



## Brits 'Careless' with 'Confidentiality'

### UK Households are making it easy for fraudsters to attack

New independent research<sup>1</sup> released today reveals that more than a half of UK households are careless when it comes to protecting confidential information and are unknowingly sharing their salary details, bank statements and credit information with their neighbours or strangers.

The findings are published as [National Identity Fraud Prevention Month](#) is launched, an annual campaign backed by organisations from the public and private sector to inform consumers of the risks associated with identity fraud.

The new study commissioned by [Fellowes](#), reveals more than half of respondents have seen private documents in a friend's or neighbour's house and a quarter secretly know more about them than the individual realises.

Forty one per cent secretly know what a friend's or neighbour's salary is, having had sight of a pay slip when visiting them at their home.

More than half (62%) have knowledge of purchase transactions and bank details directly from account statements. A further 38% are aware of the amount of credit owed, taken directly from a statement of account from a mortgage lender or Bank.

Conversely, one in 10 (14%) said that their friend or neighbour knew something about them which the individual didn't want to share with insight gained from paper-based information left on the side for visitors to see.

Despite this careless attitude, 30% are worried about what a friend or neighbour would do with this private information.

Two fifths (41%) have copies of their passwords to their accounts written down 'somewhere'. A further 40% leave copies of printed documents containing confidential data, such as bank statements (13%), payslips (12%), or financial documents lying around the house.

Households are failing to introduce basic precautions to protect themselves from the 'forgotten threat' of paper-based fraud, leaving them vulnerable to would-be fraudsters.

Almost a quarter (24%) forget to shred confidential documents consistently and 12% carelessly throw bank statements and other important documents straight into the bin without thinking of the repercussions. The abuse of people's identity accounts for 60% of fraud in the UK<sup>2</sup>.

Having been targeted by fraudsters<sup>3</sup>, one in five believes that 'lightening doesn't strike twice' and fails to take extra care to protect data.

Personal identity fraud can result in severe financial loss and take months before victims realise they had their identity used by someone else.

It seems that we are far more trusting of other people with our information than we ought to be as head of households allow direct access to their accounts.

The survey found that consumers share their personal information with one or more people. Over a quarter go as far as handing over their pin numbers to someone else other than themselves to get cash out (29%).

Daryl Brunt, Sales and Marketing Director for Fellowes, explains: "If households are making it easy for friends and neighbours to see statement of accounts, then they are making it even easier for fraudsters to get their hands on their information.

"It's evident that paper-based information is the forgotten threat among UK households given that the research shows that consumers remain complacent with the security of personal data.

"Brits really are leaving themselves, and their families, completely exposed, especially when they fail to destroy copies."

"Stealing your personal information is where most fraud begins. Using your identity, a fraudster can effectively create a bigger picture of you. Information really isn't fully secure unless it's shredded!"

Away from their own-homes, Brits extend this careless attitude to the workplace. One in 10 (12%) say their boss or colleague has found something out about them which they would have preferred not to have shared. Besides some (22%) having been reprimanded by their employer, 15% lost their job as a direct result.

People who want to know more about this issue can visit an online resource ['Don't let it be you'](#) which aims to raise awareness of the threat of personal identity fraud and to arm all consumers with advice, guidance and support to reduce the levels of attack.

**-ENDS-**

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**Notes to Editors:**

<sup>1</sup> Independent research commissioned by office specialist Fellowes and conducted by One Poll in September 2014. For this report, quantitative research was carried out among 1000 employed UK adults.

<sup>2</sup> CIFAS Fraudscape report 2014 [https://www.cifas.org.uk/fraudscape\\_twentyfourteen](https://www.cifas.org.uk/fraudscape_twentyfourteen)

<sup>3</sup> Independent research commissioned by Fellowes and conducted by Atomik. In August 2014, 2008 adults were surveyed.

**About Fellowes**

[Fellowes](#), Inc. offers an extensive range of products to equip the workspace, including paper shredders, binders, laminators, desktop accessories and record storage solutions.

Founded in 1917 by Harry Fellowes and headquartered in Itasca, Illinois, Fellowes, Inc. employs more than 1,200 people throughout the world and has operations in 15 countries. Visit [fellowes.com](http://fellowes.com) for more information.