

PLEASE DO NOT REPLY TO THIS MESSAGE.

If you or someone you know is vulnerable and has been a victim of fraud, please call Essex Police on 101.

Report fraud or attempted fraud by contacting Action Fraud at www.actionfraud.police.uk or call 0300 123 2040.

This week's alert relates to a national scam that is particularly affecting Essex residents.

PROPERTY RENTAL FRAUD

There has been a recent spate of frauds amongst people who are looking to rent a property.

The victim is persuaded by the 'landlord' to make an advanced payment for a rental property, using the outbreak as the reason the victim is unable to view the property. This is either because the property does not exist or because the criminal does not own it.

Many victims have arrived at the property to meet the 'landlord', who simply never arrives.

The main way to avoid this scam is to ensure you have done your research:

- Check to see whether the property is advertised elsewhere – these criminals often advertise identical listings but in different areas.
- Property viewings are not prohibited, as long as Government guidelines are adhered to (available [here](#)). **But** if you cannot see the property in person, ask for a video tour (this could be via a method such as Skype or Facetime).
- Be aware of any strange requests for additional payments or excessive personal details.
- If the deal seems too good, check the price for other properties in the surrounding area. **If it's too good to be true, it usually is!**

Remember **ABC**:

Never **A**ssume they are legitimate.

Never **B**elieve they are legitimate.

Always **C**onfirm using a trusted source of information or by asking friends and family.

In these challenging times we are asking all residents to be aware and to ensure that this message is passed on to friends and family members, or those who are in self-isolation. Follow the idea of '**Tell2**' – if you tell two people, who then tell two people etc, we can reach enormous numbers - an unbroken chain of 26 'Tell2' would reach 67 million people! Please spread this message to protect our elderly and vulnerable people. It starts with you!