



Dear Kent Resident,

**RE: Scams advice during coronavirus outbreak**

Kent County Council Trading Standards are writing to you with regards to the coronavirus and how you can access support and safeguard yourself against scams.

It can be difficult to know who to trust at this time. Please be aware that not everyone is trustworthy and some people are taking advantage of the unusual situation we are facing.

**Here are just some of the scams we are aware of, but please note that criminals come in all shapes and sizes and can contact you at the door, by phone, by post or online.**

**Beware of;**

- Miracle cures or vaccines for coronavirus – there is no specific treatment for coronavirus (COVID-19).
- Home cleaning services.
- People impersonating healthcare workers, claim to be offering ‘home-testing’ for coronavirus – this is a scam and these kits are not currently available to buy.
- Emails saying that you can get a refund on taxes, utilities or similar are usually bogus and they are just after your personal and bank details.
- Fake cures for coronavirus – there is no cure for Coronavirus at this time. These will not help and are designed to take your money.
- New mobile phone applications that claim to give you updates on the virus but instead, they lock your phone and demand a ransom. The UK Government has launched a Coronavirus Information service on WhatsApp To use the free service simply add 07860 064422 in your phone contacts and then message the word ‘hi’ in a WhatsApp message to get started.
- Your bank or the police will never ask for your bank details over the phone.
- People offering to do your shopping or collecting medication and asking for money upfront and then disappearing.

**Tips to avoid being scammed:**

- Be cautious and listen to your instincts. Don’t be afraid to hang up, bin it, delete it or shut the door.
- Take your time; don’t be rushed.
- Say no to ALL doorstep sales and requests for money, even if they claim to be from a charity. If possible, stay safe and don’t even open your door.
- If you are online, be aware of fake news and use trusted sources such as .gov.uk or NHS.uk websites. Make sure you type the addresses in and don’t click on links in emails.
- Only purchase goods from legitimate retailers and take a moment to think before parting with money or personal information.



- Know who you're dealing with - if you need help, talk to someone you know or report it to Citizens Advice Consumer Helpline – details are below.
- Protect your financial information, especially from people you don't know. Never give your bank card or PIN to anyone.

**Contact information:**

- If you think you've been scammed, report it to the Citizens Advice Consumer Helpline on **0808 223 1133** where you can also get advice.
- If you are in immediate danger, contact the police on 999.
- Contact your bank if you think you have been scammed.

To learn more about different types of scams and how to protect yourself and others, visit [KCC's Coronavirus Scams and Guidance page](#) or [www.FriendsAgainstScams.org.uk](http://www.FriendsAgainstScams.org.uk) and complete the free online training.

As a reminder, we would like to re-iterate the government and NHS guidelines about maintaining good hygiene; only go outside for food, health reasons or essential work, and stay two metres away from other people outside of your household.

It is particularly important for people who are over 70 and/or have an underlying health condition.

Kind Regards,

Steve Rock  
Head of Trading Standards, Kent County Council

**Read it. Share it. Prevent it.**  
**#ScamAware #Coronavirus #KentTogether**