

<i>Proposed Publication date</i>	<i>Organisation</i>
16/09/19	OCVA

International Charity Fraud Awareness Week which takes place between the 21st and 25th of October encourages and empowers charities to talk about fraud and share best practice. The campaign is led by a coalition of over 40 charities, regulators, law enforcers, representative bodies and other not-for-profit stakeholders from across the globe. The main aims of the week are to raise awareness of the key risks affecting the sector, promote and share good counter-fraud practices, promote honesty and openness about fraud.

Like all sectors, charities are susceptible to fraud and can be seen as easy targets for criminals. Fraud and cyber-crime are on the rise, which is why it's important for charities of all shapes, sizes and types to protect their reputation, income and assets by building strong defences. Charity scams can be simple: someone poses as a street fundraiser for an existing charity and asks for donations from passers-by or pretends to participate in a challenge on behalf of a charity and collects sponsorship.

The Charity Commission holds information on all current charities as well as those that have been barred for not complying with the regulations required for operating a registered charity. If you are concerned about an organisation or an individual purporting to be involved in not for profit activities, you can check out if they are a registered charity on the Commission's website. You can also get guidance on reporting your concerns to the appropriate regulator on the site.

However, the problem must be put in perspective, the vast majority of charities in Oxfordshire do excellent work. The Commission says that "like any other sector, charities are not immune from criminal abuse. It does happen, but it is not rife."

Leading up to the awareness week is the fraud prevention award. The Charities Against Fraud Awards recognises and celebrates the achievements of people proactively fighting fraud in the charity sector. Entries are open until Friday 4 October. Last year's award was won by [Colchester Foodbank](#), this is a relatively small charity. Surely what Colchester can do, Oxfordshire can do better! If you would like support in entering your organisation for this award or would like further information, please contact Oxfordshire Community and Voluntary Action by emailing vol@ocva.org.uk

A key feature of this year's campaign is a free online awareness hub, developed by the Fraud Advisory Panel, UK Finance and the Charity Commission. This is a one stop shop for information, guidance and case studies, bringing together charity professionals from across the globe to discuss and share ideas on how to protect the sector. You can pre-register your interest on the [Charity Fraud Awareness Hub](#) to view the schedule of live webinars that will take place on Monday 21 October.