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FraudWatch Impact Report

November 2021

by East Riding Voluntary Action Services
(ERVAS) Ltd





Funders: **Thank You!**

FraudWatch: East Riding

Our FraudWatch – East Riding project is currently funded by the [East Riding Crime Reduction Fund](#) administered by [Two Ridings Community Foundation](#). We also have a project within the Roos area which is funded by the [Roos Wind Farm Community Benefit Fund](#).



FraudWatch: Hull

Our FraudWatch – Hull project was funded by the [Safer Hull Community Crime Reduction Fund](#).



The Crime Reduction Funds are provided by the [Humbeside Police and Crime Commissioner](#).

The project has also been funded by [The National Lottery Community Fund Awards for All](#).





Fraud:- The Issue.

Action Fraud revealed that **£2,683,323 was lost** between 2020 and 2021 by prospective Pet Owners who put down a deposit for an animal they saw online and **never received.**

There's a 30% chance that if you have been a victim of fraud, you will be again **within 12 months.**

Between April 2020 & March 2021
7,733 people were victims of fraud (↑3.5%)

Between April 2020 & March 2021
£13.7 MILLION has been reported in losses (↓0.4%)

Within the last year, online shopping fraud has **increased by 42%**

You are **more likely** to be a victim of fraud than **any other offence**

Around **one out of seven** Fraud Incidents are actually reported to the Police



Key Aims of the Project:

The FraudWatch project was established after the delivery of a pilot project that was commissioned by the National Association for Voluntary and Community Action (NAVCA) and the National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC).

As part of the FraudWatch project we set out to achieve the following aims:

- To raise awareness of fraud and cyber crime through the delivery of awareness sessions.
- Where appropriate, to support victims by providing signposting to reporting and support agencies such as Action Fraud and Victim Support .
- Target offenders through the encouragement of reporting fraud and cybercrime to Action Fraud and the National Cyber Security Centre.
- Identify and encourage local individuals to become fraud and cybercrime awareness champions.
- To continue the development of the FraudWatch website as a tool to raise awareness and encourage reporting of fraud and cyber crime.



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Outcomes:

Outcomes and Progress over the duration of the project (March 2019 - August 2021)

- **Number of Friends Against Scams and Cybercrime courses delivered**
 - As part of this project we have delivered 67 Fraud and Cybercrime awareness sessions engaging with 2630 Individuals from the Hull and East Riding area.
- **Number of key community members identified to assist in spreading the key messages (including number of key community members registered as champions)**
 - Over the time of the project 5 organisations officially made a pledge to support the campaign from the area and 1 additional group has registered as a FraudWatch approved member. Unfortunately no further groups committed to supporting the campaign officially however many more were involved. We did however have discussions with Get Safe Online, Natwest bank and ActionFraud, supported by providing materials that we can use.
- **Number of fraud and cybercrime victims identified (as part of the FraudWatch Hull Project)**
 - We have identified 20 individuals that have been a victim of fraud or cybercrime. These individuals have taken part in a course and been supported to make a report.
- **Number of fraud and cybercrime victims supported by the project (Only the FraudWatch Hull Project)**
 - All 20 individuals mentioned above were also supported by our signposting support, by attending an awareness session. Devan has also supported 396 victims as a police volunteer.



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Outcomes (Cont.):

- **Number of identified victims reporting the crime to the relevant agencies**
 - Of the 20 victims, we are aware that at least 9 of them had reported the incidences directly to Action Fraud, 5 individuals reported the suspicious texts to 7726 and 4 forwarded the email to report@phishing.gov.uk. 6 were also supported to contact Victim Support.
- **Number of offenders identified as part of the project**
 - Due to the scope of our project, we are unable to identify offenders specifically, however we have encouraged all our delegates to report phishing emails to the Suspicious Email Reporting Service (SERS) report@phishing.gov.uk and smishing text messages to the 7726 Ofcom service.
- **Number of Cyber Responder volunteers created**
 - We currently have 10 police volunteers identified as cyber responder volunteers, due to issues with staffing from the police, we are currently waiting for the internal sponsor of the project to identify the relevant staff member. Progress is being made with regard to the development of the role within the force. We are awaiting a further discussion with the relevant inspector for cyber crime within the force. This will continue beyond the scope of this project.



Work to date:

Over the time of the project, a number of developments have taken place with the projects work.

These are:

- **FraudWatch Website**

We have established a local dedicated website, to provide fraud and cyber crime information. The website is fraudwatch.org.uk. This website has become a great resource for sharing information and updates relating to the project and wider fraud and cyber awareness campaigns. The site also lists the support available for victims [here](#).

- **Organisational Pledge**

Within the website, we have also added the opportunity for organisations to make a pledge, to show how they will support the cause, we were able to promote this during the course of the project. [Find out more](#).

- **Fraud Watch Groups**

We developed a mechanism for community groups to establish their own local group. [More here](#).

- **Winter Fraud Campaign**

We developed the Winter Fraud Campaign, this was a particular campaign covering a range of fraud types.



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Work to date (Cont.):

- **FraudWatch Social Media accounts being established**

We have now established a strong presence on both Facebook and Twitter, and these accounts can be found here: Twitter: [twitter.fraudwatch.org.uk](https://twitter.com/fraudwatch.org.uk) & Facebook: fb.fraudwatch.org.uk.

- **Humberside Police Cyber Cadets**

We worked closely with the Humberside Police Cyber Cadet unit to deliver a presentation to the full Humberside Police Cadet unit, 4 cyber cadets took part in the delivery of the presentation, and this was delivered to 110 police cadets, 32 of whom were from the Hull area. In addition to this, there were also a number of adult volunteers in attendance that also benefit from the information shared.

- **SJP Law & Headway Charity Session**

In December 2020 we joined up with SJP Law and the Headway charity in Hull to deliver a specific virtual fraud awareness webinar to the charities beneficiaries, this included individuals that have suffered from a brain injury / trauma. To ensure the session was accessible, we developed a shorter 30 minute presentation with the support of the charities advisors, containing the key awareness messages and some quick tips. 27 people attended this webinar.



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Work to date (Cont.):

- **Say No to Fraud Campaign (OPCC Led)**

We supported and provided advice to the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Humberside, in relation to their Say No to Fraud Campaign, we are pleased that as a project we are one of the first links within this campaign, and more can be found here: <http://saynotofraud.uk/>.

- **Get Safe Online**

We met with Get Safe Online, as part of this meeting they pledged to continue to provide monthly content that we can use as part of the local campaign, these materials are branded as Get Safe Online and ERVAS. This supported us to ensure that we have a range of resources that we can and still will refer to.

- **A-Z of fraud**

In addition to the development of the FraudWatch website, we also added an additional A-Z of fraud page to the website that will enables users to find out more about the different fraud types, this information can be found here: <https://www.fraudwatch.org.uk/a-z-of-fraud/>.



What Worked Well?

This project has really supported us to fully understand the need for further fraud prevention work in the Hull area. We were able to network and make some great connections at the Hull Fraud Forum, and as a result of attending these meetings we joined up with two partners to deliver fraud and cyber awareness sessions to two organisations.

With the support of Matt Wright, we were also able to link up with one of the U3A groups to deliver an awareness session to their beneficiaries in April.

"The level of knowledge from Devan and Ben is reassuring."

- Romance Fraud Feedback from a Virtual Attendee

The support of Humberside Police Cyber Crime Team & Economic Crime Unit has proved very beneficial during the virtual webinars. We have been joined by a number of staff members from the force that have supported us to ensure that the sessions delivered are worth while whilst full of the most local information. This has proved to be very worth while when exploring the wider feedback from the training sessions.



What Worked Well? (Cont.):

In addition to the strong working relationship we have with the Humberside Police Cyber Crime Unit and the Humberside Police Economic Crime Unit, we have also worked very closely with the Humberside Police Community Safety Unit to provide the Humberside Police and Humberside Fire and Rescue Service Volunteers with the training they need too. We were often able to link in with them and offer the volunteers the training they need.

Quote:-

"ERVAS have been offering our volunteers the option to attend numerous Webinars relating to Cyber Crime. These Webinars have varied from Keeping Young People Safe online to Romance Fraud. The Webinars have been hugely beneficial to volunteers for personal reasons but also I believe that learning about Cyber Crime, has encouraged some of our volunteers to become Cyber Crime Volunteers, which in turn helps victims of fraud."

Kirsty – Humberside Police Community Safety Unit



What Worked Well? (Cont.):

We also worked closely with the Humberside Police Cadets (also part of the Humberside Police Community Safety Unit) with the training they need too.

Quote:-

ERVAS and yourself have very kindly supported the cadets within the Cyber Cadet Unit and the wider project in terms of increasing their knowledge and understanding of Cyber Crime and how it can impact on the lives of those within their community. This has allowed us and the cadets to ensure they are able to not only protect themselves from fraud but also their friends, family and member of their community.

Thank you very much and we look forward to doing it all again with our new intake.

Katie Hardy -

Volunteer Police Cadets – Force Lead

Community Engagement Coordinator – Community Safety Unit



What could change?

Encouragement of organisations making a pledge

As part of the project we set out to identify a number of community individuals / organisations that were keen to share and promote the fraud awareness messages. Over the space of the project we found that the uptake of organisations making a pledge to the campaign remained slow. With 3 Hull related organisations making pledges, these are: Victim Support, Audit Yorkshire and Neighbourhood Network.

Due to the number of pledges being low, we continued to focus on this element of the project to increase engagement and encourage more groups to make a pledge.

Promotion via local policing teams

To support the project further, we feel that more links needed to be made with the local policing teams as well as the wider Humberside Police Force Control Room and Marketing and Media team. Although we offered our support to the OPCC Say No to Fraud campaign and were actively involved in developing and shaping the campaign, we feel that more needed to be done to raise the profile of the project internally within the police.



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Social Media Stats Quarter 2



Facebook Vs Twitter Stats 4/12/20 - 24/02/21

FB

< VS >

Twitter

Facebook Posts reached 44,701 impressions in the same 83 day period.

Our top post gained 1.7k impressions with a total of 46 engagements.

We had 73 page likes/followers in this Quarter.

Tweets earned **21.5K** impressions over this 83 day period

Our top tweet gained 6,729 Impressions with a total of 226 engagements. This was relating to COVID-19 Frauds.

We had 81 followers posted 85 tweets in this Quarter.



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Social Media Stats Quarter 3



Facebook Vs Twitter Stats 25/02/21 - 24/05/21

FB

< **VS** >

Twitter

Facebook Posts reached 3,560 people in the above period.

Our top post reached 1.3k people with a total of 28 engagements.

We had 67 page likes and 94 page followers in this Quarter.

Tweets earned **14.9K** impressions over this period

Our top tweet gained 1,641 Impressions with a total of 39 engagements. This was relating to awareness messages.

We had 99 followers and posted 195 tweets in this Quarter.



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Social Media Stats Quarter 4



Facebook Vs Twitter Stats 01/06/21 - 06/09/21

FB

< **VS** >

Twitter

Facebook Posts have reached 6,753 people in the above period.

Our top post reached 612 people with a total of 27 engagements.

We currently have 78 page likes and 94 page followers.

Tweets earned **14.5K** impressions over this period

Our top tweet gained 1,564 Impressions with a total of 39 engagements. This was relating to a local event.

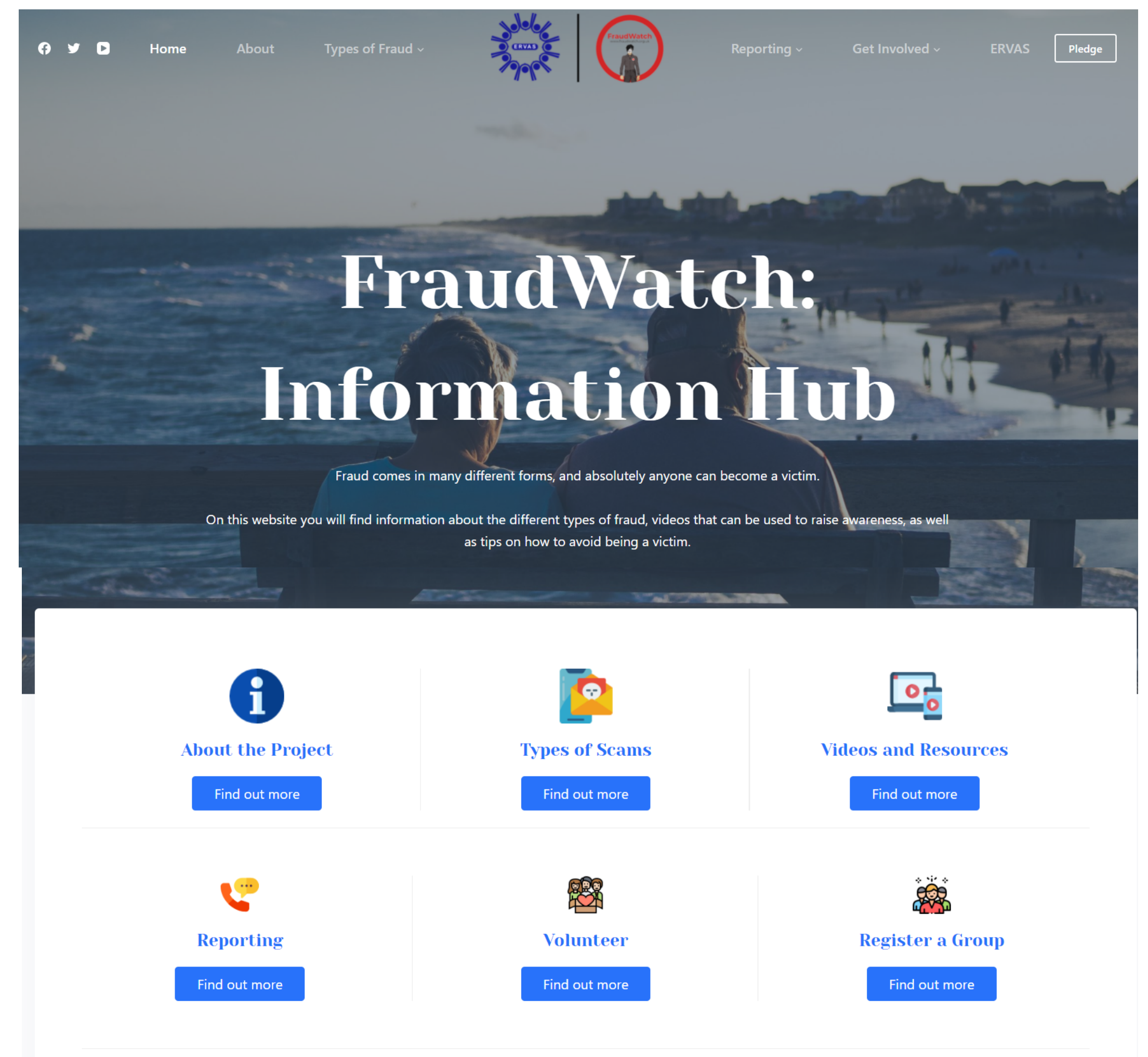
We currently have 115 followers and have posted 220 tweets



Website Stats

Since the launch of the fraudwatch.org.uk website, we have had a total of 9583 unique visitors visit the website for information about fraud and cybercrime. The full chart below provides a breakdown of details for each month:

Month	Unique Visitors	Number of Visits	Pages	Hits
Sep-20	27	60	1,441	3,321
Oct-20	866	1,981	7,120	12,378
Nov-20	923	1,850	6,999	15,399
Dec-20	907	1,459	5,572	15,167
Jan-21	708	1,276	4,008	10,041
Feb-21	907	1,377	4,464	17,427
Mar-21	1,465	2,502	7,744	13,730
Apr-21	897	1,323	4,916	11,286
May-21	809	1,178	5,117	10,742
Jun-21	660	980	5,727	9,401
Jul-21	797	1,303	6,062	10,248
Aug-21	540	826	4,587	8,060
Sep-21	77	104	805	1,593
Total	9583	16219	64562	138793

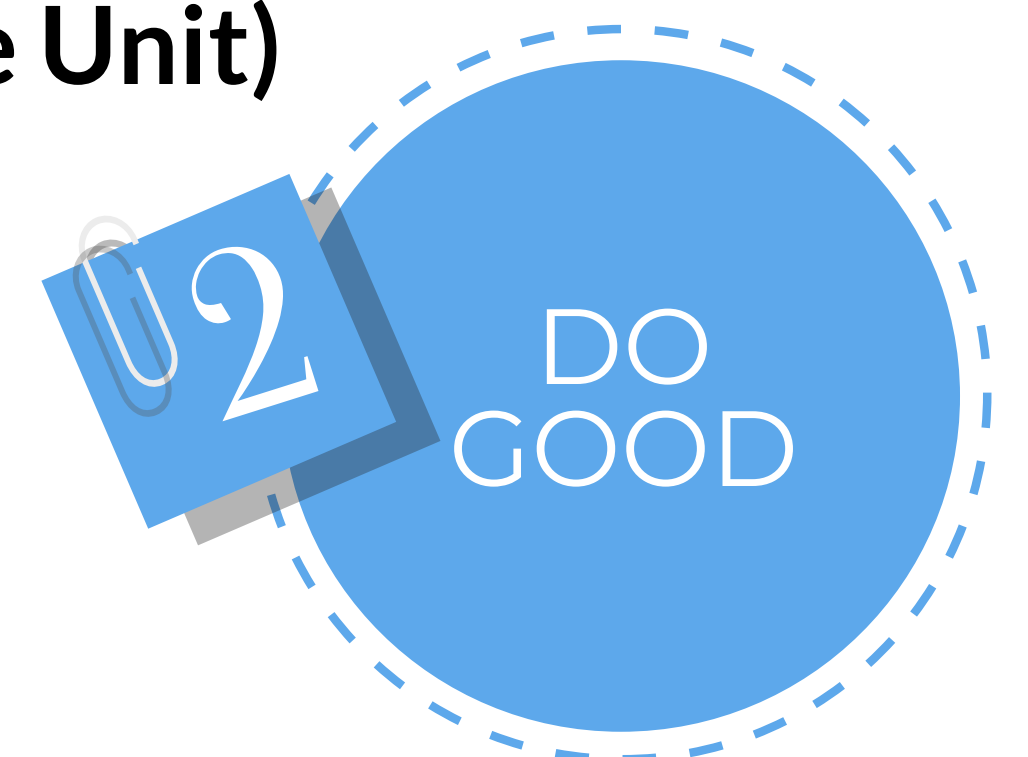




Testimony from a Professional

"Fraud is an offence that is cross border and often the suspect resides outside of UK policing jurisdiction, therefore it is not possible to arrest the suspect and disrupt the offending. Therefore it is essential that we promote an anti-fraud culture within the East Riding of Yorkshire. The work completed by ERVAS is vital to this work as they can promote fraud prevention events that targets the public and provides them with the guidance to prevent themselves from being victims of fraud."

- Detective Sergeant Ben Robinson (Humberside Police Economic Crime Unit)





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Victim Case Study

As part of the Hull FraudWatch project we have been working to support the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Humberside in developing a Humber wide fraud awareness campaign. As part of this work, the office launched a call to speak with victims of fraud that were willing to share their story, to help prevent others falling victim. Through the FraudWatch project, we supported this call by generating some social media posts asking anyone that's been a victim, to contact us. We were successfully able to speak with one individual that was keen to share their story as part of this campaign.

Elizabeth*

Liz was the victim of a fraudster, she had received a phone call from someone claiming to be from her bank, they had convinced her that something had happened and that she was needing to provide the bank with details of her account. She had handed over some details and they wanted her to respond to a text message to confirm who she was, this text message contained a code that could have given the fraudsters access to her account. Thankfully she spotted that something wasn't quite right, and attempted to contact her bank on another device, using a number that she trusted, her bank informed her that this was not them on the other line. Thankfully she did not lose any money from the incident, but now wants to share her story to help others not become a victim. Since this incident Liz has been very frightened, but fortunately she was able to seek support from Victim Support after making a report to action fraud. She now regularly shares social media posts from the FraudWatch pages. As part of our support, we have offered to provide as much information as possible to Liz that she can share with friends and family to protect them too. Liz has also registered with Cifas to add an extra level of protection to her identity for the future.

***names have been changed to protect the identity of the victim.**



Opportunities for next steps:

To further expand the project, we are are looking at the following next steps:

- **Introduction of cyber responder volunteers**

We are currently working in partnership with the Humberside Police Cyber Crime Unit to pilot the Cyber Responder Volunteer scheme, this is one of the first of its kind. These are volunteers that will:

1. Support victims of fraud via email and telephone, this will include supporting with the reporting of fraud and cybercrime to Action Fraud / National Cyber Security Centre
2. Provide fraud prevention advice to the victims of fraud and cybercrime
3. Support at events and advise the public on fraud and cybercrime prevention
4. Providing virtual / face to face support to identified vulnerable individuals on computer / device safety

Currently we have identified 10 police volunteers that wish to support with this role, while they are undertaking their training, they will also be supporting with contacting previous victims to complete a victim satisfaction survey, that is fed back to the National Cyber Security Centre directly.



Next steps (Cont.):

- **Local reporting processes for fraud and cyber crime incidents**

As part of the project, we are trying to encourage reporting of fraud and cyber crime, and developing the trust of the public in the process.

From speaking with victims, we often hear that they feel as though the police are not interested in their reports, and often they are not given information about what happens when they make a report directly to Action Fraud.

As part of the next stage of the project, we would like to secure funding to establish a local reporting process, this will include volunteers taking the initial report, and giving preventative advice for the future. It is envisaged that the volunteer will then pass this information directly to the fraud or cyber crime team, whilst also collecting the information required by Action Fraud. By implementing this process, it means that Humberside Police will gain the required information sooner, rather than having to wait, which in turn will result in the information being acted on faster. To enable this trail process, we need to secure funding to cover the cost of a new phone number and devices that volunteers can use.



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