

Kent Fraud Alert System



TO STOP FRAUD™

Fraud Alert: Fake Pet Listings Scamming UK Buyers

Thinking of buying a pet online? Stop and double-check before you pay. Santander UK has warned that nearly £160,000 was stolen between January and March from customers who were tricked by fake pet adverts on social media and online marketplaces. This is a sharp rise from £29,735 lost in the last quarter of 2025.

How these scams work

Criminals post convincing adverts for pets that do not exist. Once someone shows interest, they ask for money upfront, often claiming it is for delivery costs, Vet bills or vaccinations or a deposit to secure the animal. After payment is sent, the seller disappears leaving victims without their money and without a pet.

Scammers advertise a wide range of animals, including, Popular dog breeds like miniature dachshunds and cockapoos, Cats, Birds such as parrots, Reptiles, fish and even horses.

How to protect yourself from pet scams -

- Be cautious with social media adverts. Many fake listings appear on Facebook, Instagram and online marketplaces
- Check the seller carefully. Look for genuine contact details, reviews and a history of sales.
- Do a reverse image search. Scammers often reuse photos stolen from other websites.
- Never pay large deposits or unexpected fees. Be especially wary of requests to cover vet bills or transport costs upfront
- Always see the pet in person

Preventing fraud

Together,
let's stop
scammers.



Remember, ABC:



never Assume



never Believe



always Confirm



Shadow and Tiger say, “if you are pressured to pay quickly or something does not feel right, then walk away. A genuine seller will not rush you or refuse an in-person visit. Trust your instincts.” Purrfect.

If you have been a victim of any type of scam, then contact your Bank immediately, which you can do by calling 159 and reporting to Report Fraud at [Reporting cyber crime and fraud or phishing attempts - Report Fraud](#) or call 0300 123 2040.

Find out more by visiting our website at [Advice about fraud | Kent Police](#) and also from the Home Office at [Stop! Think Fraud - How to stay safe from scams](#)



**Kent
Police**

Report a non-urgent crime online www.kent.police.uk/report

Talk to us on LiveChat – available 24/7 www.kent.police.uk/contact

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   