



PRESS RELEASE
14 June 2018
Scams Awareness Month

Watch out for legal and financial scams, warns Citizens Advice Reigate & Banstead.

People need to be on their guard against financial and legal scams following a rise in cases reported to the national Citizens Advice consumer service.

A total of 1200 financial and legal scams were reported to the consumer service in the year ending April 2018 - a 6% increase on the year before. The median loss for these scams was £330.

This June, Citizens Advice Reigate & Banstead (CARBS) is showing people how to spot scams as part of *Scams Awareness Month 2018*.

Elaine Parr, District Manager, Citizens Advice Reigate & Banstead said:

“Scammers can be very plausible when pretending to be white collar professionals, especially online. They’re skilled at persuading people they are legitimate.

“The stakes are particularly high with financial and legal scams. You can end up losing your savings or pension fund, which can put your long-term financial stability at risk.

“If you get approached about any investment, don’t rush into anything. Make sure it’s legitimate first - particularly if you’re contacted out of the blue.”

Scams Awareness Month is an annual campaign to encourage people to report and talk about scams.

This year CARBS is delighted to have the support of Redhill and Banstead public libraries in making scam warnings available to the public.

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For more information please contact:

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Notes for editors

1. To help stop more people being fleeced by these scams, CARBS is sharing tips on how to spot them:

- Be suspicious if you're contacted out of the blue, even if it's from a name you recognise
- Don't be rushed – you never need to make a decision straight away
- If it sounds too good to be true, it probably is
- Never send money to someone you have never met
- Never give out your bank details unless you are certain you can trust the person contacting you
- Walk away from job ads that ask for money in advance
- Genuine computer firms do not make unsolicited phone calls to help you fix your computer
- Suspicious? Hang up, wait 5 minutes to clear the line or use another phone to call.
- Persuasive sales patter? Just say: "No Thank You"
- Don't suffer in silence – speak out about scams

2. Citizens Advice has reported a wide range of investment scams including:

Cryptocurrency. Fake websites claim to offer cryptocurrency investments, like Bitcoin. Scammers will often pretend that household names have endorsed the company to give it some legitimacy.

Binary options. Scammers pose as stockbrokers and get you to place bets on whether phoney shares will rise or fall within a certain date. They promise big returns. You should check if they are on the [FCA Register and not on the warning list of firms to avoid](#)

Holiday timeshares. Scammers promise to buy your membership for an advanced fee.

Bogus solicitors. Scammers intercept emails from a legitimate solicitor and pose as them. Scammers often strike when a property is being exchanged on and get the funds diverted to their bank account instead. Check if they are on the [Solicitors Regulation Authority](#) to see if they are genuine.



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