



CORONA VIRUS SCAM ALERT

WEST YORKSHIRE TRADING STANDARDS NEWSLETTER

TRADING STANDARDS WARN OF ILLEGITIMATE TRADERS EXPLOITING CONSUMERS THROUGH THE

GREEN HOMES GRANT WHICH LAUNCHED ON THE 2ND OF OCTOBER 2020

Only approved and checked traders can carry out the work requested in order to meet the criteria set by the government. Types of improvement that qualify for the grant are also split into primary and secondary measures. The voucher must be used to install at least one primary measure which can be insulation and/or low carbon heating.

Trading Standards officers are concerned the door may be left open for illegitimate traders to exploit the trust of consumers who just want to access a voucher to get home improvements made cost-effectively.

The concern is for those that may not have done their research. If someone turns up claiming they can insulate your home cheaply, consumers may find this appealing and proceed with the offer without checking the legitimacy of the offer and fall victim to traders who will later inflate the bill, provide sub-par services and poor workmanship.

For further information please refer to
<https://www.simpleenergyadvice.org.uk/pages/green-homes-grant>
for guidance and further information.

Scams Trending Locally, Regionally & Nationally

- Emails which claim to be from Paypal, Netflix, Amazon, Apple and various Internet service providers have increased. These e-mails urge you to log in to your account via the link contained in the e-mail to check your details.
- LOCKDOWN LONELINESS has seen a rise in the number of Romance Scams reported as people turn to online platforms such as social media and dating sites to combat feelings of loneliness and isolation which is likely to have been intensified during the height of the Covid19 pandemic. Continued on pg 5
- Emails are being received which claim to be from HM COURTS AND TRIBUNALS stating you have a fine outstanding have been circulating urging you to pay the fee online.

See page 2 to find out how to spot Phishing emails and where to report them

WHAT IS PHISHING?

Phishing is the fraudulent attempt to obtain sensitive information or data, such as usernames, passwords and credit card details, by disguising oneself as a trustworthy entity in an electronic communication.



- DON'T click any links contained within the e-mail
- Tap the "from" section to see the e-mail address of the sender. Does it contains several random characters and end with a gmail, outlook, yahoo or hotmail.com?

Companies such as Netflix & Amazon etc wouldn't use e-mail addresses like this.

- If the sender's e-mail address looks genuine, check the e-mail for other details, does it say "Dear customer" instead of your name? Are there any spelling errors?

If so, take screen shots and report the e-mail as junk using the menu option at the top of the e-mail.

Report the e-mail to ACTION FRAUD online and upload the screenshots when prompted.

<https://www.actionfraud.police.uk/report-phishing>

CHECK who the email is from.

TV LICENSING tvlicensing.co.uk/scam

Stop.

Check.

Ask.

Unfortunately, scammers continue to target customers under the guise of TV Licensing. Find out how to spot TV licensing scams by visiting

<https://www.tvlicensing.co.uk/faqs/FAQ288>

Last Chance To Claim Your £250 Tesco Gift Card



Hey, don't forget to claim your

£250 Tesco Gift Card

[Claim Now](#)

Time remaining: **00:49:48**

IMAGE HAS BEEN TAKEN FROM AN E-MAIL RECEIVED BY TS OFFICERS. E-MAILS ARE NOT LIMITED TO THE SUPERMARKET PICTURED.

Supermarket gift cards are circulating via e-mail and social media

At a time when consumers are more mindful about budgeting, shopping, weekly and monthly spending, scammers are using this as an opportunity to target people with e-mails offering vouchers which appear to be from large well known supermarkets but in fact are phishing e-mails in disguise.

STOP. SCREENSHOT. JUNK. REPORT

PASSENGER LOCATOR FORM SCAM

A traveller to Greece was due to return to the UK at the end of their holiday. The day before they were due to fly they used Google to search for the Passenger Locator Form (which is required by the UK government as stipulated in the COVID19 travelling guidelines) and proceeded to complete the online form.

After entering all of their details they reached the final section which was showing as “fee payment” and requested a payment of 25 Euros.

It was then realised the internet site was a scam to obtain personal information including bank details. The form was deleted and further examination of the google search showed the correct “gov.uk” internet site below the fake site on the google search results.

The fake and genuine Passenger Locator Form was almost identical aside from the payment section at the end.

**The GENUINE, FREE and OFFICIAL form can be found-
<https://www.gov.uk/provide-journey-contact-details-before-travel-uk>**

DOORSTEP CRIME REPORT

WYTS continue to receive calls relating to doorstep scams. This time of year sees the regular reporting of poor, incomplete gardening work where consumer's have little detail regarding the identity of the traders with only a leaflet stating false addresses and inoperable mobile numbers.

In early October, where as a result of a call from a concerned neighbour, WY Trading Standards officers were able to attend at a 90 year old persons home and stop the sale of an unnecessary and very expensive mattress.

The potential victim had responded to a “door knock” and would have paid £3000 without the intervention of the neighbour and TS officers.

It is known that the potential victim has been targeted previously and as they live in a fairly remote location, it is likely that their vulnerability was known to the trader.

We continue to see the value in community spirit as neighbours appear to be the first step in safeguarding the most vulnerable members of our society.

Thank you.

2 PHONE SCAMS IN CIRCULATION

Scam phone call received from a London telephone number claiming to be HMRC and stating that there was a warrant out for the consumer's arrest due to a case of Tax Fraud. The person said they were going to freeze the consumer's bank accounts and unless they paid over the phone immediately, they would be sending a police officer to make an arrest. The person purporting to be from HMRC was very serious and not very apologetic, had quite a threatening tone and said the consumer should be careful how they respond as the call was being recorded and it would be used in evidence at the Magistrates Court.

The Consumer ended the call and didn't give them any further information. When the consumer googled the number afterwards, it was highlighted as a scam.

Apparently they have been trying to get people to pay £2,000 over the phone immediately to resolve the issue.

Cold call received from 02034682183. The caller was a female stating that she was calling about the recipients Sky Maintenance package. When the recipient said they did not have one, they were told it was paid every month as part of the payment to Sky and it was due for renewal and that it was £11.95 a month. When the recipient challenged this further the female ended the call.

NOT a Paypal Scam!

PayPal to introduce £12/yr fee for 'inactive' accounts from the 16th of December 2020 where no funds have been added or withdrawn and for accounts where users have not logged in.

You may receive an e-mail informing you of this requesting you log in and/or update your account. Always check the senders e-mail first and log into your Paypal on a separate device or browser, just to be safe.

For full details visit <https://www.moneysavingexpert.com/news/2020/10/paypal-to-introduce-p12-yr-fee-for--inactive--accounts---act-now/>

Report complaints to Citizens Advice
Consumer Helpline
0808 223 1133

Report scams to Action Fraud
0300 123 2040

Report Covid-19 Scams in
West Yorkshire
Covid19.Scams@wyjs.org.uk

Would you like to receive our
Press Releases?
E- mail media@wyjs.org.uk

ROMANCE SCAMS

How it began....

A recent case at WY Trading Standards saw a victim of a romance scam lose over £150,000 to the fraudster. Earlier this year the victim in this case was targeted on Instagram by a person who began professing their romantic feelings for the victim which saw the beginning of an online romance begin to blossom. The victim was receptive to the compliments and feelings of admiration they received as they had recently lost their spouse and relative with no other close family or friends nearby.

How it progressed...

The fraudster stated that they worked for the United Nations in Syria and needed to return to the US. The victim began sending money via bank transfer until the bank eventually put a stop on the transactions. The fraudster continued to ask for money and the reasons became more elaborate.

In order to help, the victim began withdrawing large sums of money from their bank account, the bank attempted to intervene and inform the victim that this was in fact a scam however the victim, who has been successfully groomed by the fraudster, continued to send money to them as they continued to make several promises to visit the victim as soon as they could and that previous attempts to visits has been scuppered due to being stopped at customs, each and every time. Eventually, the money ran out with the victim then attempting to obtain loans and credit cards so they could continue sending money.

How it continues...

The police and Adult Social Care Services became involved along with WY Trading Standards. All authorities believe the victim came to realise that they were a victim of fraud as all communication with the fraudster has ceased when they knew there was no money to be had.

Soon after, the fraudster made contact again stating they would be returning all the money they had received and the victim again believed this to be true as the fraudster was no longer asking for money but instead wants to repay what had been borrowed.

Safeguarding measures continue with the victim to ensure they do not send any more money to the fraudster.



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