



Environment & Public Protection

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Dear Bromley Resident

RE: Scams advice during coronavirus outbreak

Bromley Trading Standards are writing to you with regard to the coronavirus and how you can access support and safeguard yourself against scams.

We hope that you are well. 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, essential work or exercise; 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.

Facebook Community Groups, WhatsApp Groups and the Nextdoor social network that send neighbourhood alerts, can be great ways of staying in touch with those around you, however it can be difficult to know who to trust. These are all online and not everyone has access to the internet, so please see the telephone numbers below if you need assistance here in Bromley.

Please be aware that not everyone out there is trustworthy and some people will take advantage of this unusual situation our society is 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, in the post or online**:

- Be aware of people impersonating healthcare workers claiming to be offering 'home-testing' or people offering miracle cures or vaccines for coronavirus – there is no specific treatment for coronavirus (COVID-19).
- Offers of home cleaning services which scammers use to try to gain access to your home – don't allow strangers into your home without checking who they are via a **trusted** source.
- People offering to spray disinfectant onto driveways of properties or around your home for cash
- 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.
- There are lots of fake products available to buy online that say they can protect you or cure coronavirus. These will not help and are designed to take your money.
- There are new mobile phone applications that claim to give you updates on the virus but instead, they lock your phone and demand a ransom.
- Be aware that your bank or the police will never ask for your bank details or PIN over the phone.

- People offering to do 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.
- If someone claims to represent a charity, be suspicious and don't give them money or your bank details. Don't let them into your home.
- 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 carefully and don't click on links in emails or text messages
- Only purchase goods from legitimate retailers and take a moment to think before parting with money or personal information.
- Protect your financial information, especially from people you don't know. Never give your bank card or PIN to a stranger, even if they are going to get shopping for you.
- Know who you're dealing with - if you need help, talk to someone you know and trust or get in touch with your local Council on the numbers below.

Contact information:

- If you think you've been scammed, report it to Action Fraud on 0300 123 2040 or www.actionfraud.police.uk
- If you need advice, call the Citizens Advice Consumer Helpline on 0808 223 1133 or www.citizensadvice.org.uk and select Consumer
- If you are in immediate danger, contact the police on 999
- Contact your bank if you think you have been scammed or given out your banking details
- If you live in Bromley you can contact Trading Standards via email trading.standards@bromley.gov.uk or if you need help urgently for example to report someone going door to door contact the **Rapid Response** on **07903 852090**
- If you need assistance from a volunteer, you can register for help using our online form which can be found here:
https://www.bromley.gov.uk/info/1113/volunteering/1410/volunteers_and_requests_for_assistance
- If you do not have internet access, you can call the assistance line (during office hours) on: **020 8313 4484**. Please use the phone number only if you are unable to access the online form yourself or through a friend or relative.

To learn more about different types of scams and how to protect yourself and others, visit www.FriendsAgainstScams.org.uk.

Read it. Share it. Prevent it.

Yours sincerely,
Bromley Trading Standards