

# Protecting yourself from fraud and scams



Rest assured, we have lots of measures in place to protect your savings, but with more sophisticated scams emerging every day, we'd like to make you aware of some of the things to look out for to help you stay safe.

Action Fraud say that fraud and cybercrime are the most common crimes committed in the UK, with an estimated cost to the economy of around £130-£190 billion each year.\*

We're supporters of the 'Take 5 to Stop Fraud' campaign, which offers simple and impartial advice about fraud.

We've summarised their key tips about how to protect yourself and listed some of the common types of scam in this leaflet.



# TO STOP FRAUD™

\*<https://www.actionfraud.police.uk/what-is-fraud>

## 1 STOP

- **Never disclose security details**, such as your PIN or full password - it's never okay to reveal these
- **Don't assume an email request or caller is genuine** - people aren't always who they say they are

## 2 CHALLENGE

- **Don't be rushed** – a genuine bank or organisation won't mind waiting to give you time to stop and think
- **Listen to your instincts** – if something feels wrong then it is usually right to pause and question it

## 3 PROTECT

**Stay in control** – have the confidence to refuse unusual requests for information

Visit [www.takefive-stopfraud.org.uk](http://www.takefive-stopfraud.org.uk) for more help and information.

## › Situational scams

Doorstep scams

Investment and Pension scams

Money Mule scams

Romance scams

Some fraudsters will try to take advantage of challenging times. An example is the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, where a number of new scams emerged.

They can be extremely convincing, especially when using our worries or fears against us.

Here are some of the things to look out for and avoid during these and other challenging times:



**Telephone scams** – when more people are at home, fraudsters may try and contact you by phone. Stay vigilant, and remember to never give out any security details over the phone



**Faulty or counterfeit goods** – only buy goods or personal protective equipment from a reputable source. Don't be tempted to purchase them from unknown suppliers or from a caller at the door, as they could be unsafe



**Donation scams** – fraudsters may take advantage of efforts to provide aid, reduce poverty or improve healthcare. Only give money to charities or health organisations you recognise, and go to the charity's website directly to make a donation



**Refund scams** – seek refunds directly with the person or organisation booked with, and don't be tempted to use companies offering to obtain refunds for you. They could be fake and it could be a scam



**Text and Email scams** – fraudsters may pretend to be from official organisations such as HMRC or the World Health Organisation. Check whether the sender looks and sounds legitimate, and don't click on any links or open attachments if you're not sure who the message is from

Situational  
scams

## ➤ Doorstep scams

Investment and  
Pension scams

Money Mule  
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A knock at the door could come for many reasons and it's usually nothing to worry about. But it could also be a scam, so if you do receive a caller at the door unexpectedly, think carefully before letting them in.

A common doorstep scam is when a fraudster poses as a genuine tradesperson, claiming you need work or repairs you were previously unaware of. You may be asked to pay for work upfront, but then the tradesperson isn't seen again, overcharges you or doesn't complete the job once you've parted with your money.

### Important things to remember:

- If you do receive a call at the door, you **don't have to let them in** – some scams begin by a seemingly genuine request to use your telephone or the toilet
- Always ask for ID – a genuine caller shouldn't be offended if you ask for it
- If a caller has made you feel uncomfortable, or won't leave when you've asked them to, contact someone you trust for help or alternatively, call the police
- If a deal or the price for the work seems too good to be true, question it
- A genuine tradesperson shouldn't rush or pressure you to make a decision – take time before committing and seek advice from a trusted friend or relative
- Do your research – search the details of the tradesperson independently through a reputable source
- If you do agree to any work or repairs, always get a contract, invoice or written confirmation of the job
- Never give out important personal information to a caller at the door, such as your bank security details or personal passwords
- Keep your home secure – take care to keep windows and your doors locked, even if you're at home

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## ➤ Investment and Pension scams

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Investment and Pension scams can be tricky to spot as scammers do all they can to persuade their victims that they're genuine.

They might come in the form of property or timeshares, investment in pensions or the purchase of Bond Certificates and there will be very convincing literature or websites to assure you that they're the real deal.

Unfortunately, victims part with their cash but never see the return they were promised or could lose their money entirely.

To help you spot them, look out for:

- Unexpected contact or nuisance calls from companies offering you new investment opportunities
- Contact offering you ways to better your return or to obtain more from your pension savings
- Offers of preferential return rates, 'special deals' if you sign up today or offers to help you gain access to your returns early
- Documentation that uses lots of legal jargon or complicated language, is misleading or that downplays the risks involved to your money

**Avoid being rushed into making any decisions, seek advice before investing and check the Financial Conduct Authority's Scamsmart Warning List.**

**For more information and to check the Warning List or check a person against the FCA register, visit: [www.fca.org.uk](http://www.fca.org.uk)**

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## ➤ Money Mule scams

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Money muling is a form of money laundering, attracting victims with the promise of easy money for little effort.

These scams often come in the form of 'make money from the comfort of your own home' advertisements often seen online and through social media channels.

A fraudster will ask their victims to receive money into their own bank account, then withdraw it and take it to someone else for a 'cut' of the cash. Unknowingly, the victim has cleaned the funds on behalf of the fraudster and implicated themselves in a serious crime.

**If someone approaches you and asks you to receive money in a way similar to this, don't hesitate - report it to the Police or Action Fraud.**



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## ➤ Romance scams

This type of scam is where a fraudster deceives their victim using a fake profile (known as 'catfishing'), or by otherwise establishing a false relationship for personal gain.

Here are some of the warning signs to look out for:



**Personal information** - Asking a lot of personal questions about you, but avoiding answering questions about them. Never give out your passwords and avoid sharing information you've used to create security information, such as where you grew up, the school you went to or your favourite pet's name



**Falling too quickly** - Falling for you quickly and telling you how they've "never felt this way before"



**Things won't add up** - What they tell you won't always make sense. Look for obvious signs such as claiming to be well educated, but often using poor grammar or spelling



**Asking for money** - Asking for your help to pay bills, buy food or pay for medical supplies. Look out for requests to send money to accounts that don't match the name you know them by

## Useful Contacts

It's important to know where to go to if you need to report a scam or if you become a victim of fraud.

Should you need to, you can contact:

### The Police

Dial 101 (or 999 if you're in immediate danger) or go to [www.police.uk/advice/advice-and-information/fa/fraud](http://www.police.uk/advice/advice-and-information/fa/fraud).

### Action Fraud

Dial 0300 123 2040 from your telephone, Monday to Friday 8am - 8pm.  
Or visit [www.actionfraud.police.uk](http://www.actionfraud.police.uk) to report a fraud 24 hours a day.

### Financial Conduct Authority

Visit [www.fca.org.uk](http://www.fca.org.uk) to report an unauthorised firm or individual who may have tried to scam you with a financial service, such as your pension or taking out an investment.

chartersavingsbank.co.uk

0800 032 9999

We hope this information has been useful, but please remember it's just a guide.  
If you believe you've become a victim of fraud, contact your bank on the number you know to be correct, or Action Fraud for help immediately.



**We can provide literature in large print, Braille and audio.  
Please ask us for this leaflet in an alternative format if you need it.**

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