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Shred junk mail or lose your ID

■ Warning of 'ultimate indignity' –
theft of details of dead relatives

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A COMPANY is warning the relatives of deceased people in Ealing to shred letters and junk mail to stop them becoming the latest victims of identity fraud.

According to research published on Wednesday, deceased residents of Ealing received more than a quarter of a million letters in the past year.

A shocking 266,500 items were sent, rating Ealing in the top five of all London boroughs whose deceased residents are still receiving junk mail.

The UK fraud prevention service lists Impersonation of the Dead (IOD) as Britain's fastest-growing identity crime and families are urged to remove names and addresses from junk mail sites and shred anything which can be copied by fraudsters.

Mark Roy, CEO of The REaD

Group, which compiled the statistics, said: "To lose someone close to us is upsetting enough, but to see their identity stolen by criminals is perhaps the ultimate indignity."

"The onus isn't solely on householders however. It's incumbent on every mailing organisation – businesses, charities, clubs and community groups – to regularly clean their databases of deceased name and address information.

"Only by combining community and business efforts will we be able to stop junk mail abuse – to the benefit of consumers, the economy and the environment alike."

Wandsworth topped the league with 520,000 letters sent in the past year, with Westminster, Croydon and Barnet following.

The REaD Group has given the following tips to decrease the chances of becoming a victim to identity fraud.

■ Register the deceased with

www.thebereavementregister.org.uk which removes names and addresses of people from companies' mailing lists.

■ Register with a junk mail control service such as www.itsmypost.com or www.mpsonline.org.uk

■ Display a 'No Junk Mail' sign on the letterbox or door

■ Shred the address panel of discarded junk mail items so that name, address, bank account and/or other personal information cannot be used by ID fraudsters.

