

#### Information Alert – New way to report online scam adverts introduced – 13 August 2020

The Advertising Standards Authority (ASA) have launched a new service which allows internet users to report scam ads appearing online.

Online users have been asked to fill in a form via the ASA website to report any fake ads they find on online platforms such as newspaper websites, paid-for search engines or social media.

ASA will then make contact with the relevant platform who can then work to remove the advert and prevent the advertiser publishing further scam ads.

This new reporting mechanism is in response to the ever-increasing number of fake advertisements found online which spread false information and trick internet users into parting with their cash and personal information.

More information on the launch of this reporting system can be found via Money Saving Expert website.

If you think you have been the victim of an online scam you can report this to us via our partners, the Citizens Advice consumer helpline, on 0808 223 1133.

#### Information Alert - Protect Norfolk campaign, coronavirus communication toolkits for businesses - 13 August 2020

Norfolk County Council have developed several toolkits to help businesses and other organisations spread awareness about how we can help protect Norfolk from coronavirus.

They include materials such as posters, educational videos and leaflets, and can be accessed by anyone wanting to help spread awareness. Topics include keeping safe while at home or work, correct hand washing methods, and how to book a test. There are more specific materials available for the tourism and hospitality industries.

There is also a section focused on Covid-19 scams, with materials that can be used by anyone looking to raise awareness on how people can better protect themselves and their personal information.

View and download the materials at [norfolk.gov.uk/coronavirustoolkit](https://norfolk.gov.uk/coronavirustoolkit).

If you are a business looking for more information about using these toolkits, email [marketing@norfolk.gov.uk](mailto:marketing@norfolk.gov.uk).

#### Scam Alert - Beware of bogus charity cold calls - 12 August 2020

A Norfolk resident has reported receiving persistent telephone cold calls from a woman claiming to be collecting money for an overseas charity.

Charity fraud has been in operation for many years, with some collectors claiming to be raising money for legitimate charities whilst others set up their own fake charities.

Action Fraud have created a useful list of checks you should carry out to determine whether a charity is genuine before you decide to donate:

- Ask to see the identification of the fundraiser if you are asked to make a donation in person. All legitimate charity fundraisers carry official identification when fundraising. Make sure you are satisfied the identification is genuine.
- All charities have to be registered with the Charity Commission. Visit the Charity Commission's website to check if a charity is registered with them.
- Don't give out personal information and bank details to make a regular donation by Standing Order unless you are satisfied the person you are talking to is genuine. You can always phone the charity back on a number published on the charity's official website.

You can find more information about bogus charity collectors on the Action Fraud website.

If you have received a telephone cold call which you believe to be a scam you can report it to us via the Citizens Advice consumer helpline on 0808 223 1133.

Scam Alert - Telephone cold calls stating you have a right to claim money - 11 August 2020

We have received a report from a Norfolk resident about a telephone cold call claiming to be from the Office for Fair Trading stating that 'you have a right to make a claim'.

The resident was informed that they were owed £5000 and was asked to provide their bank account details so that the money could be transferred.

Be very wary of claims made during telephone cold calls. If you receive this or a similar call our advice is do not interact with the call and hang up.

If you have received a telephone cold call which you believe to be a scam you can report it to us via the Citizens Advice consumer helpline on freephone 0808 223 1133.

Scam Alert - Telephone cold calls claiming to offer discounts on your energy supply - 10 August 2020

We have received further reports about telephone cold calls offering discounts on gas and electricity supply as well as boiler servicing.

Residents have reported receiving a call from an unknown man that states he is able to beat the current price being paid for certain services within the home. The man is said to state information such as the residents name, address and current provider and requests bank account details.

Be wary of telephone cold calls and the claims made during them. If you receive a suspicious call do not give or confirm any personal or financial details. If the caller is claiming to be from your current provider you should hang up, wait five minutes and then contact your provider directly using a number printed on a bill or from the official website.

If you have received a telephone cold call which you believe to be a scam you can report it to us via the Citizens Advice consumer helpline on 0808 223 1133.

Scam Alert - Telephone cold calls claiming to be police officers - 08 August 2020

We are highlighting reports of elderly victims being targeted by telephone scammers pretending to be police officers.

The cold caller states that they have arrested someone attempting to make a purchase using your bank card. The caller then asks you to confirm your personal information.

Norfolk Police are reminding residents that neither your bank nor the police will ever ask you for your bank account details.

- Your bank or the police will never ask for your PIN, bank card or bank account details over the phone - never give these details to anybody.
- Neither the police nor banks will send a courier to collect money from you.
- Always request photo ID, and if unsure call the police.
- If you're asked to telephone a bank, always do it on a different phone to the one you were contact on. Fraudsters will keep the line open and have been known to play ring tones, hold music and a recorded message down the phone so the victim believes they are making a call to a legitimate number. Use a friend or neighbour's telephone instead.
- Never download any software suggested by the caller.
- Do not rush into complying to the scammer's demands or requests.
- Friends, family, carers and neighbours are asked to spread the word to ensure everyone is aware of this scam and what they should do.

If you have received a telephone cold call which you believe to be a scam, you can report it to us via the Citizens Advice consumer helpline on 0808 223 1133 or to Norfolk Police on 101.

#### Scam Alert - Fake listings for holiday accommodation – 06 August 2020

Due to travel restrictions and the loss of holidays overseas during the pandemic, there has been a shift in planning for a staycation. This has led to people booking places to stay in Norfolk via Facebook adverts, which has been exploited by criminals who are creating fake adverts for accommodation.

One Norfolk resident has lost £350 after booking a holiday cottage via a fake advert. The resident was informed on the morning of their holiday that the previous occupants of the cottage had tested positive for Covid-19 and that their booking could therefore not go ahead. The Facebook advert was then removed and the resident was unable to make further contact and request a refund.

The advert requests that payment is made via bank transfer rather than through a booking site or other secure payment method. If a bank transfer is your only option for payment, this should set alarm bells ringing. You should be especially cautious if you're asked to pay directly into a private individual's bank account.

#### Further advice on spotting holiday scams

You can report all scams to us via Citizens Advice Consumer Service on 0808 223 1133.

#### Scam Alert – Telephone cold calls claiming to be from HMRC – 05 August 2020

We are receiving reports from Norfolk residents about telephone cold calls claiming to be from HM Revenue & Customs (HMRC).

Recent reports have included an automated recorded message call informing the call recipient that 'HMRC have issued a warrant for your arrest due to tax evasion'. These calls are appearing to come from a range of different 'spoofed' numbers.

More information about HMRC related phishing emails and bogus contact can be found on the GOV.UK website.

We always advise to be very wary of any approach made by a telephone cold call. If you receive this type of call our advice is DO NOT interact with the call and HANG UP immediately.

You can report suspected scam telephone calls to us via our partners the Citizens Advice consumer helpline on 0808 223 1133.

#### Scam Alert – Telephone cold calls claiming to be from 'Amazon' – 03 August 2020

We are again warning residents to be on their guard for telephone cold calls claiming to be from 'Amazon'.

In recent weeks we received a number reports from residents who are receiving cold calls claiming to be from Amazon. Examples of these calls include:

- Recorded message calls claiming 'your Amazon Prime subscription is about to expire and a payment will be automatically taken' the call then states you can 'press 1 to cancel the payment'
- Recorded message calls claiming your Amazon account 'is about to be cancelled unless you update your bank details' the call then states you can 'press 1 to speak to customer service'
- Recorded message calls making similar claims but referencing 'Amazon Prime Video subscriptions'
- Calls claiming to be from 'Cyber Security at Amazon'

Some residents have reported receiving multiple calls within a day delivering the same message but originating from different numbers.

In previous reports, where residents have interacted with the calls, they have then been connected to a person who attempts to gather personal, account or financial details.

These calls are a scam and are not connected with Amazon in any way. If you receive this or a similar call our advice is DO NOT interact with the call and hang up.

If you have received a telephone cold call which you believe to be a scam you can report it to us via our partners the Citizens Advice consumer helpline on their freephone number 0808 223 1133.

#### Scam Alert – Telephone cold calls offering 'Brexit investment opportunity' – 02 August 2020

A Norfolk resident has received a voicemail message from a male offering a 'Brexit investment opportunity'.

#### Top 5 Tips To Take A Stand Against Telephone Scams

1. Never give out personal or bank details over the telephone
2. Don't feel pressured to making a decision over the telephone
3. If the caller is vague about giving out their company information, hang up

4. Don't open texts or answer calls from unrecognisable numbers
5. Consider a call blocking device to filter out unwanted calls

Our advice is always be very wary of claims made during a cold call and never give or confirm personal or financial details unless you are 100% sure you know who you are talking too.

If you have received a telephone cold call which you believe to be a scam you can report it to us via our partners, the Citizens Advice consumer helpline, on 0808 223 1133.

Scam Alert – Text messages about your bank account – 01 August 2020

We have received reports about text messages claiming to be from banks stating there is an issue on your account.

These messages are spammed out randomly to huge numbers of mobile numbers hoping to trick people into clicking on a link which will take them to bogus versions of the genuine bank website which will attempt to gather personal and financial details.

The messages will often claim that accounts have been frozen, that money is about to leave the account or that there is fraudulent activity with the aim of panicking the recipient into reacting.

If you receive this or a similar message our advice is:

- Do not click on any links or open attachments
- Do not reply to the message
- Do not call any numbers given in these messages

If you are concerned about the security of a bank account or credit card contact your bank or service provider directly using the Customer Service number printed on the card, on a recent statement or via information available on their genuine website or app. never use details provided in a text message.

If you think you might have responded to a text message scam and provided your bank account details, contact your bank immediately.

You can report suspected text message scams to us via our partners the Citizens Advice consumer helpline on freephone 0808 223 1133.

Information Alert – Covid-19 scams to be aware of - 31 July 2020

Action Fraud have put together a list of scams the public should be aware of regarding Covid-19 and lockdown. These include:

- Fake Government emails offering grants and tax reductions
- Emails offering to assist with universal credit applications
- Fake track and trace emails claiming you have been in contact with someone who has Covid-19
- Fake adverts for hand sanitizers and face masks
- Fake emails offering 6 months of free TV License

- Fake online dating profiles
- Fake investment opportunities

More information on these scams and advice should you receive one

The Friends Against Scams partnership have also created a fact sheet to help raise awareness on coronavirus scams. Friends Against Scams help to protect and prevent people from becoming victims of scams. View the fact sheet as well as information about becoming a Friend Against Scams and the free online awareness training available.