

The Fraud & Scam Bulletin

APRIL 2026

Your monthly update direct from West Mercia Police on the latest
scams and frauds

COUNTERFEIT BANKNOTES

Over the last few weeks there has been an upsurge of payments made with counterfeit banknotes. These have been mainly in £20 denominations and have appeared not only in the West Mercia Policing area, but nationally as well.

Also, this has not just affected mainstream retailers but also private sellers online as well who are using such sites as Facebook Marketplace and eBay, so everyone should be aware.

Remember that if you receive any counterfeit notes, you cannot be reimbursed so you will carry the loss on that transaction. If you do receive a fake note, then hand it in to your local police station and make a report of the incident.

How do you check if a bank note is genuine?

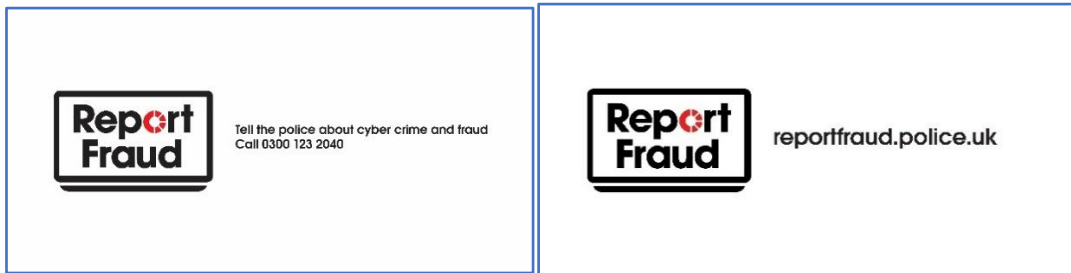
- Check the holographic window – inside you should see an image of King Charles III or Queen Elizabeth II and the value of the note around the edge, as well as the wording “Bank of England”
- Check the foil – if you tilt the note the words change between the value of the note and the word “Pounds”
- Raised Print – you should be able to feel the print such as the words “Bank of England” in the bottom right-hand corner
- Detection Pens – these were designed for paper notes so are not safe to use on the new polymer notes
- Compare with a genuine note - small differences in colour, print clarity and the overall feel of the note should be obvious

If you are unsure, then do not accept the note, and ask for an alternative method of payment such as a bank transfer.

For fuller details download the Bank of England guide by clicking on the following link:

[How to check your banknotes](#)

Please feel free to share these messages with any vulnerable friends, relatives or neighbours



If you have fallen for a fraud,

Report it to **Report Fraud** (***formerly known as ACTION FRAUD***) on **0300 123 2040** or via reportfraud.police.uk

Scam Text messages can be forwarded to 7726 to help phone providers take prompt action and block numbers that generate spam on their networks. You can also report Scam mobile calls by texting 7726 with the word "Call" followed by the fraudulent caller's phone number.

Forward **Fake Emails** received to report@phishing.gov.uk

If you think your bank account or personal banking details have been used fraudulently, then use the short phone number - **159** - to contact the Fraud Prevention Department of most major UK banks.

