

Kent Fraud Alert System



TO STOP FRAUD™

Offender made to repay almost £60,000 to fraud victims.

A criminal who acted as a treasurer for organised fraudsters has been ordered to pay almost £60,000 in compensation to victims. Luke Barling, 50, from Sittingbourne, was jailed for two years and nine months in June 2023 after accepting multiple payments from mostly elderly and retired people. The victims had been scammed in a variety of ways including insurance fraud, unnecessary building work and a scheme relating to the sale of diamonds. Others thought they were making investments in saving accounts with attractive interest rates, unaware they were being tricked by offenders using clones of legitimate companies. Some were unaware they had been defrauded until they were contacted by police. Detectives from the Kent and Essex Serious Crime Directorate established that whilst there was no evidence Barling had been involved in the frauds themselves, he had been accepting and spending large amounts of cash paid into two bank accounts opened between February and June 2020. Large sums were also transferred to a number of unknown recipients.

Money laundering

He was arrested and later pleaded guilty to three counts of money laundering. The investigation into Barling's finances continued following his sentencing and specialist staff from Kent Police's Proceeds of Crime Team made a successful application to Maidstone Crown Court to compensate seven victims a total of £58,095. A further nine victims had already received their money back from their banks or following applications to the Financial Ombudsman Service. An additional £36,172 was confiscated from Barling and will be distributed to operational agencies including Kent Police under the Asset Recovery Incentivisation Scheme.

Highly skilled

Detective Inspector David Godfrey of the Proceeds of Crime Team said, "Whilst a number of victims were able to recover the money they paid to the criminals who defrauded them, there were several others who felt they would be permanently deprived of the savings they were entitled to enjoy in their later lives. I am therefore very pleased that thanks to the work of our highly skilled financial investigators we were able to compensate everyone else affected. Whilst there is nothing to suggest Luke Barling targeted the victims in this case himself, he still clearly played a key role in the criminal operation and is quite rightly being held to account.'



**Kent
Police**

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In an emergency, if crime is in progress or life is in danger call **999**

If you have a hearing or speech impairment, use our textphone service **18000**.

Or text us on 999 if you've pre-registered with the emergency SMS service.

www.kent.police.uk   