



Press release

Two in five people in the South East targeted by a scammer since lockdown began

Two in five people (42% of people) in South East England have been the target of a scam since lockdown came into effect, finds Citizens Advice across Oxfordshire.

Over two-thirds of people (69%) are worried someone they know will fall foul of a con. And the large majority of people (91%) reported they felt wary of coronavirus scams.

As part of the 2020 Scams Awareness Campaign, Citizens Advice across Oxfordshire and Trading Standards are encouraging people to talk about their experiences and look out for others they think could be at risk.

Al Bell, Director of Citizens Advice Oxford said:

“Our data shows that the last few months have been very difficult for a lot of people across Oxfordshire. At the same time, we’ve seen appalling evidence of opportunistic scammers taking advantage of people’s worries and concerns.

“42% of people have been targeted by a scam since lockdown began, showing we all need to be on high alert.

“It’s really important we all do our bit and report anything that looks like a con when we see it. By learning how scammers operate, and helping each other understand what to look out for, we can all work together to stop fraudsters in their tracks.”

To help stop more people being fleeced by these types of scams, Citizens Advice across Oxfordshire and Trading Standards are sharing the following tips on how to spot them.

If you’re worried you, or someone you know, could be getting scammed, take the following steps:

- Install a call blocker to help combat telephone scams
- Talk to your/their bank immediately if there is any suspicious activity or transactions from you/ their account or credit cards
- Report the scam to Citizens Advice who will give you advice on what to do next and report the scam to Trading Standards
- Report the scam to Action Fraud on 0300 123 2040

You can also take the following steps to safeguard yourself and others:

- Be suspicious if you're contacted out of the blue, even if it's from a name you recognise
- If it sounds too good to be true it probably is
- Never send money to someone you've never met
- Never give out your bank details unless you are certain you can trust the person contacting you
- Don't be rushed – you never need to make a decision straight away and if you feel pressured say “no”
- Suspect a scam? Hang up, wait five minutes to clear the line or use another phone to call
- Don't suffer in silence – speak out about scams

1. Citizens Advice commissioned Opinium Research to carry out a survey of 2,009 18+ UK adults between 13th and 19th May 2020. Fieldwork was carried out online. Data is weighted to be representative of the population.
2. Citizens Advice commissioned Populus Data Solutions who conducted fieldwork of an online sample of 2022 18+ GB adults on 28th May 2020. Data is weighted to be representative of the population of Great Britain.
3. Scams Awareness is an annual campaign which aims to create a network of confident, alert consumers who know what to do when they see a scam. This year's campaign will take place over two weeks, from 15th to 28th June. The campaign includes a range of organisations across the Consumer Protection Partnership, including Trading Standards, the Department for Business Energy and Infrastructure, and Citizens Advice Scotland.

About Citizens Advice across Oxfordshire:

- The four Citizens Advice—West Oxfordshire, Oxford, North Oxfordshire and South Northamptonshire, and Oxfordshire and South Vale—all exist to provide free, confidential, independent advice in Oxfordshire, and are all members of Citizens Advice, the national charity.
- For Citizens Advice general telephone advice, visit www.caox.org.co.uk.

- Citizens Advice across Oxfordshire are supported by more than 670 trained volunteers and 52 paid staff working across 14 advice centres. In the last year, we helped 24,500 people across Oxfordshire with 73,000 issues.
- Citizens Advice is made up of the national charity Citizens Advice; the network of independent local Citizens Advice charities across England and Wales; the Citizens Advice consumer service; and the Witness Service.
- Citizens Advice helped 2.7 million people face to face, over the phone, by email and web chat in 2018-19. We had 29 million visits to our national website. For full service statistics see Citizens Advice monthly publication [Advice Trends](#).