

## Rental Scams

A rental scam is just one of many types of scam that falls under the category of **ADVANCE FEE FRAUD** which is when scammers target victims to make advance or upfront payments for goods, services and/or financial gains that do not materialise.

## How is it done?

The scam can come under many guises but of note Rental Fraud is **OFTEN TARGETED TOWARDS STUDENTS** seeking accommodation. Would be tenants are tricked into paying an upfront fee to rent a property when in reality the property does not exist, or it has already been rented out to multiple victims at the same time.

The victim then loses the upfront fee and is then not able to rent the property they thought they had secured with the payment. This is also likely to leave the victim without the means to put down a deposit on a further property.

Career Opportunity scams are also a prevailing form of advanced fee fraud. They frequently begin with some form of initial consultation but then require an upfront fee. This will be used to undertake further work or research but the promised career and benefits are never delivered. A prime example of this would be fake model and casting agencies.

## How can I prevent this?

**DO NOT PART WITH ANY MONEY** to anyone advertising rental properties until you are certain the advertiser is genuine.

If you need to secure accommodation in the UK from overseas ensure that you seek the assistance of an employer, university or trusted friend or relative to check out the property to ensure the property exists and is available.

**ASK FOR COPIES** tenancy agreements and any safety certificates such as gas, electricity or HMO Licence and never be afraid to seek an independent legal opinion if in doubt

**DO NOT BE PRESSURISED** into transferring large sums of money. Only transfer funds to a bank account once you have contacted the landlord or agent directly after the above steps have been followed.

**REMAIN SCEPTICAL** if you are asked to transfer any money via a money transfer service like Western Union. Remember these are just a platform for transactions and do not offer any protection to you as a consumer.

**BE WARY** of any pop up events at locations such as hotels and community halls claiming that they can offer you your dream career for an upfront fee. Please see the Action Fraud website for a full list of Advance Fee Frauds.



## Useful contacts

[www.thamesvalley.police.uk](http://www.thamesvalley.police.uk) Tel: 101 / 999

[www.victims-first.org.uk](http://www.victims-first.org.uk)

[www.getsafeonline.org](http://www.getsafeonline.org)

[www.actionfraud.police.uk](http://www.actionfraud.police.uk) Tel: 0300123 2040

[www.ageuk.org.uk](http://www.ageuk.org.uk)

[www.cyberaware.gov.uk](http://www.cyberaware.gov.uk)

[www.citizensadvice.org.uk](http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk)

[www.nationaltradingstandards.uk](http://www.nationaltradingstandards.uk)

Please contact Thames Valley Police for more details via telephone dialling 101, or visit our website at [www.thamesvalley.police.uk](http://www.thamesvalley.police.uk)

