



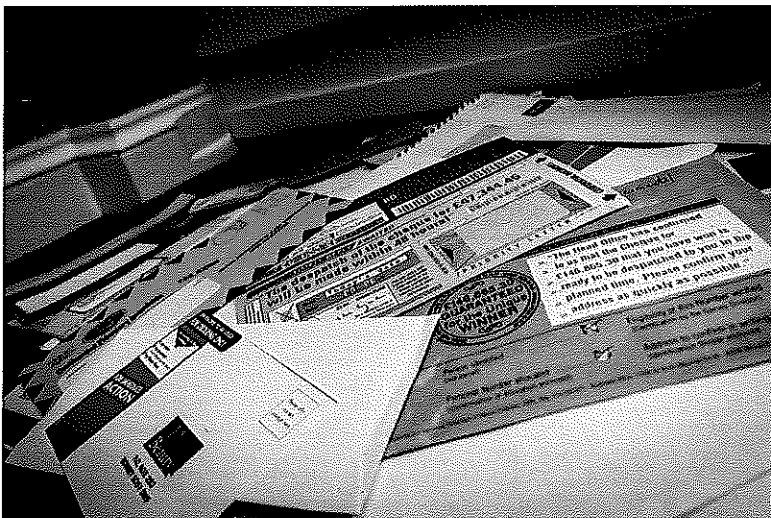
# OPERATION SIGNATURE

Protecting vulnerable victims of fraud

**Operation Signature** is a process, introduced by Sussex Police, to identify and support vulnerable victims of fraud. It focuses on the protection of the elderly and vulnerable members of our communities, through awareness and prevention. Fraud is a hidden and underreported crime with victims often in denial or unaware.

Increasingly fraud is becoming more complex and deceptive, much of which is targeted at vulnerable and elderly people. Technology is enabling fraudsters to carry out attacks more quickly and employ more complex behaviours to remain undetected.

The nature of fraud victimisation is not only financial. The emotional impact is significant and includes guilt, misplaced trust and diminished confidence, resulting in detrimental effects on physical and mental health and increased social isolation.



**Operation Signature** began as the Sussex Police response to scam mail but it quickly became apparent that those being targeted by scam mail were also vulnerable to other frauds and scams.

The prevention methods used to protect victims are the same whether they are being targeted by mail, telephone, email or on their doorstep. The remit of the Operation was extended to include all forms of fraud where the victim is vulnerable, including: investment, romance, courier, mass marketing, doorstep, computer and telephone scams.

## What we're doing

Victims of fraud are assessed for vulnerability and those requiring intervention are visited by a uniformed officer. The duration and level of support required for an individual victim varies and may range from a single visit providing crime prevention advice to a series of visits by policing partners.

Follow up visits are intended to ensure that preventative measures such as telephone call barring, bank contact, family and carer support and overall protective measures are implemented and sustained. We aim to develop a standardised referral process to provide support and additional follow-up visits to victims, and by engaging with statutory partners and volunteer groups working within communities to protect those at risk of further targeting and ensure that every victim requiring support is afforded a service.

# Scam – The Secret Crime

Sussex Police prioritises the protection of vulnerable fraud victims, through Operation Signature.

As part of this, in conjunction with the Home Office, we have created an 8 minute awareness film featuring real victim cases. This is available on YouTube: [https://youtu.be/OZDpw\\_IDSps](https://youtu.be/OZDpw_IDSps)

## The objectives of the film are:

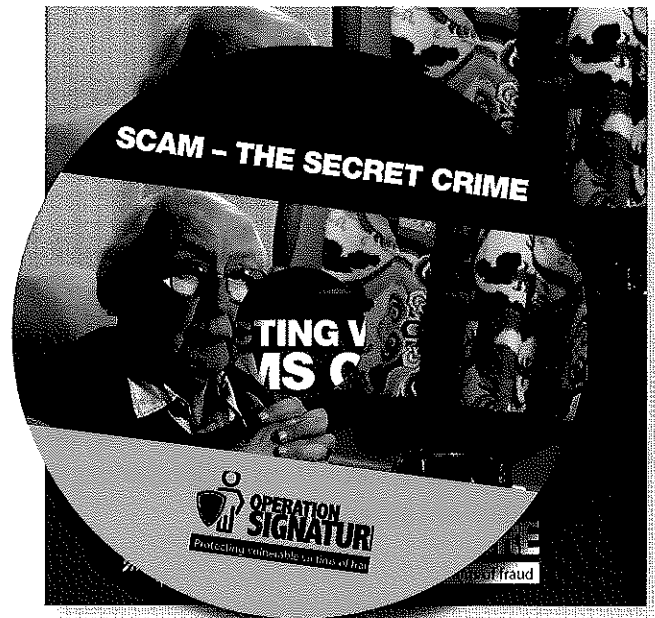
- To provide an introduction and overview of the subject of vulnerable victim fraud in a thought provoking format
- To leave viewers with a strong sense of the real and devastating impact of financial crime on individuals and families.

The film is currently being delivered to a variety of audiences with the purpose of raising awareness about the issue and encouraging them to work together to help educate and to prevent the vulnerable from becoming victims.

It can also provide a useful insight into these crimes for victims and family members.

There are a number of products which have been designed to accompany the film such as stickers, leaflets, posters and PowerPoint presentations, some of which are tailored to specific audiences. It has been used to support training and awareness in banks and financial institutions including Santander, Barclays, NatWest, Western Union and MoneyGram.

If you or your organisation would like to host a link to the film, reproduce your own copies or would like to know more about **Op Signature** please contact: [bernadette.lawrie@sussex.pnn.police.uk](mailto:bernadette.lawrie@sussex.pnn.police.uk)



## ELDERLY OR VULNERABLE?

- Large cash withdrawal?
- Moving money to an unknown bank account?
- Confused inconsistent story?
- Unusually high quantity of cheque books ordered?
- Accompanied by a stranger?

If you suspect fraud, contact Sussex Police on **101**

## PROTECTING VULNERABLE VICTIMS OF FRAUD

### Remember:



Check people are who they say they are



Make decisions in your own time



Never send or give money to anyone you don't know or trust



Don't share your personal information



If in doubt phone a relative or a friend

If you, or someone you know, is vulnerable to scams/fraud call Sussex Police on **101** or visit [www.sussex.police.uk](http://www.sussex.police.uk)