ESSEX **POLICE**
Protecting and serving Essex

Be COVID Fraud Smart!

TAKE FIVE TO STOP FRAUD

Criminals have been using a variety of sophisticated methods to exploit the coronavirus pandemic to get people to part with their hard earned money.

As part of their Take Five to Stop Fraud campaign, UK Finance have revealed some of the COVID-19 and lockdown scams the public should be on the lookout for.

NHS Test and Trace

Criminals are preying on an anxious public by sending phishing emails and cold calls claiming that the recipient has been in contact with someone diagnosed with Covid-19. These are designed to steal personal and financial information.

Contact Tracers will never:

- Ask you to make any form of payment
- Ask you for passwords or PINs
- Ask for details about your bank account
- Ask you to download anything

Fake Government Emails

Criminals are sending emails designed to look like they are from government departments offering grants of up to £7,500. These emails contain links which steal personal and financial information.

COVID-19 Relief Funds

Fraudsters have also been sending scam emails which offer access to relief funds, encouraging victims to fill in a form with their personal information.

Council Tax Reduction

Criminals have been targeting people with official-looking emails offering a council tax reduction. These emails, which use government branding, contain links which lead to a fake government website which is used to access personal and financial information.

Universal Credit Applications

Fraudsters are also preying on benefit recipients, offering to help applying for Universal Credit, while taking some of the payment as an advance for their "services".

Dating Scams

Fraudsters are also exploiting those using online dating sites and social media by creating fake profiles used to manipulate people into handing over their money. Often criminals will use the identities of real people to strike up relationships with their targets.