

Loan Sharks

What is the scam?

Loan sharks are taking advantage of people who are in a financial crisis by offering quick loans. However, they don't usually tell you how much you'll have to pay back and you could end up paying up to three times as much as you would for a legal loan.

How can I avoid this?

If you're in a financial crisis and don't know where to turn, you are not alone. There are lots of organisations that can help you. Don't worry if you have borrowed money from a loan shark - you haven't done anything wrong and help is available to you.

Where can I find out more?

- Find organisations who can help at www.stopillegalending.co.uk or call the free, confidential helpline on 0800 074 0878



Find Out More

Report all scams to Advice Direct Scotland on **0808 164 6000** (Mon-Fri 9am-5pm) or online at www.consumeradvice.scot

Report fraud to Police Scotland on **101** or **999** in an emergency

Find support and advice on avoiding scams:

- ScamShare Bulletin: tsscot.co.uk/bulletin
- Citizens Advice Scotland: citizensadvice.org.uk/scotland
- Police Scotland: scotland.police.uk
- Neighbourhood Watch Scotland: neighbourhoodwatchscotland.co.uk
- Age Scotland: ageuk.org.uk/scotland



Cost of Living Scams

As prices and bills continue to rise, many people will have financial worries heading into autumn and winter. Scammers may attempt to exploit these anxieties and to target people online and via cold calls, emails and text messages in an attempt to obtain their personal details and bank account information.

This leaflet has details of some recent scams linked to the cost of living crisis.

Energy Bill Rebate Scams

What is the scam?

An email or text message saying that you are eligible to receive a £400 discount on your energy bills. You are asked to click on a link to apply for the discount.

How can I avoid this?

You do not need to apply for the £400 energy bill rebate - the money will be applied directly to your energy account, starting in October.

Don't click on any links in texts or emails asking you to apply for the rebate.

Where can I find out more?

- www.homeenergyscotland.org/energy-bill-400-discount
- <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/getting-the-energy-bills-support-scheme-discount>

“Energy Saving” Devices

What is the scam?

Devices that claim to help you save money on your energy bills are being sold online. However, most of these fail basic safety tests and could cause fires or electric shocks.

How can I avoid this?

If you're worried that an electrical product you have bought online might be fake, don't use it. When buying electrical products online, stick to trusted brands and retailers where possible - be wary of unfamiliar sellers/stores with prices that are much lower than in official stores.

Where can I find out more?

- www.electricalsafetyfirst.org.uk/costofliving



“Quick and Easy” Loans

What is the scam?

Scammers are impersonating genuine financial firms and posting online adverts for 'quick and easy loans'. If you click on the advert and apply, you may be asked to pay a fee before receiving the loan.

How can I avoid this?

When applying for a loan, only deal with firms that have been authorised by the Financial Conduct Authority. Legitimate lenders don't usually ask you to pay a fee before receiving a loan.

Where can I find out more?

- <https://register.fca.org.uk/s/>
- <https://www.fca.org.uk/consumers/loan-fee-fraud>

Grants for Energy Saving Measures

What is the scam?

Cold callers are telling people that they are eligible to receive free or discounted energy efficiency measures, such as boilers or insulation, under government schemes. They usually give misleading information and don't mention that you may have to take out a loan or pay a deposit.

How can I avoid this?

Don't believe cold callers who say you are eligible for grants, discounts or funding schemes. You can check what funding is available in your area and get free, impartial advice about energy efficiency measures from Home Energy Scotland.

Where can I find out more?

- Call 0808 808 2282 or visit www.homeenergyscotland.org



Win Shopping Vouchers

What is the scam?

An email or social media message offering you the opportunity to win supermarket vouchers to help with the rising cost of living. You may be asked to complete a survey and provide your personal details.

How can I avoid this?

Before entering a competition or prize draw that is supposedly being run by a supermarket or big brand, always check the company's official website or social media channels to make sure that it is genuine. Don't click on links in unexpected messages.

Where can I find out more?

- <https://www.tsscot.co.uk/scamshare/>