

Beware of Scams and Fraud v2 Coronavirus COVID-19

The Coronavirus COVID-19 pandemic has brought disruption and uncertainty to us all. We have seen many fantastic examples of neighbours and helpful strangers supporting others who may be more vulnerable than themselves.

Sadly, it has also presented an opportunity to criminals who are taking advantage of the disruption and trying to make money through scams and fraudulent activity. These are examples of some of the scams we have been made aware of and sensible precautions to take.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) Supplies

It is headline news that there isn't enough PPE (gloves, aprons, masks etc.) for everyone who needs it. Fraudsters know people are desperate to get hold of PPE and are cashing in on this.

We have seen very professional looking websites offering PPE for sale. You pay up front for PPE that will never arrive.

People are also receiving texts, emails or phone calls from people saying they need to have PPE or virus testing kits to stay safe. Do not reply and put the phone down to these callers.

PPE for PAs should be obtained via your local social services department.

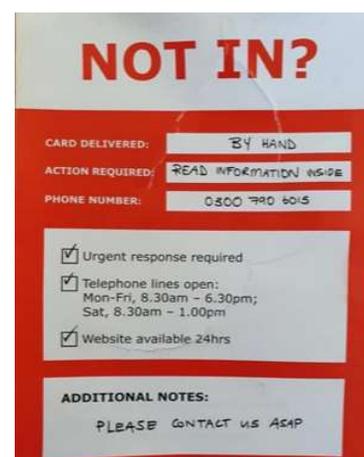


Illegitimate Charity Donations

There are many genuine charity requests for Coronavirus COVID-19 related causes. There are also a number of fake online charity sites that look very similar. If you want to make a donation, go to the charity website directly not via a link someone has sent you. Don't be rushed into making a donation.

Card through the Door

This is a scam. The phone number is a premium number. They are trying to frighten you into contacting them. If you are expecting a parcel, go straight to the delivery company website to check what to do.



Scam calls about NHS Test and Trace

We have been alerted that people are receiving scam calls from people claiming to be the NHS Test and Trace service. Scammers are asking people to provide card details to pay for a testing kit to be sent through the post. NHS Contact tracers will never:

- Ask you to make any form of payment or purchase a product.
- Ask you to share any details of your bank account or social media
- Ask you to share any PINs, passwords or download software to your device

Scam texts that appear to be from official bodies

We have heard about people being called on the phone and asked to pay a fine for failing to meet lockdown rules. Fines can only be issued by the police and in person. Put the phone down if you receive a call like this.

Or you might receive a text. It looks official but it's a scam. Do not click on the link, simply delete the text.

Scam texts have also been sent from NHS, GP surgeries, Ofcom or mobile phone operators. If you think they may be genuine and you are expecting contact from e.g. your GP surgery, make separate contact with them.

Volunteers and Community Support Groups

There are now 750,000 people signed up as NHS Volunteer Responders. There are also many excellent community support groups in every area of the UK. Whilst the vast majority of people are volunteering for the right reasons, there may be a few who are not.

You will only be contacted by an NHS volunteer if you have asked to be. All NHS volunteers have been told not to wear uniforms and can show you official ID.

If a volunteer is getting shopping for you, try and pay for it in advance via the shop's website (click and collect). Do not give them your card or share your PIN number with them. The major supermarkets all have schemes in place to make shopping easier e.g. online 'essentials' shopping list already set up to make product selection easy, paying for shopping over the phone, click and collect schemes etc.

Phishing Risks around Banks, HMRC and Pensions

We have been alerted to an increase in 'phishing' attempts from fraudsters pretending to be from your bank or building society, HMRC (the tax office) or pensions companies. Whilst branches may be closed, banks have not changed their security processes. They will never ask you to disclose your password over the telephone or by email.

To report a scam, please visit www.actionfraud.police.uk or call 0300 123 2040.