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| **INFORMATION SUMMARY SHEET**  **27.3.20**  **CORONA VIRUS SCAMS UPDATE FOR VOLUNTEERS AND FRONTLINE STAFF** |

**PLEASE READ – YOU CAN BE THE EYES AND EARS FOR OUR MOST VULNERABLE**

As a volunteer or a front line worker in Ceredigion, our communities need you to be vigilant, as there has been a rise in coronavirus-related scams across the UK.

Unfortunately, unscrupulous criminals are exploiting fears about COVID-19 to prey on members of the public, particularly older and vulnerable people who are isolated from family and friends.

Whether a volunteer, as part of your job or a resident of Ceredigion, we urge you to be on the look out and raise awareness of these scams to prevent people from becoming a victim of such crimes.

Examples of the types of COVID-19 scams to be aware of are as below.

**Doorstep crime**

* Door step crime and criminals exploiting the vulnerable – while most want to protect and help others, a minority may be seeking to befriend the vulnerable for their own gain. For example if someone is offering to do the shopping for them, no one should ever give their financial details to people or organisations that are unknown to them. Don’t hand over a banker’s card, don’t pay cash in advance, and no one should allow unknown ‘volunteers’ into their home.

**If you suspect anyone is a victim of this type of crime, contact Dyfed-Powys Police. If it can be reported online please do so:** [**www.dyfed-powys.police.uk/en/contact-us/report-an-incident/**](http://www.dyfed-powys.police.uk/en/contact-us/report-an-incident/) **otherwise call 101.** *For press office purpose: (welsh link -* [*www.dyfed-powys.police.uk/cy/cysylltwch-a-ni/riportiwch-ar-lein/*](https://www.dyfed-powys.police.uk/cy/cysylltwch-a-ni/riportiwch-ar-lein/)*)*

**Donation scams**

* Criminals claim to represent charities to help them appear legitimate before taking the victim’s money. There have also been reports of thieves extorting money from consumers by claiming they are collecting donations for a COVID-19 ‘vaccine’
* There are genuine charities providing support, so consumers should be vigilant and ask for ID from anyone claiming to represent a charity.

**If you have concerns contact Dyfed-Powys Police. If it can be reported online please do so: www.dyfed-powys.police.uk/en/contact-us/report-an-incident/ otherwise call 101**

**Online scams & telephone scams**

* Scammers claim to be from a range of organisations, such as a council offering free school meals payment or Her Majesty’s Revenue and Customs (HMRC) offering pay and earnings subsidies. As more people self-isolate at home there is an increasing risk that telephone scams will also rise, including criminals claiming to be your bank, mortgage lender or utility company. If there are any suspicions or if there has been no previous contact with the organisation, consider contacting the relevant body by using details from its own website or literature (and not contact numbers on any potential scam emails or website links that you receive).

**Report any concerns to Action Fraud on 0300 123 2040 or at www.actionfraud.police.uk.**

* There are also email scams that trick people into opening malicious attachments, which put people at risk of identity theft with personal information, passwords, contacts and bank details at risk. Some of these emails have lured people to click on attachments by offering information about people in the local area who are affected by coronavirus. There have also been links to false Coronavirus Maps – that deliver malware such as AZORult Trojan, an information stealing program which can infiltrate a variety of sensitive data. A prominent example that has deployed malware is ‘*corona-virus-map[dot]com’*.

**Report any concerns to Action Fraud on 0300 123 2040 or at** [**www.actionfraud.police.uk**](http://www.actionfraud.police.uk)**.**

**Counterfeit goods**

* Fake and unsafe goods – with demand rocketing for a range of goods, there have been reports of fake COVID-19 testing kits, hand sanitiser containing banned chemicals, and substandard protective face masks as well as some companies offering supplements that supposedly prevent COVID-19.

**Report any to the relevant Trading Standards Service by calling Citizens Advice Helpline on 03454 04 05 05 (Welsh language line) or 03454 04 05 06 (English language line).**

**Refund scams**

* Companies 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.

**Report any concerns to Action Fraud on 0300 123 2040 or at www.actionfraud.police.uk.**

**Loan sharks**

* Illegal money lenders or loan sharks are expected to prey on people’s financial hardship, lending money before charging extortionate interest rates and fees through threats and violence. If you are aware of illegal money lenders who may be targeting people in financial hardship, **report it to Wales Illegal Money Lending Unit by calling 0300 123 3311**

**PLEASE urge all your contacts to be vigilant and encourage them to report any of these concerns. It will help ensure that organisations can keep track of the types of scams, particularly if Corona virus related and take the necessary action.**

For advice and information on how to check if something might be a scam, visit: [www.citizensadvice.org.uk/consumer/scams/check-if-something-might-be-a-scam/](https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/consumer/scams/check-if-something-might-be-a-scam/).

People are being encouraged to protect their neighbours by joining Friends Against Scams, which provides free online training to empower people to take a stand against scams. To complete the online modules, visit [www.friendsagainstscams.org.uk](http://www.friendsagainstscams.org.uk).

For more information go to [www.nationaltradingstandards.uk/news/beware-of-covid19-scams/](http://www.nationaltradingstandards.uk/news/beware-of-covid19-scams/)