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HELP TAKE THE FIGHT TO COVID-19 SCAMS

A new front has been opened up in the battle against scammers trying to take advantage of the Covid-19 pandemic.

The National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC), a branch of the intelligence agency, has launched the suspicious email reporting service.

It follows a spike in scams linked to the outbreak and concerns over vulnerable people who are self-isolating or shielding.

The public is being asked to forward any dubious emails to report@phishing.gov.uk, and the NCSC's automated scanning system will check for scam emails and remove criminal sites.

NCSC will also seek to block the address the email was sent from and share information with partners about the nature of commonly reported suspicious emails and the methods of scam used.

Sandra McSparron, Lead Trading Standards Officer at Pembrokeshire County Council, said: "The more suspicious emails that are sent to the service, the better.

"If you have concerns about an email that has arrived in your inbox, don't interact with it in any way except to forward it to report@phishing.gov.uk

"The NCSC can assess the email and work to ensure scam sites are taken down as soon as possible.

"We would always urge residents to be extremely cautious about unsolicited emails."

The reporting service has been launched after the organisation removed more than 2,000 online scams related to coronavirus in the last month, including:

- 471 fake online shops selling fraudulent coronavirus-related items
- 555 malware distribution sites set up to cause significant damage to visitors

- 200 phishing sites seeking personal information such as passwords and credit card details
- 832 advance-fee frauds where a large sum of money is promised in return for a set-up payment

For consumer advice and support contact the Citizens Advice Consumer Service on 0808 223 1133 or 0808 223 1144 for a Welsh speaker - the details will be shared with Trading Standards who may also contact you by phone to offer support and advice.

For the latest advice and press releases relating to coronavirus, please view: www.pembrokeshire.gov.uk/coronavirus
For press queries, please email: presspublicrelations@pembrokeshire.gov.uk