



PROPERTY FRAUD

Safe as Houses? What you can do to protect yourself from Property Fraud.

Fraudsters everywhere become more sophisticated over time because they have to. Successful fraudsters never say “this is the way we have always done it”. Times change, technology changes, loopholes are closed, but opportunities continue to develop, and the unscrupulous will take advantage of these.



It is not personal; you do not have to mix in shady underworld communities to be a victim of fraud, it is the opportunity to steal an advantage that the criminals are looking for, rather than a way to make your life miserable, but it is the same outcome.

Your home or your property investment portfolio is (probably) the most expensive thing you own and although people routinely insure against damage to buildings and contents (very sensibly) they do not use all the protection that they can against property fraud.

The Land Registry states : “The type of frauds we see are typically where criminals steal a property owner’s identity and then attempt to sell or mortgage their property by pretending to be them. If it isn’t discovered promptly, the true property owner might find their property has been transferred or sold without their knowledge. Fixing the mess can be distressing, time-consuming and costly. Your property is more at risk if it’s empty, rented out or mortgage-free.”

There are simple steps that you can take:

1. Make sure that your address for service at HMLR is up to date. If you live in the property this will be the property address, if you do not this will be your home address and should not be the property address.
2. You can add additional addresses to the title for your property, including email addresses. Please ensure that you use an email account that you are always going to have access to (not your work email address)
3. Use the Land Registry Property Alert Service - <https://propertyalert.landregistry.gov.uk/>
This allows you to:
 - monitor a property if it’s already registered with HM Land Registry
 - monitor the property of a relative; you don’t have to own a property to set up an alert
 - choose up to 10 properties to monitor

We can help you ensure that your property address is up to date. We will make sure that the correct address is registered at HMLR initially, but we will also provide free address updates at HMLR for existing clients, subject to satisfactory ID checks (see our blog on ID and money laundering)

<https://landandlaw.co.uk/a-short-word-on-id-and-money-laundering/>

