

SCAMS AWARENESS UPDATE

Older Persons Scams Awareness & Aftercare Project

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You've Got (scam) Mail!

We hope these bulletins continue to be useful in raising your awareness of types of scams and current scams to watch out for, to prevent becoming victims of fraud. The Older Persons Scams Awareness and Aftercare Team would love to hear how these bulletins have helped you. If you have a moment, please do give Sally Wilson a call on **01625 612958** or **07932 999902**, or drop us an email to sally.wilson@ageukce.org, to let us know.

If you read our July bulletin, you may be expecting to find out about online shopping scams in this month's edition. Nevertheless, with many older people still spending the majority of their time at home, unable to meet in large groups, we are concerned about people's vulnerability to a type of scam invisible to many - **postal mail scams**.

These scams, featured on pages 2 and 3, cost victims more than £5billion a year and can be the beginning of an overwhelming financial and emotional decline. But don't despair; read on to be empowered to spot, avoid and protect yourself and others against scams that fall through the letterbox.



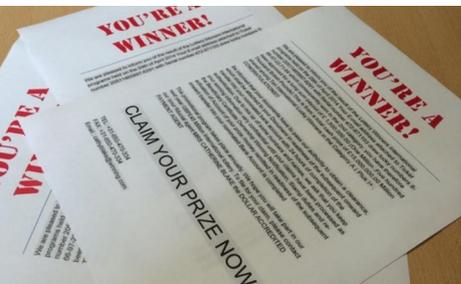
Each year mass marketing mail scams cost somewhere between £5 billion and £10 billion to consumers across the UK.

The sinister path of scam mail starts with criminals obtaining a mailing list that include thousands of names and personal details. By responding to the scam by replying or sending money, you are confirming your details to the scammers, so they will continue to send you scam mail. They may even sell your details to other criminals on a “suckers list”.

Postal scams are letters sent with the sole intention of obtaining money through *deception* or *fraud*.

This is different to legitimate mail sent by companies to advertise lawful services or the sale of genuine goods.

There are many different types of scam mail; here are a few to look out for:



LOTTERY OR PRIZE DRAW SCAMS: These claim the recipient has won a large sum of money in a competition or lottery and a fee is required to release the prize. Scammers come up with reasons as to why the prize cannot be released until more fees are sent.

CATALOGUE SCAMS: Sell unwanted products, vitamins and ‘miracle cures’ at ‘bargain’ prices. Responding to one offer can lead to a flood of catalogues. They often claim the recipient has won a prize but needs to purchase goods from the catalogue to receive it.



CLAIRVOYANT SCAMS: Offer contact with the deceased, predictions of the future or promises of protection in return for a fee. Victims may be groomed over time, leading to a relationship forming which the victim may be reluctant to end.

TOP TIPS TO AVOID BECOMING A VICTIM OF MAIL SCAMS

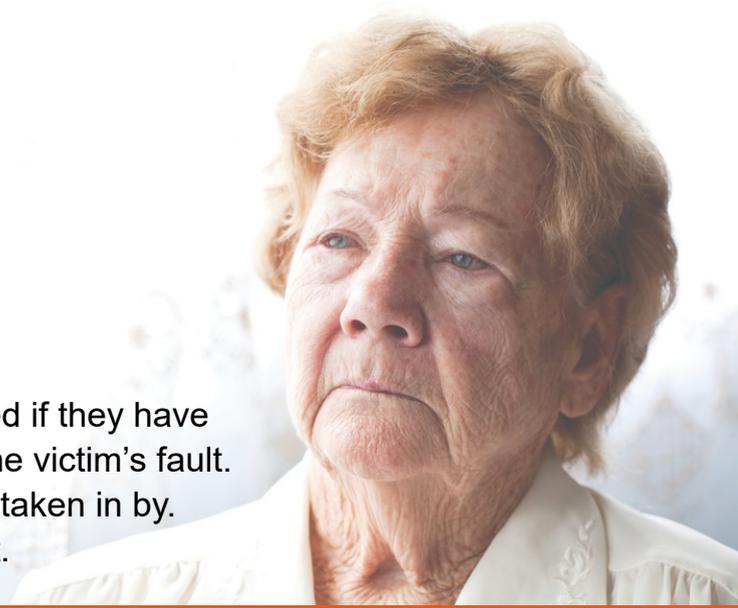
- ! Watch out for letters with too good to be true offers; it's probably a scam.
- ✗ Never send money to a company to claim a prize or winnings.
- ✗ Don't share personal information with people or companies you don't know.
- ✓ Ask family or a trusted friend to sort through mail with you.
- ✓ Sign up for the **Mail Preference Service** on **0845 703 4599** or visit www.mpsonline.org.uk. This removes your name from mailing lists which may be sold to fraudsters.

COULD YOU OR SOMEONE YOU KNOW BE A VICTIM OF MAIL SCAMS?

Here are some tell tale signs:

- ▶ An unusually large amount of junk mail.
- ▶ A high number of phone calls from strangers.
- ▶ A sudden lack of money.
- ▶ Secretiveness about finances.
- ▶ Lots of goods delivered that aren't needed.

It's not uncommon for people to feel embarrassed if they have fallen victim to a scam. Try not to worry; it isn't the victim's fault. Scammers use devious tactics anyone could be taken in by. The best thing to do is tell someone and report it.



REPORTING MAIL SCAMS:

-  You can send potential scam mail to Royal Mail with a covering letter to: Freepost Scam Mail.
-  Email scam.mail@royalmail.com.
-  Call 0345 611 3413.

If you have been a victim of any scam, including mail scams, **report it to Action Fraud on 0300 123 2040** or at www.actionfraud.police.uk

If you have transferred money to the scammer in the last 24 hours, **contact the police on 101 and let your bank know.**



If you've been a victim of mail scams why not become a Scam Marshal? These people share their experiences with others and send any scam mail they receive to the National Trading Standards Scams Team so it can be used as evidence in investigations.

Visit www.friendsagainstscams.org.uk/scammarshals to find out more.



Phone scams

Scammers are calling people offering goods and services

such as washing machine insurance and free boilers.

Never reveal personal or financial details to anyone who has called you out of the blue. If you are interested in any products or services, do your own research and contact companies on a known, independent number.

Courier fraud

Cheshire Police are aware of 'phone calls claiming to be from the Police in relation to 'suspicious' activity on your bank account. The call might look like it's come from a legitimate number – even from a Cheshire-based Police station!



The Police will NEVER ask you to withdraw money to help with their investigations. If someone does, report it to the Police on **101**.



COVID-19 scams

The pandemic continues to be an opportunity for scammers. We are still receiving reports of criminals selling dangerous face masks door-to-door and people being asked for payment and financial information through bogus Test and Trace schemes.

Remember the genuine NHS Test and Trace will never ask for payment, and only buy items through reputable companies.



Driver & Vehicle Licensing Agency

Scam DVLA texts and emails

Scammers are posing as DVLA officials to trick you into handing over your money, banking details or personal information. The scam emails or texts claim that your vehicle tax is not up to date, your payment has failed or the DVLA are trying to contact you.

Do not click on any links or downloads in the messages. Always contact DVLA on an independent number.

COMING NEXT TIME...

- Current scams
- Focus on telephone scams

Though we don't like to see you leave, you can unsubscribe from these bulletins by emailing sally.wilson@ageukce.org

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