



# CORONA VIRUS SCAM ALERT

WEST YORKSHIRE TRADING STANDARDS NEWSLETTER  
West Yorkshire Trading Standards monthly update on COVID-19 related scams.

## Romance Scams



The pandemic has most of the nation at home, and people are communicating online even more than before, leaving people more susceptible to romance scams.

### Signs of a romance scam:



Asks you for money and lures you off the dating site onto another social platform.



Claims to be working overseas or in the military.



Claims to need money for emergencies, hospital bills, travel plans to visit, or to fix broken phones/ computers.



Unable to video chat with both audio and video on at the same time.



Their profile picture is very attractive. Scammers often use stolen photographs of beautiful people.

## SCAMMERS PRETENDING TO BE COUNCILS DURING PANDEMIC!



- Be vigilant for letters purporting to be from local councils offering discounts.
- They should be addressed to you by name, not 'The Occupier'.
- Check the spelling / grammatical errors.
- Any links to websites that contain the shorted word 'gov' should come directly before the '.uk'
- To check on any council led schemes visit the correct Council website or <https://www.gov.uk/>
- Report incidents to Action Fraud and Citizens Advice.

Report scams to Action Fraud:  
0300 123 2040

Forward scam emails to  
[report@phishing.gov.uk](mailto:report@phishing.gov.uk)

Spot the signs of illegal money lending and report your concerns confidentially to @LoanSharkNews on 0300 555 2222 or via the Stop Loan Sharks App. Download it for free from your mobile app store: [bit.ly/2FW28rn](https://bit.ly/2FW28rn)

## Green Homes Scheme Warning



We are urging residents to be aware of fraudsters looking to take advantage of the new government 'Green Homes' grant. The scheme outlined is offering energy efficient home improvement grants. The grants are not yet live. We expect many criminals will seek to exploit this opportunity to target our residents.

### Top Tips



- Check to see if you need permission or approval for any work doing.
- Get the contractor's full contact details before work starts. If you know how to get in touch, it's easier to deal with any problems that come up.
- Recommendations from friends and family are always best.
- If you can't get personal recommendations from people you know, ask contractors for references.
- Try to get written quotes from at least 3 different contractors before you decide on one. Comparing quotes will help you decide if you're getting a fair price.
- Check there's insurance in place.
- Always try to get a contract in writing before you give the go-ahead.

## Jury Service Scam



The Chartered Trading Standards Institute (CTSI) has uncovered evidence of a series of bogus texts inviting recipients to perform jury service or delay it at cost. The texts host a link to a scam website clad in UK Government branding which asks the target to confirm that they can perform the service, or to postpone jury service for six months at a fee of £34.99.

## Amazon brushing Scam, what is it?



Reports of people receiving mysterious parcels that they haven't ordered from Amazon. It is thought that these parcels are part of a global 'brushing' scam where amazon sellers create fake customer profiles with real names and addresses on e-commerce sites, then create false positive reviews for their products and or company.



## Consumer Warning : Scam NHS Test and Trace Calls and Emails

We have received multiple reports of scam callers purporting to be from NHS Test and Trace. The fake calls ask consumers for personal information and even sometimes banking information. Other reports suggest criminals are sending phishing emails and links claiming that the recipient has been in contact with someone diagnosed with Covid-19. These lead to fake websites that are used to steal personal and financial information or infect devices with malware.

## Doorstep traders 'took the money and ran' in Halifax

Reports of rogue traders in Halifax who have targeted elderly residents offering to do work on their driveway. The traders quoted an initial price then requested half the money upfront in cash. The traders then fled the property and never returned to do the work.

### Report to us:

Mailbox to deal

with reports of Covid-19 Scams in West Yorkshire:

[Covid19.Scams@wyjs.org.uk](mailto:Covid19.Scams@wyjs.org.uk)

Past issues of our news alert can be found on the West Yorkshire Joint Services website. Just look for the Trading Standards Service and Covid-19 resources page.



**@wytradstandards**

Regular updates can also be found on:



**@SAFERProject**

### The month in stats...

West Yorkshire Trading Standards total number of Covid 19 related intelligence reports 17/08/2020 to 16/09/2020 = 8

Yorkshire & Humber total number of Covid 19 related intelligence reports 17/08/2020 to 16/09/2020 = 56

For information about SAFER online workshops contact [safer@wyjs.org.uk](mailto:safer@wyjs.org.uk)

**Report complaints to Citizens Advice Consumer Helpline:**  
**0808 223 1133**