

## Coronavirus information

# Charity fundraising scams

The Covid-19 pandemic has seen truly heart-warming acts of kindness with hundreds of thousands volunteering to support the oldest and most vulnerable in their communities. Age UK has seen an unprecedented increase in the demand for our services as a result of the coronavirus. We have launched a fundraising appeal asking the great British public to help us raise £10 million to help the older people that need us most during this time of national crisis.

Unfortunately, criminals are also using the crisis as an opportunity to devise new scams to target the public. We have been made aware of two reports

of fraudsters sending phishing text messages and emails claiming to be from Age UK and other charities in order to convince people to 'donate'. In one report, a website was selling Coronavirus testing kits with claims that all sales proceeds will go to charities like Age UK. Criminals are capitalising on the goodwill of the public and the fact that charities are urgently asking for donations to support efforts to help the most vulnerable.

**We are truly saddened by these events, we are in desperate need of donations during this time, please donate via our website [www.ageuk.org.uk](http://www.ageuk.org.uk) if you wish to support us.**

### Age UK Fundraising

Age UK is registered with the Fundraising Regulator, the independent body which sets and maintains the standards for charitable fundraising in England, Wales, and Northern Ireland. We are committed to the Fundraising Promise and to treating donors and the public with respect, fairness, honesty, and clarity in our fundraising activities

### Age UK in its fundraising will always:

- Display the Fundraising Regulator badge on our fundraising material
- Where we ask a third party to fundraise on our behalf or agree to partner with other organisations, we will make this relationship and the financial arrangement transparent.

### Age UK will not:

#### **Undertake any fundraising door-to-door activity.**

We do not 'cold-call' people for fundraising purposes. We only phone people with whom we have an existing relationship or who have already given us permission to contact them.

### **Key Advice for the public on giving safely to registered charities is:**

- Check the charity's name and registration number at **[www.gov.uk/checkcharity](http://www.gov.uk/checkcharity)**  
Most charities with an annual income of £5,000 or more must be registered.
- Make sure the charity is genuine before giving any financial information.
- Be careful when responding to emails or clicking on links within them.

## Scams awareness

- Contact or find out more online about the charity that you're seeking to donate to or work with to find out more about their spending.

### Key advice on avoiding scams:

**Stop:** Taking a moment to stop and think before parting with your money or information could keep you safe.

**Challenge:** Could it be fake? It's ok to reject, refuse or ignore any requests. Only criminals will try to rush or panic you.

**Protect:** Contact your bank immediately if you think you've fallen for a scam and report it to Action Fraud.

### If you receive a suspicious fundraising email or text message:

- Be wary of unsolicited communication from a charity or any organisation you have had no previous contact with.
- Think about whether you have donated before. Some scammers try to trick you into paying them by thanking you for a donation that you never made.
- Do not click on any links or open any attachments in a suspicious email, text or social media message.
- Do not reply to spam or suspicious emails or texts, even to say no.
- If you receive a text message asking you do donate via your mobile, please be aware that texts from charities are always sent from numbers between 70000 to 70999. You can also confirm the phone number on the charity's official website.
- Beware of spoofed email addresses and phone numbers. Criminals can easily make an email, text or call look like it comes from a legitimate source. If in doubt, verify what you have received is genuine with a known verified point of contact.

### If you are on a suspicious charity website:

Make sure that you're using a secure website before entering any personal details. There are ways to spot that a website is secure, including:

- The website address starts with 'https' - the 's' stands for secure.
- The address bar is green, which is an additional sign that you're using a safe website.
- A padlock symbol in the browser where the website address is - but don't be fooled if the padlock appears on the page itself. A current security certificate which is registered to the correct address will appear if you click on the padlock.

However, be aware that a padlock symbol is not an absolute guarantee of safety. If you ever have doubts it's best to leave the page.

### If you receive a suspicious fundraising letter:

Be wary if you are asked to provide a cash donation as they don't accept cheques. Or, they want the cheque to be made out to them rather than to the charity.

If you have received or are receiving something that looks like scam mail, talk about it with someone you trust such as a friend or family member, or call

**Age UK Advice on 0800 169 65 65.**

### If you're approached at your doorstep by a fundraiser:

All legitimate charities should have stopped door-to-door fundraising due to the government's lockdown order and advice about social distancing. If someone comes to your door asking for donations, do not answer it. Do not feel embarrassed about ignoring them or turning them away.