



In today's increasingly connected world, scams are becoming more sophisticated — and, unfortunately, more widespread. Across the country, and here in the Chichester District, we are seeing a steady rise in attempts to defraud residents through phone calls, emails, texts and even in person. That is

why raising awareness and helping people protect themselves has never been more important.

Scammers rely on creating a sense of urgency, fear or trust. They may pretend to be from your bank, a delivery company, a utility provider, or even a government organisation. Their goal is simple: to get you to share personal information or transfer money quickly, before you have time to think.

While anyone can be targeted, we know that some members of our community can feel particularly vulnerable — including older residents, those who live alone, or individuals who are less familiar with digital technology. But it's important to stress that scams do not discriminate. Even the most vigilant among us can be caught out if the circumstances seem convincing enough.

So, what can we all do to stay safe? First and foremost, pause before you act. If you receive an unexpected request for money or personal details, take a moment to check whether it is genuine. A legitimate organisation will never pressure you into making immediate decisions or ask for sensitive information in an insecure way. Secondly, do not share personal or financial information unless you are completely certain who you are dealing with. This includes passwords, PIN numbers and one-time security codes. No reputable company will ever ask for these details over the phone or by email.

Thirdly, be wary of links and attachments in messages. Scammers often mimic official branding to make emails and texts appear authentic, but clicking on these links can lead to fake websites designed to capture your details.

At the council, we are working closely with partners including Sussex Police and national consumer protection bodies to help spread these messages and support residents. We also encourage people to report scams — even if no money has been lost — as this helps build a clearer picture of emerging threats and can prevent others from becoming victims.

If you think you have been targeted, you can report it to Action Fraud, the UK's national reporting centre at: www.reportfraud.police.uk, or contact Sussex Police if the situation is urgent. For ongoing concerns, our Community Wardens or organisations such as Citizens Advice and Age UK can also provide guidance and reassurance.

We are also keen to promote a simple but powerful message: talk about scams. Many people feel embarrassed if they have been targeted, but sharing experiences with friends, family and neighbours can make a real difference. A quick conversation may help someone else recognise the warning signs and avoid falling victim.

Our communities are strongest when we look out for one another. If something doesn't feel right, trust your instincts — it is always better to double-check than to act in haste.

Over the coming months, we will continue to share advice and updates through our communication channels and at community events. I encourage everyone to take a moment to familiarise themselves with the common signs of scams and to help spread awareness in your own networks.

By staying informed, vigilant and connected, we can work together to keep our district a safer place for everyone.

Best Wishes

Councillor Adrian Moss
Leader of Chichester District Council