BEWARE OF SCAMS DURING THE CORONAVIRUS OUTBREAK

Sadly some fraudsters are exploiting the current situation with a number of scams trying to take advantage of the crisis. Many instances relate to online shopping scams where people have ordered protective face masks, hand sanitiser, and other products, which have never arrived.

Please be aware of the following scams:

- Reports of scam **emails to parents** suggesting that with schools being closed, all pupils are being given free meals, followed by a request to families to "register" their details, including their bank details, so parents can be supported. These are scam emails and not from the local authority. Official advice is that if you receive any emails like this, do not respond and delete them immediately. If in doubt, call your local authority on a phone number that you know to be correct.

- **Impersonating Red Cross workers** and health authorities - door-to-door knocking claiming to be carrying out mandatory testing for coronavirus as an excuse to enter a home and carry out robberies: - always ask for ID before letting anyone into your home.

- **Impersonating willing shoppers** – door-to-door knocking offering help with shopping but then, instead, stealing the money.

- Cybercrime - there are a number of **fraudsters sending emails with information regarding coronavirus via a link.** That link creates a virus on your computer: if you are unsure, do not open links within an email, visit official websites instead.

Online scams reported to us by the Police include a number that are being conducted under the banner of "COVID-19", "Coronavirus", "Working from Home", "Self Isolation" and "Financial Support / Hardship".

Extra care needs to be taken as it may feel tempting to go to unfamiliar websites and receive emails from unusual sources whilst dealing with current events. The Police advise:

- **For on-line shopping**, if you are purchasing goods and services from a company or person you don't know and trust, carry out some research first, and ask friends or family for advice before completing a purchase

- **Scam messages**: Be wary of unsolicited emails and texts offering questionably good deals, and never respond to messages that ask for your personal or financial details.

- **Payment method**: Avoid paying for good and services by bank transfer as that offers you little protection if you become a victim of fraud. Instead, use a credit card or payment services such as PayPal.

- **If you have made a payment**: Inform your bank as soon as possible, they can help you prevent any further losses. Monitor your bank statements regularly for any unusual activity.

- **Installing software**: Never install any software, or grant remote access to your computer, as a result of a cold call.

- **Financial details**: Genuine organisations would never contact you out of the blue to ask for financial details such as your PIN or full banking password.

- **Tech support**: If you need tech support, ask your friends or family for recommendations and look for reviews online first. Don't contact companies promoting tech support services via browser pop-ups.

- **If you granted remote access to your computer**: Seek technical support to remove any unwanted software from your computer. Ask your friends or family for recommendations and look for reviews online first. Don't contact companies promoting tech support services via browser pop-ups.

- **Lender Loan Fraud**: Seek advice first. Speak with a trusted friend or family members first if you're using a loan company you're unfamiliar with, or if the lender requires an up-front fee. Don't click on the links or attachments in suspicious emails, and never respond to messages that ask for your personal or financial details. Use the Financial Conduct Authority's (FCA) register to check if the company is regulated by the FCA.

To report crimes and scams please call Action Fraud on 0300 123 2040 or report via www.actionfraud.police.uk; Call 101 to report non-emergency incidents to the local police but dial 999 if you're reporting a crime that's in progress or someone is in immediate danger.

Please pass this advice on to others who may not have access to this website.