



# SCAMbassador Pack



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## What is Friends Against Scams?

Friends Against Scams is an initiative run by the National Trading Standards (NTS) Scams Team, which aims to protect and prevent people from becoming victims of scams by empowering communities to "Take a Stand Against Scams."

Friends Against Scams was launched in 2016 to tackle the lack of scams awareness by providing information about scams and those who have been victimised by them. This information enables communities and organisations to understand scams, talk about scams and cascade messages throughout the local area.

The awareness session from Friends Against Scams comes in a few formats:

- an online, interactive awareness session
- a short video version of the session
- virtual or face-to-face awareness sessions run by trained SCAMchampions

Friends Against Scams encourages communities and organisations to take the knowledge learnt and turn it into action. The initiative aims to raise awareness of the impact of scams and help people recognise the signs that someone might be at risk.

**Anybody can join Friends Against Scams and make a difference.**



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## Scam Statistics

Scams affect the lives of millions of people across the UK. Postal, telephone and doorstep scams are often targeted specifically at disadvantaged consumers or those in periods of vulnerability.

**53%**

**of those aged 65+ have been targeted by scams**

**5%**

**of scams are reported to law enforcement**

**£5-10 billion**

**lost to scams by UK residents each year**

**37%**

**of people have been targeted by a scam five times or more**

**There are around 12 million people aged 65 or over in the UK.**

The number of people aged 65+ is projected to rise by over 40% in the next 17 years to over 16 million. By 2033, the number of people aged 85 and over is projected to more than double again to reach 3.2 million, and to account for 5% of the total population.

[www.friendsagainstscams.org.uk](http://www.friendsagainstscams.org.uk)

# Ways to get involved



The easiest way to get involved is to take an awareness session and become a **'Friend'** Against Scams. You will join hundreds of thousands of others who have taken the first step in becoming more scam aware.

**SCAMchampions** are Friends Against Scams who want to do more. They can host awareness sessions to recruit Friends and drive Friends Against Scams forward in their communities or workplace. They complete an additional session and also gain access to a login to the resources area of the Friends Against Scams website.



A **Scam Marshal** is anyone who has been targeted by a scam and now wants to take a stand. This can be by sharing their own experiences, helping others to Report and recognise scams and sending any scam mail that they receive to the team.

If a business, organisation or charity would like to be involved, they can become a **Friends Against Scams Organisation** by pledging to actively promote the initiative. The easiest way to do this is to make all employees Friends. Organisations may also wish to encourage their customers to become Friends as well.

The **Practitioner e-learning** was designed to assist professionals and practitioners who will be interacting with victims of scams. This includes but is not limited to; social workers, community nurses, volunteers and befrienders. This e-learning goes through the scale of the problem, legislation to support victims, and an insight into the psychology behind the criminals' behaviour.



**Businesses Against Scams** was set up in 2020 in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. Businesses that sign up will have access to a number of resources and an awareness session that covers relevant scam and fraud types.

**Young Friends** was designed to teach young people about scams and how they can affect people's lives, different types of scams, how to protect themselves from being scammed and how to spot and help a scam victim. The materials are suitable for school or youth group environments.



**Utilities Against Scams** was launched for utility companies to work together with a focus on raising awareness around scams, as their engineers are in the homes of many who could have been targeted or become a victim to a scam.

## SCAMBassador Role

As a SCAMBassador, you can help to spread these scams awareness messages to the wider community and act as a role model.

Victims of scams are often embarrassed and ashamed that they were tricked into losing money to criminals. You can help them by breaking the silence and speaking out about fraud and scams. Criminals use very sophisticated techniques, and no one should feel foolish or too ashamed to seek help if they have been targeted or victimised.

## First steps

When you become a SCAMBassador, it is beneficial to:

- Take the **Friends Against Scams awareness session** to understand what it is you are encouraging others to do when they become a Friend.
- Take the **Practitioner e-learning** for an extended understanding of the impact of scams, legislation around the topic and psychology behind the criminals' behaviour.
- Speak to the Friends Against Scams team about the different options that you could promote in your community.
- **Share an announcement** of your role as a SCAMBassador on social media (where applicable) and how you plan to support your community.



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## What you can do

The role of a SCAMBassador is very flexible and what you choose to do will depend on how you interact with your community.

Here are some ideas on how to use your influence to spread the message:

- Use **social media** to raise awareness of the issues. There is a general Friends Against Scams social media pack with posts and images that can be used, as well as some statistics at the start of this pack.
- Inform to your local **newspaper, magazine or news outlet**, including some information on the latest scams in the area. Let people know what you're doing and where to get advice.
- Co-ordinate a **mail collection** in your area – you can set up a drop box in your offices, local library or council buildings and encourage local people to bring in their scam mail. Any post can be sent into the team for investigation.
- **Encourage staff in your organisation to become Friends** by taking the awareness session.
- Approach local businesses, groups and charities to look into registering as **Friends Against Scams Organisations**.
- **Talk to people in your community** about fraud and scams and encourage them to learn how to protect themselves by taking the online training.
- Consider putting up **posters** in a public facing area of your offices, or other community buildings, which raise awareness. The Friends Against Scams team have electronic copies of these that can be used.

[www.friendsagainstscams.org.uk](http://www.friendsagainstscams.org.uk)

## Reporting and advice

As highlighted in the statistics at the start of this pack, only 5% of scams and fraud are reported.

There are lots of reasons why this figure is so low, including:

- they may not realise they have been scammed
- embarrassment or shame
- "it was only a small amount of money"

It's important to reassure people that they are not alone. Scams have become incredibly sophisticated and the criminals put a lot of time into their planning. Once a person has lost money to a scam, they are added to the criminal's list and will likely be more heavily plagued, and even approached by different types of scams than the one they were originally victim to.

If somebody has made a payment in response to a scam, they should **contact their bank as soon as possible** as they may be able to recover some of the money.

### England & Wales

**REPORT:** Report Fraud on 0300 123 2040.

**ADVICE:** Citizens Advice on 0808 223 1133.

### Scotland

**REPORT:** Police Scotland on 101.

**ADVICE:** Advice Direct Scotland on 0808 164 6000.

### Northern Ireland

**REPORT:** Report Fraud on 0300 123 2040 or the police on 101.

**ADVICE:** Consumerline on 0300 123 6262



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## Practical tips

There are many practical things that can be put in place to stop criminals from reaching their targets. It can be useful to suggest some of the below to residents in your area where appropriate:

- Many landline providers now offer options for preventing nuisance calls which are free to their customers.
- Signing up to the **Telephone Preference Service (TPS)** does not stop scam calls, however it will reduce the amount of unwanted sales and marketing calls received. The TPS is a free service. For more information and to register, visit [www.tpsonline.org.uk](http://www.tpsonline.org.uk) or call 0345 070 0707.
- Signing up to the **Mailing Preference Service (MPS)** does not stop scam mail, however it will reduce the amount of direct marketing mail received. The MPS is a free service. For more information and to register visit [www.mpsonline.org.uk](http://www.mpsonline.org.uk) or call 0207 291 3310.
- Residents can display a 'No Cold Calling' sticker on the front door. Many local authorities and police have these available, as well as a printable version here: [www.friendsagainstscams.org.uk/resources-and-materials](http://www.friendsagainstscams.org.uk/resources-and-materials)
- Encourage residents to use **security software** (for example anti-virus, anti-spyware and firewall) to protect their computer from viruses and attempts to steal personal information. Some computers already have security software installed, or they can check [www.getsafeonline.org](http://www.getsafeonline.org) for advice on reputable providers.



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