

IDENTITY THEFT

Whilst it can be claimed that NHW has been very successful in helping the police in the reduction of burglaries and other cases of theft, there is one alarming growth area of criminality and that is identity theft leading to fraud.

Significant sums of money can be involved and even small sums can have an impact and seriously affect the unwary.

You can never be too careful with the disposal of documents which could cumulatively allow someone to be recognised as yourself and to access your personal accounts.

Such documents with full name, mother's maiden name, utility bills, bank and credit card statements should be shredded in a cross cut shredder before disposal.

Credit card sales vouchers now tend to have four asterisks concealing four digits of your credit card number. However, some receipts show the full number and you should then complain to the shop manager. Also there are asterisks in different positions so any two receipts together can divulge your number.

Above all NEVER give your PIN to anyone. If you have difficulty remembering it keep the number separate from your card(s) and ideally change it to a more memorable number as soon as possible.

Cross-cut shredders are quite cheap and a local fund raising event could be used for the purchase of one for scheme use.

Similarly, there have been instances of scams which have resulted in people being duped by telephone calls or letters, usually from abroad, into paying sums of money to 'unlock' huge lottery 'winnings'.

Under no circumstances should you send money or your bank details to anyone or give them to cold-callers. Keep personal details private.

Internet users are very vulnerable because they are being tricked into using spoof websites, set up by criminals to get access to personal financial details. This is called 'Phishing' and is a rapidly growing crime.

Be on your guard!

You can find more helpful information about tackling fraud on the website of the Home Office under www.identitytheft.org.uk

TO PREVENT CRIME IS EVERYONE'S RESPONSIBILITY