



northyorkshire community messaging

North Yorkshire Police have been informed of an emerging fraud whereby social media platforms are being used to attract members of the public to donate money to animal welfare charities overseas that do not exist. Criminal groups based in Spain or Cyprus and are using social media to target donors from the UK. The money is then laundered from the UK to overseas and rather than be used to tackle animal cruelty it is simply used to support a criminal lifestyle in the sun. They will canvass for contributions through their existing social networks which will expand over time, attracting more donors.

PROTECTION / PREVENTION ADVICE:

Sometimes the article or post on social media may indicate the payments are for charitable organisation or a “worthy cause”. Sadly not in all instances are these genuine, and if any doubt please undertake your own due diligence.

Other signs to look for include:

- Genuine charities are registered with the Charity Commission and print their registration details on all documentation, collection bags, envelopes, electronic communications etc.
 - Check these details exist and also contact the Charity Commission to confirm they are authentic. You can call them on their helpline 0845 300 0218 or by visiting www.charity-commission.gov.uk, where they have an online charity register.
 - If the collection is for a charity you know is genuine, check the collection is authorised by asking the charity directly, using contact details from the phone book or a website that you know is genuine.
 - Watch out for poor grammar and spelling in emails and other documents, including collection envelopes.
 - Send your donation to the charity directly. This may mean going to a little more trouble, but at least you can be sure your donation will get to where it's intended.
 - If you have any concerns you can also gain further information from the government website - <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/charity-commission/about>
 - If you have been affected by this, or any other fraud, report it to Action Fraud by calling 0300 123 2040, or visiting www.actionfraud.police.uk
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