

TIAA's Be Scam (Fraud) Savvy Month

Online Shopping and Auction Sites Fraud

Millions of people now shop online to purchase new or second hand goods. The huge number of websites give you the opportunity to purchase goods from around the world, but among the genuine websites, there are criminals who use the internet to offer goods for sale that are fake or do not exist.

Fraudsters will advertise an item for sale, often at a much cheaper price compared to similar listings and they may show pictures of the item so that it appears genuine. The fraudster could also request that you complete the transaction by bank transfer away from the website, and offer a further discount. However by doing this you risk losing any protection you had, as many websites will offer buyers the opportunity to pay via a recognised secure third party payment service.

Once the payment is made, the 'seller' either won't send the item or you will receive counterfeit goods.

If you are selling an item, be aware that fraudsters use websites to pose as 'buyers' and may fake a confirmation that payment has been made to you. Before posting your item, log in to your bank account using your normal method and check that you have received the money.

How to protect yourself

Stay on the website to complete any transactions and be suspicious of any requests to pay by bank transfer or virtual currency.

Use the website's recommended payment method. Many use secure third party payment services such as PayPal or Apple Pay.

Research the seller/buyer and their bidding history.

Remember pictures may be fake and taken from somewhere else on the internet.

Be very wary of offers that look too good to be true. Think why is this item so cheap?

If you have been the victim of a scam or fraud, please report it to Action Fraud on 0300 123 2040 or at www.actionfraud.police.uk Contact your bank immediately if you think you may have lost money.

For more information about how our Anti-Crime Team can help you, please contact:

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