

Coronavirus Fraud Prevention - Purchase & Refund Scams

John:

So another example that we've seen during lockdown is where fraudsters are looking to exploit customers through pretending to sell or to refund items online. And we're seeing examples during the COVID-19 pandemic of adverts for testing kits or for PPE equipment where the fraudsters are really looking to explore our vulnerability at this time. And we're also seeing examples where that using the current situation with the reduction in flights and the cancellations of holidays to also encourage customers to try to seek refunds don't really exist. Chris, any thoughts around this please?

Chris:

Yes, absolutely. So what the fraudsters are trying to do here, of course, two key issues that they're trying to create uncertainty, and they're trying to get our community, our customers to react quickly. So they create a scenario where they effectively threaten people by suggesting that if they don't respond immediately to this particular link or through this particular site, then they will lose money or there will not be an opportunity for them to purchase PPE. So our advice here is very straightforward, is that there is no problem necessarily responding to the information, however, what we're asking people to do is to do their own research. So if someone says you need to purchase PPE and you wish to purchase PPE, then do it through a legitimate site, do it through your own research. Similarly, with the holiday scenario, don't respond to the prompt from the adverts, but go directly to the recognised website in order to seek advice and guidance.