**SCAMS INFO**

**Advice on scams**

It’s important to always keep an eye out for scams - they can and do affect anyone.

Sadly Scams continue to impact the lives of many people. Unscrupulous Scammers will use any opportunity to perpetrate their criminal behaviour.

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| Many scams perpetrated within a church context or against church people present as being ‘spiritual’ and appeal to a person’s faith or to a Biblical idea and use ‘religious’ language.  Do not be taken in by someone who sounds like a Christian or quotes the Bible. Remember Jesus advised us in Matthew 10 v 16:  “I am sending you out like sheep among wolves. Therefore be as shrewd as snakes and as innocent as doves. |

**If you think someone might be trying to scam you, it’s important to act straight away.** If you need further advice and support you can call the Citizens Advice consumer service on 0808 223 1133 or see: https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/scamsadvice/

There is more information on:

* [Check if something might be a scam](https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/consumer/scams/check-if-something-might-be-a-scam/)
* [Check if you can get your money back after a scam](https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/consumer/scams/check-if-you-can-get-your-money-back-after-a-scam/)
* [What to do if you've been scammed](https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/consumer/scams/what-to-do-if-youve-been-scammed/)
* [Report a scam](https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/consumer/scams/reporting-a-scam/)
* [Get emotional support if you've been scammed](https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/consumer/scams/get-help-dealing-with-the-effects-of-scams/)
* [Get help with online scams](https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/consumer/scams/get-help-with-online-scams/)

If you are ever in any doubt about any communication you receive, always check it out.

Citizens Advice have an on-line tool to help you identify if something is a scam. Have a look at: https//www.citizensadvice.org.uk/decision-trees/scams/

You can sign up for Which? Scam Alerts here:

https://act.which.co.uk/page/103781/data/1?ea.tracking.id=scam-alerts

**The Scam alerts can help you:**

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| **•** | Stay ahead of the latest scams |
| **•** | spot scams and protect yourself |
| **•** | take steps if you've been scammed |
| **•** | understand the way scams work. |

**Which? Also provide a Scam Sharer Tool:**

https://www.which.co.uk/tool/scam-sharer

This is an easy way to make Which? aware of scams.

**Please do report Scams as you may be protecting others.**

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| **Please note** – many people express feelings of shame or guilt if they have been scammed. The ONLY people who should feel this are the scammers.  We are all at risk of being scammed.  If you have been scammed you are not to blame. |

I am sure we are all aware of the ongoing wide range of scams attempting to take advantage of vulnerable people.

National Trading Standards have been actively working in this area for some time.

There is a huge amount of useful information on the National Trading Standards Scams Team website –

https:// [www.nationaltradingstandards.uk/work-areas/scams-team/](http://www.nationaltradingstandards.uk/work-areas/scams-team/)



There is also an excellent online learning session at:  <https://www.friendsagainstscams.org.uk/training/friends-elearning?xPage=125>

This covers:

Chapter 1:   Why is learning about scams important?

Chapter 2:   Types of Scams

Chapter 3:   How to spot a victim...

Chapter 4:   Anyone can be a scam victim...

Chapter 5:   Spot the signs

Chapter 6:   Top Tips - what can you do to protect yourself and/or others?

Chapter 7:   Reporting a Scam

Chapter 8:   Congratulations - You are now a Friend Against Scams

Chapter 9:   If you would like to do more...

The training only lasts half an hour or so and has some material that would be very useful for pastoral teams. I am pleased to tell you I am now a ‘Friend Against Scams’ and a ‘SCAMChampion’.

Many local Trading Standards Teams also provide more locally based information about scams.

Please do think about doing the training and how you may be able to support those in our churches and communities who may be vulnerable. As we know Covid is increasing loneliness and isolation which makes people more vulnerable to scams.