



Wedding Services Fraud

May 2017

Copyright © City of London Police 2017

NFIB 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 NFIB by return.

Any use of the information or other material contained in this document by you signifies agreement by you to these conditions.

WEDDING SERVICES FRAUD

The information contained within this alert is based on the results of research carried out by the National Fraud Intelligence Bureau (NFIB). One of the key objectives of sharing fraud data between the NFIB and stakeholders is to prevent fraud.

ALERT CONTENT

With the upcoming “Wedding Season”, and for those individuals who are considering making plans for next year and beyond, you should be aware of the potential risks of fraud involved.

According to ‘bridesmagazine.co.uk’, in 2017 the average wedding cost spend is approximately £30,111. This will be paid out to multiple vendors, including; photographers, caterers, reception venues and travel companies, to name a few. Many of these services will require booking at least several months in advance and you may be obliged to pay a deposit or even the full balance at the time.

Being aware of the potential risks and following the below prevention advice could minimise the likelihood of fraud.

PROTECTION / PREVENTION ADVICE

- Paying by Credit Card will provide you with protection under Section 75 of the Consumer Credit Act, for purchases above £100 and below £30,000. This means that even if a Company goes into liquidation before your big day, you could claim a refund through your Credit Card Company. (1)
- Social Media - Some Companies run their businesses entirely via social media sites, offering low cost services. Whilst many are genuine, some may not be insured or may even be fraudulent. There are a few things you can do to protect yourself;
 - Ensure you obtain a physical address and contact details for the vendor and verify this information. Should you experience any problems, you will then be able to make a complaint to Trading Standards or consider pursuing via the Small Claims Court.
 - Ensure you obtain a contract before paying money for services. Make certain you fully read and understand what you are signing and note the terms of cancellation.
- Consider purchasing Wedding Insurance - Policies vary in cover and can be purchased up to two years in advance. They can protect you from events that would not be covered under the Consumer Credit Act.
- Complete research on each vendor, ensuring you are dealing with a bona fide person or company. Explore the internet for reviews and ratings and ask the vendor to provide details of past clients you can speak to. You should do this even if using companies recommended by a trustworthy friend or source.
- For services such as wedding photographers, beware of websites using fake images. Look for inconsistencies in style; Meet the photographer in person and ask to view sample albums. If you like an image from a wedding, ask to view the photographs taken of the whole event so you can see the overall quality.
- Remember, if something appears too good to be true, it probably is! (2)

FEEDBACK

The NFIB needs feedback from our readers to evaluate the quality of our products and to inform our priorities. Please would you complete the following NFIB feedback survey through: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/FeedbackSDU>. This should take you no more than 2 minutes to complete. If you have other feedback or additional information that you would prefer to provide by email please send to NFIBfeedback@cityoflondon.pnn.police.uk.

Handling Instructions

This report may be circulated in accordance with the protective security marking shown below and caveats included within the report. The information contained in this report is supplied by the City of London Police in confidence and may not be shared other than with the agreed readership/handling code without prior reference to the City of London Police. Onward disclosure without prior authority may be unlawful, for example, under the Data Protection Act 1998.

The cover sheets must not be detached from the report to which they refer.

Protective Marking:	NOT PROTECTIVELY MARKED
FOIA Exemption:	NO
Suitable for Publication Scheme:	NO
Version:	V1.0
Storage File Location:	G:/OPERATIONAL/FraudDesk/ActionFraudCrimes/21.VolumeCrimeTeam/Resarcher/Alerts/2017
Purpose:	Fraud Alert
Owner:	NFIB Management
Author:	103886P
Review By:	NFIB Management
References	(1) http://urbanette.com/avoiding-wedding-vendor-scams/ (2) http://markfraserphotography.co.uk/2015/11/ten-pitfalls-to-avoid-when-planning-a-wedding/