

# CLIENT NOTICE

# PROPERTY FRAUD

**It has become apparent that residential property is becoming the target of fraudsters looking to exploit property owners - potentially selling or remortgaging property in order to access the cash equity in the property. Property is usually the most valuable asset people own, and can therefore be an attractive target to criminals.**

This type of criminal activity is on the increase, and some properties are more at risk than others;

- Unoccupied properties
- Buy to Let / rented properties
- Properties with no mortgage
- Properties left empty for extended periods
- Property owned by elderly occupants
- Property left empty following death of owner
- Unregistered land – not registered with HM Land Registry
- Owners who have had their identity stolen
- Owners who live overseas

This type of fraud normally starts with the fraudster stealing your identity, and then selling or mortgaging the property by pretending to be you. Thankfully this type of property fraud is rare, but can have devastating effects for the victim.

The Land Registry have a dedicated property fraud page on their website with all of the latest information that you should consider to protect from this type of fraud.

<https://www.gov.uk/protect-land-property-from-fraud>

The Land Registry offer a free alerts service to enable you to become aware of any applications or searches made against your property at the Land Registry by third parties. You can set up alerts for up to ten properties which could, for example, enable you to monitor family members' properties or any further property you may hold, to reduce any risk of property fraud. You don't have to own the properties you set up alerts on. To do this log in to <https://propertyalert.landregistry.gov.uk/> and then follow the online instructions.

It is also important to ensure that your contact details the Land Registry hold for you are up to date. If your details are not up to date then you may not receive any correspondence sent to you. The Land Registry can register up to 3 addresses, including a foreign address and an email address for you. Where the Land Registry have your email they will send alerts by email instantly through their property alert system.

Contact the HM Land Registry fraud line if you think you are the victim of property fraud.

Email – [reportafraud@landregistry.gov.uk](mailto:reportafraud@landregistry.gov.uk)

Tel – 0300 006 7030 | Mon-Fri 8:30am – 5pm