

Beware of holiday scams

When booking a holiday it can be tempting to look for the best deal you can find. But be suspicious of offers that look too good to be true – they usually are.

Scammers use a range of tactics, like fake online adverts, or out-of-the-blue phone calls, emails or text messages offering very cheap rates. Adverts may show tempting pictures of holiday accommodation. You may be asked to pay by cash or bank transfer. However, the likelihood is, it's just a scam and what you pay for doesn't exist.

How to protect yourself:

- Don't respond to unsolicited emails, texts, social media or phone calls offering holidays.
- Book your holiday through a reputable travel agent who is a member of a recognised association such as ABTA, or directly with an airline or hotel.
- Pay by credit or debit card. Cash and bank transfers are hard to trace and not refundable – if this is the only way to pay, be wary.
- Read reviews on a few different sites. Heed warnings and look out for suspicious reviews a scammer may have posted themselves.

If you are worried you have been scammed:

- Get advice from Citizens Advice on 03454 040506
- Report it to Action Fraud on 0300 123 2040

This article has been written by Devon, Somerset and Torbay Trading Standards Service
<https://www.devonsomersettradingstandards.gov.uk/>