

Coronavirus COVID-19



Coronavirus
COVID-19
Public Health
Advice

How to Protect Against Fraud and Generate Trust

Department of Rural and Community Development



Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland



Unfortunately, there are a number of people and groups who will use the COVID-19 outbreak as an opportunity to take advantage of people and commit fraud. Here is some advice on how to protect yourself.

For people receiving help from volunteers

The following tips should help you protect yourself from such criminal practices.

- Do not answer the door to someone you don't know unless you feel comfortable doing so.
- Do not let someone into your house unless you know them or you are expecting them
- Do not give your bank details or your credit/debit card to anyone you do not trust. You may be asked for the details by text, by email, over the phone or in person, do not reply.
- If someone calls to the door from an organisation to provide support, ask to see their identification. If you are still unsure, ring the organisation directly but verify the phone number independently rather than using the number on the card they hand you. Close and lock the door on the caller as you make the enquiry.
- If someone offering help is not with an organisation that you know and you are not comfortable with this, don't worry. A genuine volunteer will respect that you are being careful.
- You can contact a recognised helpline or support service like **Alone** on 0818 222 024 or **Seniorline** on 1800 80 45 91 if you need support.
- Do not buy 'testing kits' or other testing materials from any source. Medical tests will be provided free of charge by the HSE if they are required.
- If any caller makes you uncomfortable ask them to leave. Tell the caller you will contact the company directly.
- Have the number of a trusted relative, friend or neighbour to hand in case you need to call someone.
- If you suspect that someone is trying to commit fraud, contact your local Garda station (not 999/112).



For volunteers

- Vulnerable people may have heard of such criminal practices and may be concerned if they are contacted by a stranger. If you are volunteering to help people in your community who you do not know, please be aware of this anxiety.
- These tips should help reassure people that you are a genuine volunteer.
- Don't contact someone you have never spoken to before (unless you are working through a voluntary organisation). Calls from strangers can be distressing to older and vulnerable people. Consider dropping a note through the letterbox with your name and phone number to let them know you are there to help. You could also make contact through someone the person already knows and trusts.
- Don't call to a vulnerable person's door unannounced – it could cause undue stress and worry for the person.
- If someone has asked you to help them, do not enter their home unless absolutely necessary. If you are dropping off shopping or a prescription for someone, simply call and let them know that you are at their door. Please follow the social distancing guidelines.
- If you call to someone's door, do not take offence if they wish to see identification and call the organisation to verify that you are a genuine volunteer. They are protecting themselves, and this should be respected.
- If you suspect that someone is trying to commit fraud, contact your local Garda station (not 999/112).