



## Protecting Public from Cruel Coronavirus Scammers

**PLEASE SHARE THIS MESSAGE FAR AND WIDE!!!!**

<https://www.west-midlands.police.uk/news/protecting-public-cruel-coronavirus-scammers>

We're issuing crime prevention advice to older, vulnerable people across the West Midlands warning of cruel scammers who are trying to profit from the coronavirus.

Specialist detectives from our Economic Crime Unit (ECU) are writing to past fraud victims alerting them to tricks being used by crooks to burgle homes or access banking information.

Recent weeks have seen:

- 'Phishing' emails from hackers claiming to provide a list of Covid-19 infected people in their area – but with a link that leads to a malicious website.
- Online sellers purporting to be offering face masks or hand sanitiser for sale – but pocketing money and never sending out goods.
- Heartless con artists knocking on the doors of elderly residents offering to run shopping trips – but taking the cash or bank cards and never returning.
- ...and even thieves posing as police officers or health visitors making Covid-19 checks at homes in a bid to gain access and steal cash and valuables.

Our Victim Care Unit is also working with charities for the elderly to send out the warning letters and emails to even more people across the region.

Kloe Burrows from the ECU said: "Unprecedented times like these bring out the best in people – with communities rallying round to help those in

need – but also the worst in people and those who are using the virus pandemic to profit.

“I’ve heard from the British Red Cross who are reporting people claiming to represent them who are taking cash and bank cards from people under the pretences of running shopping errands. But they’re stealing the money and using bank cards fraudulently.

“It beggars belief people can be so cruel at a time of crisis – but it’s happening and we all need to be aware and pass on the message to older, perhaps more trusting relatives, friends and neighbours.”

On 16 March a switched on resident in the Stoke area of Coventry alerted us to two bogus PCs who claimed they were checking properties for Covid-19.

They flashed some kind of ID card but the woman asked them to wait while she wisely called the police. They made off as the woman left them to make a phone call.

Beware of doorstep cold-callers who may be using Covid-19 to con residents

And on 20 March, also in Coventry, a member of the public called to raise concerns about a man cold-calling homes offering to check broadband signals having suggested more people working remotely was causing IT issues.

Please read and share the below crime prevention advice so fraudsters cannot profit during this time:

- Never let unsolicited callers into your home or hand over bank cards or cash
- If someone claims to be from the police, NHS or other organisation ask to see their identification. If in doubt call the organisation they claim to represent to make checks; if they are genuine they won’t mind waiting while you verify who they are.
- Don’t click on links or attachments in suspicious emails
- Do not respond to unsolicited messages asking for personal or financial information
- If you are looking at making purchases on sites you don’t know or trust then research the company beforehand
- If you do decide to make payment use a credit card as the majority of credit card providers insure purchases made online
- Keep in contact with your loved ones, especially if elderly

To report suspicious activity to us message on Live Chat via our website or go to the Action Fraud website: <https://www.actionfraud.police.uk/>