

# STAY HOME

# STAY SAFE

# STAY SCAM AWARE

## Devon, Somerset and Torbay Trading Standards Service

Commissioned by Devon, Somerset and Torbay Councils



The outbreak of COVID-19 has seen an increase in scams and doorstep traders who are trying to exploit fear and uncertainty during this difficult time. As individuals and communities, we urge you to keep safe and vigilant in the current environment and look out for scams in your neighbourhood, which often target elderly and vulnerable people.

### Types Of Scams

#### Testing Kits and Cures

There is currently no cure for COVID-19 and limited access to testing kits outside the NHS. When these kits are available, always ensure you are purchasing from a reputable supplier.



#### Doorstep Crime

There are many genuine community groups and charities that are assisting the most vulnerable, however, be alert for individuals who may be taking money under the false pretence of helping.



#### Donation Scams

There have been reports of thieves extorting money from consumers by claiming they are collecting donations for a COVID-19 'vaccine'.



#### Refund Scams

Some companies are offering fake holiday refunds for individuals who have been forced to cancel their trips. People seeking refunds should also be wary of fake websites set up to claim holiday refunds.



#### Financial Scams

Criminals are seeking to take advantage of the financial uncertainty many people are facing. These include calls/emails pretending to be from your bank, mortgage or internet provider, as well as increases in loan shark activity.



### How To Stay Safe

- If you need help, try and use people you know and trust. If you cannot do this, always ask the person for ID, preferably in the form of a driving licence and make a note of their details
- Don't assume everyone is genuine. It is okay to say no and refuse an offer
- Don't open links or attachments from suspicious emails or text messages
- Never give out your personal bank details, pin, passwords to anyone over the phone, online or on your doorstep
- Don't ring the number the caller has given you to check it's genuine. Always try to look the number up for yourself
- If buying online, only make payments if there is a padlock symbol in the browser window frame and you have carefully checked the site and website address for inconsistencies
- If you are unsure, please seek advice from someone you know and trust

We are calling on communities to look out for each other. If you see or hear anything suspicious contact the Citizens Advice Consumer Helpline on **0808 223 1133**  
For more advice visit our website: [www.devonsomersettradingstandards.gov.uk](http://www.devonsomersettradingstandards.gov.uk)