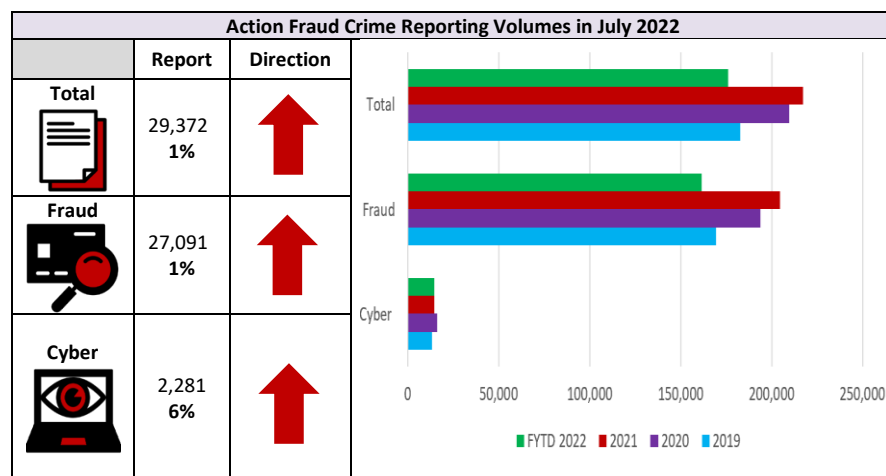




## Crime Trends Summary



**Explanation of Figures:** The columns above on the left show the crime reports (excluding information reports) received for September 2022 and the percentage change from the previous month, broken down by all reports, fraud reports and cybercrime reports. The graph on the right-hand side shows the Action Fraud crime reports received for each financial year to date, broken down by all reports, fraud reports and cyber reports.

- Fraud reports have remained relatively consistent to last month's figures, however, they have shown a slight increase, equivalent to a 1% rise. Cybercrime reports to Action Fraud have increased in September by 6% to 2,281. Overall, reporting figures show little change to August's data.
- When looking at the financial year to date (April – September 2022) as shown in the graph, overall reporting figures are significantly below the same period in 2020 and 2021 (during covid restrictions), however, the reporting volumes are proving to be similar, if a little below, the figures

seen during the same period in 2019. This pattern is also shown when looking at fraud reporting specifically. When examining cybercrime reporting, the figures show that reporting is higher in the financial year to date compared 2019 but are below the figures for the same period in 2020 and 2021. These comparisons to previous years will continue to be examined in subsequent MTU's.

- **Total losses** for crime reports, which have been verified, showed a significant increase in August, by 128%, however, they have come back down in September, from **£782 million** to **£268.2 million**. Verified losses remain above the previous year average of £207.6 million.
- **Online Shopping and Auction fraud** (crime and information reports) has decreased by 1% this month, after a slight increase the month prior. Figures have generally been going down since a high reporting level in January 2021 and remain lower than pre-pandemic levels. As we approach Christmas, and shopping habits change, this will be an area which is predicted to increase and will therefore continue to be monitored.
- **Ticket Fraud** has been steadily increasing since restrictions were eased and events have opened once more. However, as we move out of the summer months, September has seen a monthly decrease in reports by 29%. Levels remain reasonably high and with many big events expected to take place over the festival period, this will be one to continue monitoring.
- The largest percentile increase has been seen in reports under the category NFIB1G, which relates to Rental Fraud. Figures have risen by 23% this month and is now 62% higher than the 2021-year average. Reports are reasonably high at 637 reports received for the month of September alone. With the cost-of-living-crisis continuing to impact on things such as the housing market, we may see more individuals turn

to rental properties, therefore allowing fraudsters to target a larger pool of people.

- As mentioned in last month's threat update, a large amount of reporting remains under the NFIB52C code (Hacking – social media and Email). Within this code, social media hacking poses a significant risk to business continuity for sole traders and small businesses who are likely to have linked business and personal accounts and may depend on social media for communicating with clients.
- **Mandate Fraud:** Crime and information reporting has shown another increase of 8% in September with 320 reports. Mandate fraud is 20% lower than the previous year average. Reporting remains lower than pre-pandemic.

## Current Reporting Trends

### September MO's

- **Energy Bills Support Scheme Scam:** Action Fraud have issued an alert as reports are being received that relate to energy bill support schemes. Fake text messages, purporting to be from the UK Government, are being circulated, stating that the recipient has been identified as being "owed" or "eligible" for an energy bill discount as part of the Energy Bill Support Scheme. The texts include a link to genuine looking sites, designed to steal personal and financial information<sup>1</sup>.

- The NFIB have identified an MO of interest in relation to courier fraud. Victims are being contacted by a fraudster purporting to be from the "Fraud Squad", who advise the victim that they are required to "catch fraudsters". "Police money" is then placed into victim's accounts and they are asked to drive to the bank to withdraw funds. They are then instructed not to touch the money and to place it into an envelope for collection. The victim is provided with a safe word which will be confirmed by the courier who collects the cash from the victim's home address. The victim is also provided with a reference number through a fake 999 call, adding an element of validity to the scam. Following collection of funds, the criminals advised that officers will attend the address following the transaction, however, they never materialise.
- Similarly, another MO of interest was identified where victims received a call and were advised that they were being contacted by the "Action Fraud Squad". They were instructed to withdraw cash from various banks and that someone from Action Fraud would collect the money later, to carry our fingerprint analysis. The callers were on the phone to the victim during all transactions. The victim became alarmed when the caller took the home address and began asking about the entrances and exits to the property. A reference number was given to the victim to put on the envelope of cash. It was confirmed that two officers would attend the address to collect the money later that day.

<sup>1</sup> Action Fraud Alert

## Horizon Scanning – Monitoring

**New Cost of Living Scams:** Fraudsters have consistently managed to adapt their tactics in line with societal changes and/or major world events. The looming recession as provided a particularly fertile environment for criminals to thrive in. A warning has been issued about new cost of living scams. Fraudsters are using multiple platforms to reach people of all ages, including email, telephone, and social media. As energy prices continue to rise and many are struggling to 'tighten their belts' any further, criminals are preying on vulnerable businesses and households by offering fake discounts on prepayment meters as well as hoax rebates schemes. Concerns have also been raised over doorstep scammers posing as tradesmen.

**Pension Scams:** The Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) have issued a warning to pension holders who may become vulnerable to 'misdirection' scams due to the cost-of-living burdens. As many begin to struggle with rising costs, one in four UK adults, aged 40 and over would consider accessing their pension early. Between 01<sup>st</sup> April and 30<sup>th</sup> June alone this year, £3.6bn of flexible pension withdrawals were made. This is a rise of 23% on the same period in 2021. Fraudsters are taking this opportunity to exploit the potential victims through offering 'free' pension reviews and making promises of a higher return on pension investments<sup>2</sup>. In addition to this, recent political decisions have meant that pensions pots appear to be at risk and this may further encourage many to draw down early, giving the scammers a market to thrive.

---

<sup>2</sup> [The scams to watch for if you're considering early pension access - Your Money](#)

<b>Protective Marking</b>	PUBLIC
<b>FOIA Exemption</b>	No
<b>Suitable for Publication Scheme</b>	No
<b>Version</b>	Final
	CoLP Strategic R&A
<b>Purpose</b>	Provide an overview of key themes affecting individuals and enterprise. The information contained within this report has been based upon content within Action Fraud reports and open source which have not been verified as true and accurate accounts.
<b>Owner</b>	CoLP
<b>Author</b>	Strategic R&A
<b>Reviewed By</b>	Senior Analyst Strategic R&A

Copyright © City of London Police 2021 Disclaimer: While every effort is made to ensure the accuracy of the information or material contained in this Alert, it is provided in good faith on the basis that the Commissioner, the City of London Police and its police officers and staff accept no responsibility for the veracity or accuracy of the information or material provided and accept no liability for any loss, damage, cost or expense of whatever kind arising directly or indirectly from or in connection with the use by any person, whomsoever, of any information or material herein. The quality of the information and material contained in this document is only as good as the information and materials supplied to the City of London Police. Should you or your police force hold information, which corroborates, enhances, or matches or contradicts or casts doubt upon any content published in this Alert, please contact the City of London Police. Any use of the information or other material contained in this document by you signifies agreement by you to these conditions.