



The UK's Fraud Prevention Service

Press Release

March 2006

Victims of Identity Fraud Speak Out

Since 1999, the number of identity frauds recorded by CIFAS has risen from around 20,000 per annum to over 137,000 in 2005. Earlier this year, the Home Office released figures showing that identity theft costs the British economy £1.7 billion annually¹.

Ever since CIFAS was established in 1988, part of its role has been to develop a better understanding of the impact of identity theft on the victims of this crime. Last year, CIFAS commissioned a research study entitled 'Identity Fraud: What about the Victims?' which has been undertaken by Perpetuity Research and Consultancy International (PRCI) Ltd, to assess the impact of identity theft on victims. The research findings are being announced today (16 March) at a high profile conference in London entitled 'Identity Fraud – The Fight Back' at which Nigel Evans MP, Chairman of the All Party Parliamentary Group on Identity Fraud, is a keynote speaker.

Professor Martin Gill who headed up the research team says:

'In the wake of a identity theft case, the victim has to go through a process of proving their innocence and undoing the damage caused to their credit rating. Depending on the severity of the impersonation, this can involve spending hours contacting numerous service providers, credit reference agencies and the police.'

So what do victims want?

Victims want organisations to improve the way they deal with cases, and they want the police to improve their success rates in identifying and prosecuting offenders.

The top 5 changes victims of identity fraud want to see implemented are:

- 1) An individual/personal case worker within each organisation to help the victim.
- 2) Keeping the victim regularly informed about progress and what is actually being done to rectify the situation.
- 3) Service providers to be more understanding and sympathetic towards victims.
- 4) Staff to be better trained in how to deal with identity theft victims.
- 5) Better and clearer information on identity theft e.g. if you become a victim what action you should take to clear your name and where to go to get support.

Notes to Editors:

CIFAS - The UK's Fraud Prevention Service has over 240 Member organisations spread across banking, credit cards, asset finance, retail credit, mail order, insurance, investment management, telecommunications, factoring, and share dealing. Members share information about identified frauds in the fight to prevent further fraud. CIFAS is unique and was the first data sharing scheme of its type in the world. Other schemes modelled on CIFAS have been set up in South Africa, Ireland and Germany.

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PRCI Ltd. is an independent research and consultancy company specialising in the areas of community safety, security, risk and crime management that has been launched at the University of Leicester.

1. Taken from 'Updated estimate of the cost of identity fraud to the UK economy: 2nd February 2006,' the Home Office Identity Theft website: <http://www.identitytheft.org.uk/>

PRCI Ltd. is partly owned by the University of Leicester and led by Martin Gill who is a Professor at the University. Martin has been prominent in recent news because of his leading research in the areas of identity theft and fraud and led the research that this work is based on. <http://www.perpetuitygroup.com/prci>

Results were collated from a survey conducted with victims of impersonation – almost 1,000 questionnaires were sent out to victims of impersonation and a return rate of 21 per cent was achieved.

CIFAS offers a 'Protective Registration' service for victims of Identity fraud to protect their identity from misuse. For further details refer to the CIFAS website http://www.cifas.org.uk/protective_registration.asp Every impersonation case is distressing for the innocent victim and it can take between 3 and 48 hours of work for a typical victim to sort out their life and clear their name. CIFAS provides information for consumers on Identity Fraud, both as a leaflet and from its consumer information website <http://www.identityfraud.org.uk/>

For more in depth findings from this research, entitled 'Identity Fraud: What about the Victim?' please see the CIFAS website http://www.cifas.org.uk/reports_what_about_the_victim.asp The study includes a focus on the victims' experiences, specifically the process of victimisation and it's aftermath and collects victims' views on their treatment by the service providers and law enforcement agencies.

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