



# northyorkshire community messaging

## PLEASE ALSO REFER TO THE SEPARATE VILLAGE UPDATE

### **1. We have been made aware of a number of new scams exploiting peoples fear over the Corona virus.**

The scams take several forms which include (so far):

- Messages claiming to be from HMRC offering a tax refund due to changes in the law around Covid-19, recipients have to click a link which takes them to a fraudulent website;
- Messages claiming to be from the US Center for Disease Control or from the World Health Organisation. These messages offer the recipient the chance to view a list of confirmed cases within their local area by clicking on a link and making a Bitcoin payment.
- Emails claiming to be from a virologist sending an attached document with instructions on how to avoid the Coronavirus. The attachment is malicious.
- Fraudulent online sales of masks and hand sanitiser which never materialise. If an online shopping offer looks too good to be true, then it probably is.

Please do not click on links or open attachments and take time to check that the email is from a legitimate source. Please be aware that fraudsters go to great lengths to make their communications with you look genuine.

As Covid-19 continues to spread, fraudsters are likely to continue using the anxiety it generates to trick people out of their personal data and hard -earned money. You can find more information about the scams listed above online. The BBC have summarised these scams in this article: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/technology-51838468>

More than ever, as a community you need to be aware of those in your locality who are elderly, live alone and who are vulnerable. Please look after and support each other.

**(2) We have been in discussion with NYCC Local Resilience Forum, “Ready For Anything” and the Major Incident Response Team about how best we administrate spontaneous volunteers. However we recognise that the communities are self-organising, and know their communities best.**

Due to the potential risks to the public and organisation in coordinating volunteers in this setting without DBS checks and putting people at risk, we consider the best way forward to speak with one voice and to sign post people to the following support and advice about keeping well and looking after your neighbours and communities:

<https://healthwatchnorthyorkshire.co.uk/information/coronavirus/>

<https://www.northyorks.gov.uk/coronavirus-covid-19-community-support/>

MIRT and British Red Cross are continuing with business as usual and still have to be available for any other incidents that may happen alongside CD19. BRC have today made the decision that they will not be deploying volunteers over the age of 70 or those who fall into the vulnerable categories. They have closed their office premises, and all staff are working from home.

**3. The current national situation is causing widespread anxiety, and with a lot of misinformation, rumours and speculation flying around fraudsters are using this to their advantage.**

North Yorkshire Police has had a number of reports of fraud related to Coronavirus over the last few weeks and although this is something that we predict will continue to increase, we are on hand to help keep you safe.

Below you can find a round-up of the latest scams that we’ve had reported and most importantly, how you can protect yourself.

Please remember that if you are a victim of a scam call, email, text or visit then please report it to North Yorkshire Police on 101. We are here to support and advise you and every scam report that we receive helps us to build up a profile of the tactics in use so we can safeguard others from falling victim.

**a. HMRC tax refund**

Messages and emails claiming to be from HMRC offering a tax refund due to changes in the law around Covid-19, recipients have to click a link which takes them to a fraudulent website. If you receive a message like this, delete it immediately and do not click any of the links it contains.

#### **b. Center for Disease Control or World Health Organisation**

Messages and emails claiming to be from the Center for Disease Control or the World Health Organisation offer the recipient the chance to view a list of confirmed cases within their local area by clicking on a link or making a Bitcoin payment. Needless to say these are a scam, delete them immediately and do not click on any of the links.

#### **c. Virologist advice**

Messages claiming to be from a virologist sending an attached document with instructions on how to avoid the Coronavirus. The attachment is malicious and should not be opened. Delete them immediately.

#### **d. Online sales of face masks and hand sanitiser**

Fraudulent online sales of masks and hand sanitiser which never materialise. If an online shopping offer looks too good to be true, then it probably is. We've heard of shoppers being asked to send a direct payment, avoiding the use of secure payment facilities such as PayPal. The money is then unable to be returned when the buyer doesn't receive the products

If you're making a purchase from a company or person you don't know and trust, carry out some research first, and ask a friend or family member for advice before completing the purchase. If you decide to go ahead with the purchase, use a credit card if you have one, as most major credit card providers insure online purchases.

#### **e. Insurance or medical plans claiming to have a Coronavirus cure**

Phone calls telling the individual that there are insurance plans or medical plans which will give you a cure to the Coronavirus/COVID19. These are a scam, hang up the phone and do not engage with the caller.

#### **f. Microsoft/BT notifications of a computer virus**

Phone calls telling individuals that their laptop or network has a virus and that fraudsters are accessing their data. If you receive calls of this nature, hang up and do not engage with the caller.

#### **g. Free school meals**

Emails or texts suggesting that as a result of school closures, pupils are still entitled to free meals or financial support for meals. The email requests bank details so that support can be provided. Delete the message immediately, do not follow any links and do not provide any personal information or bank details.

#### **h. Unsolicited visitors offering free Coronavirus testing**

Individuals visiting people's homes and offering free Coronavirus testing. Do not open your door to anyone that you don't know and if they claim to be from a

legitimate organisation, ask to see their ID before you even think about engaging with them.

#### **i. Visitors offering help with groceries and errands**

Being a good neighbour is important, and communities are rallying around to support each other. However, we have had reports that some unscrupulous individuals are exploiting the situation. Volunteers working with the health, emergency services and local authorities will be in possession of the necessary DBS arrangements and should all have documentation proving their status. Community volunteering to provide assistance to those most vulnerable in meeting their daily needs will also be likely in the coming months. If you have doubts about anyone who approaches you, don't engage and report serious suspicious behaviour to police. The majority of groups are well-intentioned, and will be working through charities or through a local authority and should have proof that they are doing so. Never hand over money or a credit or debit card to anyone making unsolicited visits to your home.

[North Yorkshire County Council has information on community support.](#)

A police officer will identify themselves in person by showing you their warrant card. This is proof of their identity and authority. If you receive a telephone call from a police officer and you have any doubt about their identity, hang up and call our Force Control Room on 101. We recommend after hanging up that you wait five minutes before calling as there have been cases of fraudsters keeping the line open after a victim had hung up.

[Read more on how to verify a police officer](#)

#### **General tips to keep safe from scams:**

- Do not click on links or open attachments in emails and text messages.
- Take time to check emails or messages are from a legitimate source. Please be aware that fraudsters go to great lengths to make their communications with you look genuine.
- Delete any suspicious emails or text messages immediately.
- Don't let anyone into your home without verifying their identity and checking they have legitimate documentation or an official ID card.
- Never give out personal or financial information over the phone.
- Only purchase goods online from trusted and legitimate retailers and if you have one, then use a credit card as this will offer greater insurance.

As Covid-19 continues to spread, fraudsters are likely to continue using the anxiety it generates to trick people out of their personal data and hard-earned money.

More than ever, as a community please be aware of those in your locality who are elderly, live alone and who are vulnerable. Please look after and support each other and report anything suspicious to the police. We are here to help you.

**3. Lisa Winward (Chief Constable of North Yorkshire Police), Andrew Brodie (Chief Fire Officer of North Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service), and Julia Mulligan (North Yorkshire Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner) have issued the following statement on new measures to stop spread of Coronavirus**

“It is our job to keep North Yorkshire safe and we can only do that if you follow the instruction to stay at home, protect the NHS and save lives.

“We know the vast majority of you have already been taking action to stop the spread of Coronavirus, and we thank you for those efforts. But some have not – and the crowds we saw in some parts of North Yorkshire this weekend illustrated that all too clearly.

“Now there is no ambiguity, there can be no question – if you do not need to be outside for an essential reason, to buy food or medicine or to exercise once a day, you must stay at home.

“Anyone who thinks this does not apply to them is putting lives at risk. North Yorkshire Police will use all powers we have to stop that, to keep us all safe and to ultimately save lives.

“Our emergency services will be here to protect you throughout this national emergency. We know these are unsettling times. They are unprecedented times. But across North Yorkshire we stand together, and together we’ll get through it.”

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