

Fraud Alert



An Increase in Scams During the Festive Season

In the run up to Christmas, everyone should be extra vigilant to the increased risk of fraud and scams, especially online. Don't let fraudsters spoil your Christmas celebrations.

Status: **Action Required**

The alert provides information and advice about fraud and economic crime, and the risks associated with it.

If you have fallen victim to fraud you should report it to Action Fraud by calling 0300 123 2040, or visit: <https://www.actionfraud.police.uk/reporting-fraud-and-cyber-crime>

If you have given your bank details and think you may have lost money, contact your bank immediately.



How to protect yourself from scams and fraud

- Action Fraud report that scam online shopping bargains which were 'too good to be true' cost shoppers over £15 million over the Christmas period last year. Stop and think before making a purchase to protect you and your money, and always shop with official retailers. Carry out some research on the website or person, and use a payment method that offers protection, such as a credit card. Also remember that some of the emails or texts that you receive about amazing offers may contain links to fake websites. If you are unsure, don't use the link and visit the website directly.

- The Fundraising Regulator is calling for everyone to give safely this Christmas as appeals for charitable donations increase during the festive period. Action Fraud report that £1.6 million was lost to online charity fraud over the last year. Before making an on-line donation, the campaign recommends checking the charity name and its registration number on the Charity Commission website and using the Fundraising Regulator's online directory to find out whether a charity has registered with it and committed to excellent fundraising. Remember legitimate causes will always be happy to respond to any questions.

- The Chartered Trading Standards Institute has raised concerns about on-line purchases of toys. Research carried out by the British Toy and Hobby Association (BTHA) has revealed that nearly half of the toys purchased from third-party sellers via on-line marketplaces were unsafe for children, and an even bigger proportion were illegal to sell in the UK. BTHA has produced a consumer tips guide available on their website: [About - Toy Safety](#).

- E-cards are gaining popularity as they are cheaper and easier to send than the traditional Christmas cards via the post, but they do come with risks as fraudsters use e-cards as a method for delivering malware. Clicking on a link to an e-card could result in viruses being downloaded and your personal and financial information being stolen. Always check that you recognise the sender of the e-card and if so, contact them directly to verify it is actually from them, as their email account could have been hacked. Make sure your anti-virus software is kept up-to-date.

Disclaimer: This document is provided for guidance and awareness purposes only. This summarising article is not a full record of the key matters and is not intended as a definitive and legally binding statement of the position. While every effort is made to ensure the accuracy of information contained, it is provided in good faith on the basis that TIAA Limited accept no responsibility for the veracity or accuracy of the information provided. Should you or your organisation hold information, which corroborates, enhances, contradicts or casts doubt upon any content published in this document, please contact the Fraud Intelligence Team.

Handling & Distribution: This document must not be circulated outside of your organisation, on public facing websites or shared with third parties without written consent. Onward disclosure without prior authority may be unlawful under the Data Protection Act 2018.

For further discussion and support, including fraud awareness training services, contact:

Melanie Alflatt, Director of Anti-Crime Services ■ Email: fraud@tiaa.co.uk

www.tiaa.co.uk
0845 300 3333