in Hampshire during 2015 indicating that perhaps this type of fraud is hugely under reported.

Alongside changing crime there has been an increase in the number of older people using tablets, smart phones and laptops. ONS reported last year that 33% of older people now use the internet making it easier for them to stay in contact with their families. A recent report by Age UK found that over half of people aged over 65 believe they have been targeted by fraudsters, while the financial loss for people aged 55 and over was likely to be nearly twice as much per scam as that for younger age groups.

Take a look inside at our **SNAPSHOT** and join in the conversation



These crimes can have a huge impact on our vulnerable older people's mental health and well-being, leaving them feeling violated and suffering a severe loss of confidence which many believe will eventually impact their lives and overall health.

In 2017 our next Vital Signs report will be a major review across themes covering work, local economy, fairness, housing and homelessness, strong communities, safety, learning, arts, culture and heritage, environment and healthy living. Here, the Foundation will be able to implement a full comparison to the initial 2014 Vital Signs report.

DOORSTEP CRIME

Introduction

Hampshire Constabulary uses the term 'Doorstep Crime' to describe distraction burglary and rogue trading. Offenders may knock on the door and distract the resident in order to gain entry. Rogue traders may sell goods or services that are of very poor quality and value and people may feel pressurised into accepting work they don't want or need. Older people can be preyed on because they are lonely and isolated. Trading Standards reports show that the average amount a consumer loses is £1,000 per incident.

Statistics

85% of victims of doorstep scams are aged 65 and over according to National Trading Standards, of which **18%** are aged 80 to 84.

Almost 17,000 reports are made to Trading Standards annually but it is estimated that this represents only 10-20% of incidents, the true figure could be up to **169,000** cases per year.

Community Voice

25% of our respondents told us that they (or a friend or relative aged 65+) had been targeted by a door to door scammer, and 9% of people had lost something as a result. That could mean over **175,000** Hampshire residents have incurred a loss as a result of doorstep crime.



Hampshire Residents Told Us ...

"My parents bought solar panels and had some sort of special waterproof wash put on the roof. The solar panels didn't work in the first year, and even now don't work as expected. My partner is a roofer and there was no need for any special wash to be put on their roof. Parents think they are doing the right thing and will not be told otherwise. It is a huge anxiety to myself as my parents appear to be spending thousands on non-required items. However, this was how life was back in their day - that is how people got work and most were decent and honest"

BANK CARD CRIME

Introduction

Banking and payment card scams involve using a person's credit or debit card details to make purchases over the phone or internet, or cloning your card.



Statistics

The Crime Survey for England and Wales for the year ending in March 2016 reported that over **2 million** offences of bank and credit card fraud had taken place, affecting almost **5%** of plastic card users. This suggests that almost **70,000** Hampshire residents were victims of bank card fraud during 2015/16.

Community Voice

Respondents in our community suggest the figure is far higher than the national average, with **29%** of residents having been targeted by this kind of fraud. Our figures would therefore suggest that **273,000** Hampshire residents had incurred losses, not necessarily financial, as a result of banking card fraud.

One survey respondent said

"I consider myself to have above average awareness of scams but as I get older I'm concerned that I will become more vulnerable".

Hampshire Residents Told Us...

My step-dad, aged 80, received a phone call from an internet company to 'fix' the phone, and so he handed over all of his bank card details. When we realised what had been happening and that money had been taken we informed the bank immediately and contacted the police who were highly supportive as the caller had threatened to turn up at the house. The bank refunded the money but the whole event caused massive anxiety.

POSTAL CRIME

Introduction

Mass marketing scammers send out letters to try and trick people into parting with money or providing their banking or personal details in the belief that they will win a prize or lottery win. Older people tend to be targeted more often because they tend to have time on their hands to read and reply to the mail and one response can lead to the person getting inundated with scam mail while their names and addresses get added to a 'sucker's list' where they end up receiving huge amounts of mail on a daily basis.

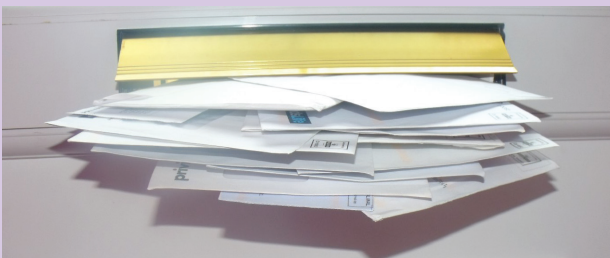
Statistics

The National Fraud Authority estimates that mass marketing fraud equates to a financial loss of over **£3.5 billion** per year.

It is estimated that older consumers over the age of 55 lose an average of **£1,261 per scam**, almost double the loss per scam compared to younger people.

Community Voice

The under-reporting of these scams make it hard to surmise just how prevalent these schemes are but **36%** of our community respondents told us that they or a friend or relative aged over 65 have been targeted by a mass marketing scam in Hampshire.



Hampshire Residents Told Us ...

My elderly Mum fell prey to marketing scams through filling in competitions and responding to the kind of mail that tells you you've won something. I was alerted to this through seeing all the junk mail she was getting and by the local post mistress who was worried about Mum sending postal orders off to random places. She was then receiving parcels with rubbish jewellery and soaps etc. We tried to get the junk mail stopped and believe Mum lost several thousands of pounds. It caused great anxiety both for my Mum who believed if a letter came she had to do something and for myself in trying to support her to remain living independently.

CYBER-CRIME

Introduction

Cyber-crime covers a wide range of offences including email and social media hacking, bank and credit card fraud, identity fraud, online shopping scams, and romance scams and criminals will target their victims from all across the globe.

"Cyber-crimes pose an immediate threat to the public we serve, some of whom do not always understand the increasing risks to their personal lives", says Detective Chief Superintendent Ben Snuggs, Hampshire Constabulary's head of investigation command, July 2016.

Statistics

The Crime Survey for England and Wales estimates that almost **3 million** people fell victim to cyber-crime in the year ending 2015.

This suggests that around **85,000** Hampshire residents were victims of cyber-crime in 2015/16, which is almost 6% of our adult population.

Community Voice

Identity fraud is often cited as Britain's fastest growing crime, although only **8%** of our local respondents had suffered losses as a result of identity theft indicating that it is not a huge issue yet in Hampshire.

Just **4%** of our local respondents have suffered losses as a result of internet scamming and **3%** had incurred losses as a result of being deceived by a romance scam.

Hampshire Residents Told Us...

"My mother had an email supposedly from a friend asking to put some money into her account because she was stranded abroad. She did not send money but it caused her a lot of anxiety until we were able to put her mind at rest that it was a scam."



Case Study

Supplied by Hampshire County Council Trading Standards

An elderly client was receiving hundreds of scam letters a week. He lived alone and was being contacted several times a day by criminals inviting him to send money. He was spending several hours a day filling in forms and posting off cheques to criminal companies based abroad, who promised him substantial winnings. When a Trading Standards Officer became involved, he had been spending £18,000 per year trying to access his 'winnings' and was in debt. Subsequently, his mail was redirected and his phone number changed. A handrail was fitted to his back door to allow him to access the garden and due to his renewed interest in gardening he was distracted from responding to criminal scams.



Join the conversation and get involved in HIWCF's Vital Signs

We hope you have enjoyed reading our report, now it's your turn. Please tell us your priorities, your opinions really do matter to us...

Please email marketing@hantscf.org.uk and

1. Tell us your top three priorities
2. Tell us what you would like to do about the issues raised in this report

Read the full report on Hampshire's Vital Signs on our website

www.hantscf.org.uk/about-us/publications.aspx

DATA PROTECTION ACT 1998

Thank you for taking part in this survey. The information you supply will be stored electronically and used by us to inform further work on Vital Signs. We will not publish individual responses without permission or supply personal information to third parties.

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The Community Foundation serving Hampshire and the Isle of Wight is a registered charity (number 1100417) and limited company (4534462).

Data provided in this report has been sourced through the Office of National Statistics, other government sources, Action Fraud, Place-analytics, Age UK and Financial Fraud Action UK.

LET'S SPARK DISCUSSION, ENCOURAGE CONNECTIONS AND INSPIRE ACTION!

If you would like to know more about Vital Signs, please contact:

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Vital Signs is a community philanthropy guide from your local Community Foundation that measures the vitality of our communities and identifies significant trends in a range of areas critical to quality of life. Vital Signs is supported by UK Community Foundations.

We would like to thank all those who generously gave their time, knowledge and experience to complete the online survey to provide our 'community voice' and contributed to the publication of Vital Signs report for the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Community Foundation.