

### **Three Eastbourne-Based Fraudsters To Start Repaying Money To Victims - 17.10.19**

Three people already convicted and sentenced for a systematic Eastbourne-based fraud have now been given court orders requiring them to start paying back the proceeds of their crime to five victims.

Following an investigation by Sussex Police financial experts, Orders under the Proceeds of Crime Act (POCA) were issued at Lewes Crown Court against all three on 30th September.

Sogo Fasoyrio, 40, of Chandlers Drive, Bexley, Kent, was found to have benefited from crime to the amount of £17,596.56 and currently had £8,939.31 available to repay.

Clive Theobald, 55, of Coffee Hall, Milton Keynes, was found to have benefited by £80,652.72 and had £13,055.34 currently available to repay Tolulope Ajetunmobi, 37, of Marchwood Close, London SE5, was found to have benefited by £21,515.45 and had £1,549.52 currently available to repay.

Each has three months to pay, and will serve extra terms if they fail to do so (Fasoyrio five months, Theobald six months and Ajetunmobi 28 days), and will still have to pay.

All three had been sentenced at Lewes Crown Court on 9th April for their roles in an email-based 'mandate' fraud that diverted more than £60,000 from businesses and private individuals into an Eastbourne-based bank account.

Theobald was sentenced to 26 months for seven offences of transferring or possessing criminal property, Ajetunmobi was sentenced to 18 months for two such offences, and Fasoyiro was given a one-year sentence suspended for two years, plus 150 hours unpaid work, for five such offences.

He was also found not guilty of three other such charges.

Detective Constable Fleur Jones of the Sussex Police Economic Crime Unit said: "We identified six incidents in which people had been defrauded or almost defrauded by these defendants.

"One was a firm of builders in East Sussex who lost £7,908, meant to be the payment of building repairs that they had completed to a block of flats. A second was a man in London who lost £59,595 supposed to be the deposit for the purchase of his new home. A Surrey man lost £1,000 meant to be the deposit for the rent of a flat, and an Eastbourne sports club lost £2,370 meant to be the payment of an invoice.

"A Sussex man almost lost £7,000 meant to be the payment of a landscaping invoice but he realised just in time that the bank account details so made a phone call to the genuine company to double check their bank details. A Hungarian company almost lost £12,639.18 meant to be the payment of an invoice but this was held in the bank account that the defendants had access to by the bank who by then had been alerted to the unusual amount of money coming into and out of the account.

"They will now receive payments in compensation."

Detective Chief Inspector Andy Richardson of the Surrey and Sussex Economic Crime Unit said; "Funds seized by the courts through POCA confiscation or cash forfeiture orders can go to the central Government exchequer, and a proportion of the centrally seized funds is then returned to law enforcement, CPS and the court system - if they are not paid in compensation to specific victims, as will be done with funds being recovered in this case.

"The court found that this trio had benefited by amounts greater than those they are currently required to repay. However it is important to understand that we keep records of all existing confiscation orders where the full benefit amount isn't immediately available and regularly check to identify any additional assets which have been obtained since the original order was made.

"We can then apply to the court for an increase in the original order. We can also seek the help of the South East Regional Asset Confiscation Enforcement (ACE) team, part of the South East Regional Organised Crime Unit (SEROUC) who will check on the offenders to help identify more assets.

"Meanwhile, even orders such as those just granted still send the important message that we will always go after criminal assets even beyond conviction, to try to return them lawful and useful purposes."

Mandate fraud involves a company or individual being tricked into changing details of a direct debit, standing order or bank transfer by criminals pretending to be an organisation to whom regular payments are made, typically a business supplier or a subscription.

It's a simple but effective fraud which is used a lot and can involve the loss of a huge amount of money.

For more information and advice about preventing mandate fraud see the Sussex Police - please copy and paste this link into your browser

<https://www.sussex.police.uk/advice/advice-and-information/fa/fraud/business-fraud/mandate-and-cheque-fraud/>

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Alternatively you can contact the independent charity **Crimestoppers**, anonymously, on 0800 555 111, or online at [www.crimestoppers-uk.org](http://www.crimestoppers-uk.org)