



Parent Newsletter

St Mary Magdalene
Secondary

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Squares' / Money Mules/ Money Laundering

Dear Parents/Carer,

Please see below some information passed on by the local police regarding money mules.

Definition and Description

- Some street names used are; Squares, AC, Easy Cash Schemes, Flips, Money transfer jobs.
- A 'Money Mule' is a person who transfers stolen money on behalf of others, usually through their bank account. Criminals contact people and offer them cash to receive money into their bank account and transfer it to another account. This is a crime known as money laundering. The person is known as a 'money mule', transferring money between criminals.
- Money mules are individuals who give up their bank account details—either intentionally or unknowingly—to allow criminals to deposit large sums of money into their account. The money mule is then expected to withdraw the money and take it to a specified person, or is asked to make a bank transfer.
- Money laundering in any form is illegal in the United Kingdom.
- Criminals are targeting vulnerable teenagers because they can be easily convinced to hand over their bank details in exchange for a cut of the cash, and may not realise the true extent of the consequences they could face.
- Even if you're unaware that the money you're transferring was illegally obtained, you have played an important role in fraud and money laundering, and can still be prosecuted. Criminals will often use fake job adverts, or create social media posts about opportunities to make money quickly, in order to lure potential money mule recruits.
- Social media posts use a sort of code language, using phrases such as "5K drop" to describe the amount of money that needs
- to be laundered, and "squares and deets" as a term for bank cards and account details

Key Drivers and Risk Factors

- **There has been a recent spate of posts and profiles on social media that have been actively recruiting young people to get involved as money mules.** Many of these posts make the crime sound like a job, promoting titles such as "UK Transfer Agent" and specifying that personal bank account details will need to be provided to carry out the role. There is usually a tempting promise of large sums of money in exchange for "an hour's work".
- The young person may see this as "only transferring money", or "letting someone use your account", but it's not as innocent as that. They are helping criminals commit crime, often against vulnerable people.
- The consequences for the young person to consider:
- Bank Accounts are private, anyone allowing their bank account to be used by an unauthorised person or have criminal funds go through the account would breach the terms and conditions of the Bank account. If you allow your bank account to be misused in any way, the bank will close your account and report you to credit agencies. This report lasts for 6 years and if there is a guarantor on the account, this may affect them.
- The account holder's credit rating will be affected. It will be difficult to open another bank account or get simple credit, for example a mobile phone contract, car loan Student loan or even a mortgage later on as account holder's financial credit rating will be tarnished with a mark against them.
- The account holder is also committing a crime themselves. Anyone allowing criminal funds to go through their bank account is committing an offence of Money Laundering under the Proceeds of Crime Act.
- You could be subject to an arrest, have your Fingerprints, DNA and Photograph taken and depending on your age have your parents/guardians informed. You could face up to 14 years imprisonment and/or be given a fine/community service. Whatever the sentence, you have a Criminal Conviction.
- Criminals have also been known to approach teenagers at the school gates or as they are walking home. They have been known to use forcible behaviour and make the youngsters feel threatened, or pester them enough with promises of a cut of the money that the individual eventually gives in and passes over their bank account details for the criminal to use.
- Usually, money mules get a percentage cut of the money they are laundering, but many are forced to act as money mules by threats of violence, whereas others are led to believe that they are fulfilling a genuine job role and do not realise that a crime is being committed

National

SC&O7 FALCON (Fraud and Linked Crime Online) was formed in 2014 as part of the MPS response to the evolving threat and increase of Cyber related Crime Offences. FALCON allows the MPS the capacity and capability to investigate cyber dependant and cyber enabled fraud and adapt to the emerging challenges of Cyber Crime.

The UK is experiencing an increase in young people allowing their bank accounts to be used to receive and move money on behalf of third parties. This money often originates from crime; their account becomes a 'Mule Account' used to launder criminal funds making the account holder a 'Money Mule'.

Young people are increasingly being recruited as 'Money Mules'. They are recruited via social media platforms such as Snapchat, Instagram or Facebook, other messaging such as text/WhatsApp or in person at their school, university or sports clubs. They can be lured by the offer of money for allowing their account to be used, convinced they are doing so as a favour, or can be coerced.

Anyone allowing their bank account to be used by an individual not registered on the account is breaching their bank's terms and conditions. Anyone allowing criminal funds to go through their bank account is facilitating criminal activity and committing Money Laundering, an offence under the Proceeds of Crime Act 2002.

Local

Mule accounts can be 'complicit' i.e., used with the knowledge of the account holder, or 'non-complicit' i.e. used without the knowledge of the account holder. This is complicated further as the holder of a 'complicit' mule account may have known that the account would be used to launder proceeds of crime or tricked into allowing their account to be used, believing it was for a legitimate purpose. There are also a large number of mule accounts set up for the sole purpose of laundering criminal proceeds, these are often set up using false identities and fraudulent documents.

Resources for Professionals

www.getsafeonline.org
www.moneymules.co.uk
www.met.police.uk/fraud

Services for Victims

Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre: Help and advice for children and young people. www.thinkuknow.co.uk

National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children Gangs Helpline: Anyone worried about a young person involved in, or at risk from, gangs can call 0808 800 5000 or email help@nspcc.org.uk.

Victim Support: Provides emotional support and practical information for all victims of crime. 0808 1689 111 or www.victimsupport.org.uk

Childline (National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children): 24 hour helpline for young people. 0800 1111 or www.childline.org.uk

For more information contact the Safer Communities Team on 020 8921 8396 or community-safety@royalgreenwich.gov.uk