



PRESS RELEASE

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80% of people in the South East targeted by scammers as the cost-of-living crisis bites

80% of people in the South East of England have been targeted by a scammer so far this year as the cost-of-living crisis takes hold, new research by Citizens Advice has found.

Of those people targeted by a scam, the top five most common types of scams reported the South East of England included:

- Deliveries, portal and courier services - 58%
- Government or HMRC scams - 38%
- Investment or financial - 29%
- Rebates and refunds - 26%
- Banking - 25%

Ahead of many households receiving vital government help to cope with rising prices, Citizens Advice and the Consumer Protection Partnership have launched their annual Scams Awareness campaign.

For information on the genuine types of help available and how you'll receive it see [If you're struggling with living costs](#) and [Grants and benefits to help you pay your energy bills](#) on the Citizens Advice website.

Christine O'Hare, Chief Officer of Citizens Advice Oxford, said:

"A shocking number of people in Oxfordshire have been targeted by a scammer so far this year.

"We know scammers prey on our worries and fears, sadly the cost-of-living crisis is no exception.

"Anyone can be targeted by a scam, and as the purse strings are tightened and financial pressures pile on, it's important we work together to protect ourselves and each other."

To stop more people from falling victim to these types of scams, Citizens Advice across Oxfordshire is sharing five top tips to help you guard against a potential scam:

- It seems too good to be true – for example, scammers pretending to be energy companies to lure people into "too good to be true" deals
- You suspect you're not dealing with a real company or a genuine person – take a moment to step back and double-check
- You've been pressured to transfer money quickly

- You've been asked to pay in an unusual way – like by an iTunes vouchers or a transfer service
- You've been asked to give away personal information such as passwords, PINs or other verification codes.

If you've been scammed, Citizens Advice across Oxfordshire advises:

- Talk to your bank or card company immediately if you've handed over any financial and sensitive information or made a payment
- Report the scam to Citizens Advice. Offline scams, like those using the telephone, post and coming to your door, can be reported to the Citizens Advice [website](#) or by calling 0808 223 1133. Report online scams to the dedicated Scams Action service either [online](#) or on 0808 250 5050
- Text scams can be reported to your mobile phone provider by forwarding it to 7726
- Also report the scam to Action Fraud on 0300 123 2040.

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Notes to editors:

- The four Citizens Advice West Oxfordshire, Oxford, North Oxfordshire and South Northamptonshire and South Oxfordshire and Vale of the White Horse all exist to provide free, confidential, independent advice in Oxfordshire and they are all members of Citizens Advice, the national charity
- For Citizens Advice general local free telephone advice, visit www.caox.org.co.uk.
- Citizens Advice Free phone Adviceline 0800 144 8848 and Textphone: 0800 144 8884
- Citizens Advice in Oxfordshire are supported by more than 319 trained volunteers and 52 paid staff. In the last year, we helped 27,600 people across Oxfordshire with 78,000 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 20-21. We had 3.5 million visits to our national website. For full service statistics see Citizens Advice monthly publication [Advice Trends](#).