

Scams – mid June 2020

Be aware! Protect yourself and others

Buckinghamshire and Surrey Trading Standards has seen a 40% rise in complaints from residents being targeted by serious coronavirus related frauds.

The most alarming example is fraudsters buying fake NHS and care provider lanyards online, so they can attempt to enter the homes of vulnerable people. Trading Standards is warning Surrey residents to never let anyone they're not expecting or don't recognise into their home. Check first with the caller's employer either by ringing a number in a phone book, visiting a website, or from any existing paperwork. If there is absolutely any doubt then don't let them in.

Don't be scammed during coronavirus

Here are some of the scams and tricks being used during coronavirus:-

- COVID-19 voucher scams, phishing HMRC emails and texts offering a tax refund to help during the virus, or a fine for you leaving the house
- Unsolicited phone calls insisting you buy a facemask because 'the Government says so'
- Fake charity collectors
- Social media quizzes - cyber criminals use your answers and personal data to hack your accounts
- Fake healthcare workers offering 'home-testing' for coronavirus
- Thieves offering to shop for the elderly but really, keeping the money

Don't Be Fooled by Covid-19 Test and Trace Scams

The NHS test and trace system is now live and unfortunately this could be an opportunity for fraudsters to fool people. What you can expect from NHS test and trace:-

- You will be alerted by the NHS test and trace service if you have been in close contact with someone who has tested positive for coronavirus
- The alert can come by text, email or phone call.
- No financial information is needed as this a free service.
- Read on to find out what the tracers will and won't do so that you can stay alert

Contact tracers will:-

- call you from **0300 013 5000**
- send you text messages from 'NHS'
- ask you to sign into the NHS test and trace contact-tracing website **<https://contact-tracing.phe.gov.uk>**
- ask for your full name and date of birth to confirm your identity, and postcode to offer support while self-isolating
- ask about the coronavirus symptoms you have been experiencing

- ask you to provide the name, telephone number and/or email address of anyone you have had close contact with in the 2 days prior to your symptoms starting
- ask if anyone you have been in contact with is under 18 or lives outside of England

Contact tracers will never:

- ask you to dial a premium rate number to speak to us (for example, those starting 09 or 087)
- ask you to make any form of payment or purchase a product of any kind
- ask for any details about your bank account
- ask for your social media identities or login details, or those of your contacts
- ask you for any passwords or PINs, or ask you to set up any passwords or PINs over the phone
- disclose any of your personal or medical information to your contacts
- provide medical advice on the treatment of any potential Coronavirus symptoms
- ask you to download any software to your PC or ask you to hand over control of your PC, smartphone or tablet to anyone else
- ask you to access any website that does not belong to the Government or NHS

Top tips to avoid getting tricked out of your money

- **Be sceptical.** Don't be afraid to hang up, bin it, delete it or shut the door.
- Take your time. **Don't be rushed.**
- **Know who you're dealing with.** If you need help talk to someone you know or get in touch with Trading Standards.
- If you are **online, be aware of fake news** and use trusted sources such as gov.uk or nhs.uk
- **Be wary of advice online** - only seek medical advice from qualified doctors.
- **Protect your financial information**, especially from people you don't know and particularly in light of the recent Government announcement - key workers and their families can now book to be tested for coronavirus.
- **Do not give money, your bank card or PIN to a stranger.**
- **Never engage with someone or let anyone you're not expecting or don't recognise, into your home**, unless you are able to verify their authenticity and who they are.

Keep informed

Now more than ever, it's important to protect ourselves and others against scams, be aware, know who to trust and remember that not everyone out there is trustworthy. To stay updated on the latest tricks and scams you can follow Trading Standards on social media.

- Facebook [BucksSurreyTS](#)
- Twitter [@Bucks_Surreyts](#)
- Read the latest [TS Alerts newsletter](#).
- Visit the [Trading Standards webpage](#) for more information and advice.

For further consumer advice, to report a scam to trading standards or request a scam pack or No Cold Calling pack, please email trading.standards@surreycc.gov.uk or call 01296 388788.