

SCAMNESTY

Scams are schemes to con you out of your money. They usually come by post, phone or email.

Fake lotteries and prize draws, bogus psychic predictions, get-rich-quick investments and 'miracle' health cures are just some of the many tricks that scammers try. The tactics that these conmen use are so powerful that it can be difficult to say no.

Every year, three million people fall victim, losing an average of £850 each, and sometimes a great deal more. And it's not just your money that's at risk. Being taken in by a scam can be very distressing.

The scammers are clever, and all kinds of people from all walks of life get duped. If you let down your guard, you too could become a victim.

Warning signs

- It sounds too good to be true: Beware of hype and extravagant promises. If it sounds too good to be true, it almost always is.
- You are contacted out of the blue: You may get a phone call, email or letter from someone you've never heard of.
- You have to make a quick decision: Scammers don't like to give you time to think. They will try to pressure you into making a decision by saying things like 'If you don't act now, you'll miss out.'
- You have to give away bank account details: Trustworthy firms will never contact you to ask for this information.

If you see any of these signs in a letter, phone call, text message or email, it could well be a scam.

First of all, don't reply. Then bin it, delete it or hang up. And if you're still unsure, you can call Consumer Direct for advice on 08454 04 05 06 or report the scam to them.

From 1st-29th February The Office of Fair Trading are conducting a campaign called Scamnesty, aimed at reducing the number of victims of scams of various sorts.

Special Scamnesty bins will be provided at all Wandsworth libraries, Randall Close Day Centre, the Town Hall, Adult Social Services in Putney Bridge Road and Shopmobility in Garratt Lane. Drop in any letters or emails that you suspect to be scams, so that others can be made aware of them and action taken against them where possible.

Useful contact details.

To ensure that you do not receive nuisance phone calls from traders, register with the :-

Telephone Preference Service

DAM House, 70 Margaret House, London, W1W 8SS

0845 070 0707

www.tpsonline.org.uk

To ensure that you do not receive junk mail from traders, register with the :-

Mailing Preference Service

DAM House, 70 Margaret House, London, W1W 8SS

0845 703 4599

www.mpsonline.org.uk

Wandsworth Trading Standards Service

78 Garratt Lane, Wandsworth, SW18 4DJ

020 8871 7720

www.wandsworth.gov.uk/

Consumer Direct

0845 04 05 06

www.consumerdirect.gov.uk/

or to report a scam online:-

<https://secure.consumerdirect.gov.uk/reportascam.aspx>