

Identity fraud on the rise; only 7 per cent of British people are totally confident that the organisations they deal with treat data responsibly

National Identity Fraud Protection Week 2010 launches today

London, 18 October 2010 – National Identity Fraud Prevention Week (NIDFPW), now in its sixth year, starts today to warn consumers and businesses of the dangers of identity fraud at home and at work. NIDFPW brings together partners from both the private and public sector, contributing a wealth of experience and resources to companies, their employees, customers, suppliers and consumers who are facing the threat of identity fraud.

Research carried out by Fellowes for this year's campaign shows that only 7% of British people are completely confident that the organisations they deal with treat data responsibly. Despite being aware of the dangers, British individuals and businesses still aren't taking steps against identity fraud:

- More than nine out of ten people in the UK (94%) consider themselves to be at risk from identity fraud
- Only 44% say that they regularly check bills and financial statements against receipts
- Only half (55%) verify emails or calls from organisations before responding
- 82% of British people believe that the company they work for doesn't take identity fraud seriously enough

Identity fraud is still a big problem in the UK. According to CIFAS - The UK's Fraud Prevention Service, in the first three quarters of 2010, levels of identity fraud increased by almost 10% (9.68%), when compared with the same period in 2009, to 79,871 cases of identity fraud.

It is clear that British businesses are not doing enough to prevent identity fraud. This includes not handling sensitive documents in a secure enough fashion, or not undertaking adequate security checks. Specifically the research found that:

- Only 56% of British organisations have a comprehensive policy to help protect people's identities
- 40% of British employees believe that employees' and customers' identities could be obtained from company bins. This is one of the highest figures in Europe
- Additionally, a survey commissioned by the FSB finds that the average amount lost due to fraud per year by UK small businesses is around £3,000 (£2,864).

John Inverdale, renowned BBC sports presenter, is this year's National Identity Fraud Prevention Week spokesperson and has had his own personal experience of identity fraud. In his role as spokesperson, John will shed light on how all businesses and individuals need to be taking steps to protect themselves and their customers.

Talking about his own experience of identity fraud, John said: "I discovered from my postman that my mail had been illegally redirected to a house in North London and I was shocked to think that someone had had access to all my mail and credit card details for four weeks. It became more worrying when I started to receive credit card statements in my name from organisations

that I had never heard of. Although, I resolved the situation in the end, it was extremely stressful.

“My experience has made me realise just how important it is for people to protect themselves and their businesses from identity fraud. It’s not difficult, but it is important to do things like regularly check your credit report, be careful about what information you reveal on social networks and never give out personal information, especially your PIN number. Businesses can also take simple steps to protect themselves such as creating an anti-fraud policy, as well as having a comprehensive IT security policy and securely destroying all sensitive documents.”

This year, the NIDFPW partners are once again making a guide available with tips on how to prevent identity fraud at home and at work. In addition to a dedicated online resource centre, the guide will outline the risks of identity fraud and suggest ways everyone can protect themselves. This essential reading is available free of charge from today through the campaign’s website, www.stop-idfraud.co.uk.

This year’s campaign is supported by the Association of Chief Police Officers, Metropolitan Police, City of London Police, Fellowes, the National Fraud Authority, the Federation of Small Businesses, Equifax, CIFAS - The UK’s Fraud Prevention Service, Callcredit, Experian, the Home Office, the British Chambers of Commerce, the British Retail Consortium and the Royal Mail.

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High resolution images are available for the media to view and download free of charge from www.stop-idfraud.co.uk

Additional tips can be found in the “Mind Your Own Business” guide or by visiting www.stop-idfraud.co.uk