

# **Covid-19: where to get help and how to avoid being scammed**

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## How to get help

In these unprecedented times, those in our community who have to self-isolate can find doing the basics like shopping and getting prescriptions problematic. Whilst Trading Standards would always recommend that anyone who is self-isolating seeks help from their existing network, people they already know and trust, we realise this will not always be possible for everyone.

If you need help, phone the Council's new **Hotline number: 0151 907 8363**.

Because of the changes we have all had to make, some of us will feel lonely and we may feel concerned about the future. This normal and natural response is what scammers will exploit, to take your money or trick you into providing your personal information.

So that we can all stay as safe and well as possible and genuine volunteers can be easily identified, we are encouraging all those who want to help people beyond their family, friends and immediate neighbours, to register online with [Halton and St Helens Voluntary Action](#). Volunteers will be matched to those needing support. When a volunteer is connected with an individual who needs help, both parties will be given a password that only the resident and volunteer will know. Halton Borough Council and Halton and St Helens Voluntary Action are working together to make sure that residents get the help they need, safely.

There may be genuine volunteers who do not know about this scheme or do not want to register, but who still want to offer support beyond their existing network. Halton Trading Standards is therefore offering a new service.

If you have been contacted by someone that you don't know with an offer of help, Trading Standards will make contact with the volunteer and ask them to provide their full name and address and this will be checked against the electoral roll. All information given to Trading Standards relating to volunteers will be treated in the strictest confidence. We will never pass the details of the volunteer to the resident and we will never pass the resident's details to the volunteer. If you want to make an enquiry about somebody who has offered help, please call **Anthony on 0151 511 8477**.

If you are a volunteer and you receive a call from Trading Standards, please don't be offended: your offer of help is very much appreciated and your support vital, but please understand that we know scammers are already exploiting the situation and so we need to make this check to protect those who are in most need of help.

## Advice on how to avoid being scammed

- Consider accepting offers of help from friends, family or people you already know.
- If you don't have access to family or friends who can help, phone the Council's Hotline 0151 907 8363.
- If you are receiving help, do not share financial details like credit/debit card numbers or personal information.
- Exercise more caution before accepting offers of help from people that you don't already know. You can call Anthony at Trading Standards on 0151 511 8477 who will contact the volunteer and confirm they are a resident of Halton.
- Do not allow volunteers who are not friends or family, to enter your home.
- Consider joining iCAN, our free email alert system for scams, doorstep crime incidents and product recalls. Email [trading.standards@halton.gov.uk](mailto:trading.standards@halton.gov.uk). If you don't have email, call Linda or Sue on 0151 511 8785 or 0151 511 8775
- Take your time; don't be rushed.
- If someone claims to represent a charity, ask them for ID. Be suspicious of requests for money up front.
- If someone attempts to rush you into accepting an offer, they are unlikely to be genuine.
- If you are online, be aware of fake news and use trusted sources such as .gov.uk or NHS.uk websites. Make sure you type the addresses in and don't click on links in emails. A Covid-19 WhatsApp bot has been launched by the UK government, which as well as providing the latest advice, contains a mythbuster that corrects a lot of the false information that is circulating on social media. To access the bot, open the WhatsApp and send a message saying "hi" to the number 07860 064422. **This is the only number you should use.**
- Only buy goods from established retailers that you are familiar with and take a moment to think before parting with money or personal information.

If you think you've been scammed, call the Citizens Advice Consumer Helpline on 0808 223 1133. If you are in immediate danger, contact the police on 999.

You can also contact one of our specialist officers, Linda or Sue on 0151 511 8785 or 0151 511 8775, who are already working with people in Halton who have lost thousands of pounds to scams.

## Covid-19 Scams that we are already aware of:

- People offering miracle cures or vaccines for coronavirus – there is no cure nor any specific treatment for coronavirus (COVID-19).
- Home cleaning services.
- People impersonating healthcare workers, claiming to be offering 'home-testing' for coronavirus – tests are not currently available to buy.
- Emails saying that you can get a refund on taxes, utilities or similar - they are usually bogus and they are just after your personal and bank details.

- Fake products available to buy online that say they can protect you or cure coronavirus. These will not help and are designed to take your money.
- New mobile phone applications that claim to give you updates on the virus but instead, they lock your phone and demand a ransom.
- People claiming to be from your bank or the police and asking for your bank details.
- People offering to do your shopping or collecting medication, asking for money upfront and then disappearing.
- Texts and emails offering access to government funds or providing links to claim financial support if your income has been affected.
- Texts claiming that you have breached the stay home requirements and you have been fined by the government.
- Phone calls pretending to be from the NHS, claiming you are on the shielded list and they need to take your bank details in case you ever need shopping bought for you.

### **Advice on how we can look after our own mental well-being**

Understandably, you may find that social distancing can be boring or frustrating. You may find your mood and feelings are affected and you may feel low, worried or have problems sleeping and you might miss being outside with other people.

At times like these, it can be easy to fall into unhealthy patterns of behaviour, which in turn can make you feel worse. There are simple things you can do that may help, to stay mentally and physically active during this time such as:

- look for ideas of exercises you can do at home on the [NHS website](#)
- spend time doing things you enjoy – this might include reading, cooking, other indoor hobbies or listening to the radio or watching TV programmes
- try to eat healthy, well-balanced meals, drink enough water and try to avoid smoking, alcohol and drugs
- keep your windows open to let in fresh air, get some natural sunlight if you can, or get outside into the garden
- Go for a walk or exercise outdoors if you stay more than 2 metres from others.
- Draw on support you might have through your friends, family and other networks. Try to stay in touch with those around you over the phone, by post, or online. Let people know how you would like to stay in touch and build that into your routine.

Remember it is OK to share your concerns with others you trust and in doing so you may end up providing support to them too.

Whether you're concerned about yourself or a loved one, the government recommended national helplines and support groups can offer expert advice. See pages 5 to 9 for more information.

<b>Name</b>	<b>What they do</b>	<b>Phone</b>	<b>Opening times</b>	<b>Website</b>
Halton Borough Council's Mental Health Information Point	Signpost to sources of information and advice for different sectors of the community.	NA	NA	<a href="https://www3.halton.gov.uk/Pages/health/hit/live/mentalhealth/mental-health-signpost.aspx">https://www3.halton.gov.uk/Pages/health/hit/live/mentalhealth/mental-health-signpost.aspx</a>
Age UK Call in Time	A free telephone friendship service for people 60 and over	0800 434 6105	NA	<a href="http://www.ageuk.org.uk/services/befriending-services/sign-up-for-telephone-befriending/">www.ageuk.org.uk/services/befriending-services/sign-up-for-telephone-befriending/</a>
Age UK Mid Mersey	Make well-being phone calls and assistance with essential shopping and medication delivery. Priority will be given to those aged 70+ and living alone	0300 003 1992	Mon-Fri: 10am-2pm or leave a recorded message	<a href="http://www.ageuk.org.uk/midmersey/our-services/coronavirus-support/">www.ageuk.org.uk/midmersey/our-services/coronavirus-support/</a>
Anna Freud	Support young people's health through periods of disruption	NA	NA	<a href="http://www.annafreud.org/what-we-do/anna-freud-learning-network/coronavirus/">www.annafreud.org/what-we-do/anna-freud-learning-network/coronavirus/</a>
Anxiety UK	Charity providing support if you have been diagnosed with an anxiety condition	03444 775 774	Mon-Fri: 9.30am- 10pm; Sat – Sun: 10am to 8pm	<a href="http://www.anxietyuk.org.uk">www.anxietyuk.org.uk</a>
Bipolar UK	A charity helping people living with manic depression or bipolar disorder.	NA	NA	<a href="http://www.bipolaruk.org.uk">www.bipolaruk.org.uk</a>
CALM	CALM is the Campaign Against Living Miserably, for men aged 15 to 35	0800 58 58 58	Every day: 5pm to midnight	<a href="http://www.thecalmzone.net">www.thecalmzone.net</a>
Carers UK	Provides help and advice to carers	0808 808 7777	Mon-Tues: 10am-4pm	<a href="http://www.carersuk.org/help-and-advice/coronavirus-covid-19/coronavirus-covid-19">www.carersuk.org/help-and-advice/coronavirus-covid-19/coronavirus-covid-19</a>

Covid 19 and the Anti-baddies	Toolkit for children	NA	NA	localoffer.haltonchildrenstrust.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/COVID-19-and-The-Anti-Baddies-Resilience-Toolkit.pdf
Creative Education	Free online courses to help you deal with Covid-19	NA	NA	<a href="https://elearning.creativeeducation.co.uk/available-courses/#free">https://elearning.creativeeducation.co.uk/available-courses/#free</a>
Halton Carers' Centre	Telephone & email support for carers.	01928 580 182	Mon-Fri: 10am-4pm Sat: 10am-1pm	haltoncarers.co.uk
Men's Health Forum	24/7 stress support for men by text, chat and email.	NA	NA	<a href="http://www.menshealthforum.org.uk">www.menshealthforum.org.uk</a>
Mental Health Foundation	Provides information and support for anyone with mental health problems or learning disabilities.	NA	NA	<a href="http://www.mentalhealth.org.uk">www.mentalhealth.org.uk</a>
The Money Saving Expert	Information on the Coronavirus –financial help and your rights	NA	NA	<a href="http://www.moneysavingexpert.com/news/2020/03/uk-coronavirus-help-and-your-rights/">www.moneysavingexpert.com/news/2020/03/uk-coronavirus-help-and-your-rights/</a>
Mind	Promotes the views and needs of people with mental health problems.	0300 123 3393	Mon-Fri: 9am - 6pm	<a href="http://www.mind.org.uk">www.mind.org.uk</a>
NHS Every Mind Matters	Resources for mental well-being	NA	NA	www.nhs.uk/oneyou/every-mind-matters/
No Panic	Voluntary charity offering support for sufferers of panic attacks and obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD). Offers a course to help overcome your phobia or OCD.	0844 967 4848 Calls cost 5p per min plus your phone provider's Access Charge	Every day: 10am – 10pm	<a href="http://www.nopanic.org.uk">www.nopanic.org.uk</a>
OCD Action	Support for people with OCD. Includes information on treatment and online resources.	0845 390 6232 Calls cost 5p per min plus your	Mon-Fri: 9.30am-5pm	<a href="http://www.ocdaction.org.uk">www.ocdaction.org.uk</a>

		phone provider's Access Charge		
OCD UK	A charity run by people with OCD, for people with OCD. Includes facts, news and treatments.	0333 212 7890	Mon-Friday: 9am-5pm	<a href="http://www.ocduk.org">www.ocduk.org</a>
PAPYRUS	Young suicide prevention society.	HOPELINEUK 0800 068 4141	Mon-Fri: 10am-10pm Weekends and bank holidays: 2pm-10pm	<a href="http://www.papyrus-uk.org">www.papyrus-uk.org</a>
Rethink Mental Illness	Support and advice for people living with mental illness.	0300 5000 927	Mon-Fri: 9.30am-4pm	<a href="http://www.rethink.org">www.rethink.org</a>
Samaritans	Confidential support for people experiencing feelings of distress or despair	116 123 (free 24-hour helpline)	24/7	<a href="http://www.samaritans.org.uk">www.samaritans.org.uk</a>
SANE	Emotional support, information and guidance for people affected by mental illness, their families and carers.	0300 304 7000	Every day: 4.30pm - 10.30pm	Textcare: comfort and care via text message, sent when the person needs it most: <a href="http://www.sane.org.uk/textcare">www.sane.org.uk/textcare</a>  Peer support forum: <a href="http://www.sane.org.uk/supportforum">www.sane.org.uk/supportforum</a>  Website: <a href="http://www.sane.org.uk/support">www.sane.org.uk/support</a>
The Silver Line	Free confidential helpline providing information, friendship and advice to older people	0800 4 70 80 90	24/7	<a href="http://www.thesilverline.org.uk/">www.thesilverline.org.uk/</a>

YoungMinds	Information on child and adolescent mental health. Services for parents and professionals.	Parents' helpline 0808 802 5544	Mon-Fri: 9.30am-4pm	<a href="http://www.youngminds.org.uk">www.youngminds.org.uk</a>
NSPCC	Children's charity dedicated to ending child abuse and child cruelty	0800 1111 for Childline for children.  0808 800 5000 for adults concerned about a child	24/7  24/7	<a href="http://www.nspcc.org.uk">www.nspcc.org.uk</a>
Refuge	Advice on dealing with domestic violence.	0808 2000 247	24/7	<a href="http://www.refuge.org.uk">www.refuge.org.uk</a>
Alcoholics Anonymous		0800 917 7650	24/7	<a href="http://www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk">www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk</a>
National Gambling Helpline		0808 8020 133	Every day: 8am - midnight	<a href="http://www.begambleaware.org">www.begambleaware.org</a>
Narcotics Anonymous		0300 999 1212	Every day: 10am to midnight	<a href="http://www.ukna.org">www.ukna.org</a>
Alzheimer's Society	Provides information on dementia, including factsheets and helplines	0333 150 3456	Mon-Fri: 9am-5pm Weekends: 10am-4pm	<a href="http://www.alzheimers.org.uk">www.alzheimers.org.uk</a>
Cruse Bereavement Care		0808 808 1677	Mon-Fri: 9am-5pm	<a href="http://www.cruse.org.uk">www.cruse.org.uk</a>
Family Lives	Advice on all aspects of parenting, including dealing with bullying.	0808 800 2222	Mon-Fri: 9am-9pm Weekends:	<a href="http://www.familylives.org.uk">www.familylives.org.uk</a>

			10am-3pm	
Relate (Runcorn and Widnes)	Relationship support.	0300 330 5793 for enquiries		<a href="http://www.relatecm.org.uk/">www.relatecm.org.uk/</a>