Be wary of any emails saying they are from official sources which ask for money

Scammers are getting in touch with people, and claiming to be from health organisations such as the Centre for Disease Control, World Health Organisation or public health bodies. Do not respond to these emails or do as they request. Remember:

Any requests for payment are a sign that this is a scam

They might claim to have a list of people in the local area who are infected, at a cost. Public bodies such as this would never ask for money for information. Any information they make available to the public is free of charge.

Your personal information is valuable

Remember, any data provided to scammers could be used at a later date to try and trick you out of money. Be careful with what you provide, and to whom.

Don't respond to offers of medication and health screening

In some countries there has been an increase in scammers claiming they have access to a vaccine, treatment or cure for the virus – of course, at a cost.

There is currently no vaccine against coronavirus, and no specific treatment or medication available. Any offers of a treatment or vaccine available privately at a cost will likely be a scam.



Be alert to scammers and fraudsters

The tips we've shared may seem frightening, but they're simply there to help you be aware of some of the tricks used by scammers and fraudsters.

We're all in this together and although it's important to stay alert to potential scams, it's also important to remind ourselves that most people are genuinely trying to help.

Support is available

You aren't alone. Victim Support are here to support you, and we will continue to do so throughout this difficult time. You can call our free confidential Supportline on **08 08 16 89 111**, or visit **victimsupport.org.uk**

Contact your local Victim Support:

Essex Victim Support
0808 178 1694

Supportline: 08 08 16 89 111
FREE CONFIDENTIAL INDEPENDENT

Business Disability Forum – Building disability-smart organisations
Leaders in Diversity
Stonewall DIVERSITY CHAMPION

Registered office: Victim Support, 1 Bridge Street, Derby, DE1 3HZ
T: 020 7268 0200 Next Generation Text: 18001 020 7268 0200 Registered charity no. 298028
© Victim Support 2020 Images: © Getty Images P2603 | 03|20

VICTIM SUPPORT

Coronavirus: Scammers and fraudsters

Advice for individuals



www.victimsupport.org.uk

VictimSupport @VictimSupport victimsupport_uk

Coronavirus: Scammers and fraudsters

In neighbourhoods up and down the country people are pulling together and demonstrating a real sense of community, and that's something we should all be incredibly proud of.

Unfortunately, the coronavirus has also seen a rise in the exploitation of vulnerable people, and on the unease, uncertainty and anxiety that many of us are understandably feeling at this time.

These 'Bad Samaritans' con people into thinking they are helping them, or take advantage of people's good nature and their desire to help others.

Many of these scams are not new, but we may be more likely to fall victim to them given these uncertain times. With more time spent at home, scammers and fraudsters also have more chance to contact us – either on our doorstep, by phone, or online.

We've listed some tips to help prevent you becoming a victim of crime.



Tips to prevent you becoming a victim of crime

If someone offers to shop for you set some boundaries and stick to them

If you are unable to easily get to the shops, you may accept an offer from someone to do your shopping for you. Although most people may be honest and well-intentioned, sadly not everyone is. They may take money or your cash card, but not return with your shopping. Scammers may even claim to be from helpful or reputable organisations or charities, offering help, taking money and not coming back.

It's always best to ask someone who you know and trust to help you, such as a family member or close friend. However, when this isn't possible, set some boundaries and stick to them. You can:

Ask for ID

If someone claims to be from an official organisation like the British Red Cross, ask to see some employee identification such as an ID card. Do not let them into your home before seeing it. If you're at all suspicious, ask them to leave your doorstep. You can always call the organisation and ask them if they have helpers operating in your area before handing over any money.

Insist on payment upon their return

If someone offers to help with shopping or buying medication, request that you pay when they return. People who are genuinely trying to help will generally understand why this is a good idea.

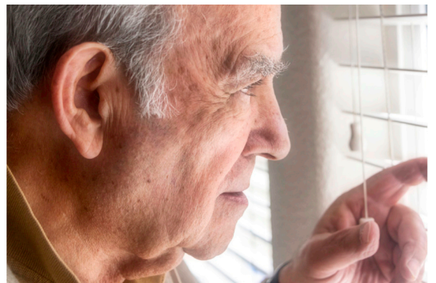
Ask to see the receipt before paying

Ask to see a receipt showing how much your shopping cost before handing over money. If they are hesitant to do this, explain that you are just being cautious and want to make sure they are given the right amount.

Be wary about following suggestions that may put you at risk

Lots of local Facebook sites are being set up to help neighbours. Although this can be helpful, please be careful about the suggestions given on these groups.

For example, some community groups are asking people who need assistance to put a red card in their window. Although this initiative is well intentioned it can make you a target for fraudsters and scammers. We therefore do not recommend that these are used.



If something seems too good to be true, it probably is

The outbreak of coronavirus has seen shops run out of lots of supplies such as hand sanitiser, face masks and toilet paper. As a result of shortages you might be shopping online, perhaps for the first time. To keep you as safe as possible follow the tips below, and remember if something seems too good to be true, it probably is.

Look for a name you know

You can generally trust the larger supermarket chains, but make sure you're on their real website. This will generally end in .co.uk or .com

Take a look at the reviews before buying

Before you buy on smaller websites, do some research. Check if they have positive reviews for their website, and how long they have been selling online. If they have only just started selling and they have no reviews there is a higher chance it could be a scam.

Check the price is about right

Look out for sellers offering prices at well below the normal retail price. If it's too good to be true, it probably is.

Seek advice from others

If you're not sure, ask a trusted family member or friend for advice before buying.

Use a credit card

If you do decide to purchase a product online, use a credit card as most credit cards provide protection under section 75 of the consumer credit act.

