

The logo features the words 'COMMUNITY SCAM WISE' in a bold, sans-serif font. 'SCAM' is the largest word, with 'WISE' below it. The 'S' in 'WISE' is red and has a white diagonal slash through it. The text is enclosed in a red speech bubble shape.

COMMUNITY SCAM WISE

SPOT • SUPPORT • REPORT



Scams can affect a person's wealth, health, independence and wellbeing. Often, it's not just the scam victim that suffers but their family and close friends as well.

It's important to be alert to this type of crime so that you can protect those close to you.

This guide will help you recognise when someone close to you is being scammed and give guidance on what to do to help them.

What are scams?

A scam is a fraudulent and criminal activity designed to cheat someone out of their money or obtain their personal details for illegal purposes.

Scams target people of all ages and backgrounds. They come in many guises - via email, the internet, by letter, by telephone or in person, and can be very convincing to the victim.

How do scams work?

Fraudsters prey on people's fears, their lack of time to consider something fully, or their wish for a better life for themselves and their family.

These emotional triggers cloud a person's rational judgement and make them susceptible to an enticing scam that offers false promises.

Scammers are very good at what they do. They often spend a lot of time and effort grooming their victims and making their scams look genuine.

Unfortunately, once someone has been a scam victim, they become a target for other scammers and are more vulnerable to being conned again.

What are the signs that a relative or friend is being scammed?

Warning signs to watch out for include:

-  Large amounts of post or letters in their home.
-  An unusual number of phone calls or visits from strangers.
-  A sudden lack of money or unpaid bills.
-  Being secretive about finances or about what they're doing.
-  Deliveries of goods that they don't seem to need, or unnecessary work being done on their house.
-  Large cash withdrawals or multiple cheque payments.
-  A change in behaviour or personality.



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What should you do if a relative or friend is being scammed?

If you think someone you know is being, or has been, targeted by scammers:



TALK - try to speak to them about it. They might be embarrassed or ashamed, so be patient and supportive.



STAY CALM - if they're in denial and won't accept they're being scammed, it's vital that you stay calm and don't get angry.



SEEK HELP - contact the Citizens Advice consumer helpline for advice about a scam or Victim Support for support.



REPORT - contact Action Fraud to report the scam.

It's not uncommon for a scam victim to have been so taken in by the fraudsters that they refuse to believe the truth. As hard as it is, try not to lose your temper with them and seek support from others.

What practical steps can you take to prevent further scams?

Where possible, undertake the following actions to try and help protect victims from being scammed again:



REDIRECT - redirect mail to another address so you can sift out any scam mail.



BLOCK - use a call blocker to prevent unwanted telephone calls.



UNFRIEND - remove the scammer from social media sites or apps and block their email address or telephone number.



CHANGE BANK ARRANGEMENTS - set up direct debits for major bills so you can cancel cheque books and ask whether you could become a third party to the bank account.

Useful organisations and their contact details

For advice and support:

The Citizens Advice consumer helpline

03454 04 05 06

www.citizensadvice.org.uk/consumer/get-more-help/if-you-need-more-help-about-a-consumer-issue

Victim Support

0808 16 89 111

www.victimsupport.org.uk

Age UK Advice Line

0800 678 1602

www.ageuk.org.uk

Action Fraud

0300 123 2040

www.actionfraud.police.uk/report_fraud

For information and helpful resources:

Trading Standards South West

www.tssw.org.uk/consumer

Friends Against Scams

www.friendsagainstscams.org.uk

Think Jessica

www.thinkjessica.com

For more information about
Trading Standards South West
and our ScamWise resources, visit:

www.tssw.org.uk/scamwise

