

## Consumer Alerts – March 2021

### **Flyer Offering Property Exterior Cleaning Services**

A resident of South Ribble reported receiving a flyer offering to paint the outside of your property. The flyer claims that reducing the moss and dirt from the exterior of buildings can help prevent the spread of Coronavirus and offers a water repellent coating for the walls. The trader was offering a free, no obligation quote and special rates for OAP's.

Always do your own research, be suspicious of such claims and be cautious of using trades people via advertising flyers. Trading Standards would always advise using know local trades people, ask family and friends for recommendations and get 3 quotes.

**Trading Standards advice is to always say no to cold callers. The Safetrader scheme can help you find a trader in your area, contact 0303 333 1111 or go to [www.safetrader.org.uk](http://www.safetrader.org.uk)**

### **Census Information**

The Office for National Statistics will shortly be carrying out the Census 2021 across England and Wales. Census Day is Sunday 21 March. After this day field census officers will be knocking on doors following up non-responders and helping the public with queries.

All officers will carry official identification cards and a critical workers letter. The card will have a photograph and the officer's name. The officers will work through the day to make contact with residents but will not call before 09:00 or after 20:00. Census officers will never ask for any

money or bank details at any point during the conversation with respondents.

More information about the Census is available at [www.census.gov.uk](http://www.census.gov.uk)

### **Covid Grant Scam**

Beware, unsolicited text messages are being sent to members of the public purporting to offer a Covid -19 grant due to the current lockdown. The text includes a link to claim the grant and starts with the words GOV.UK and ends with govuk.com, suggesting the text message has been sent by or on behalf of the Government and is therefore an authentic message.

If you get this through please don't select the link, it will pharm your private and personal details, delete or block the number if you can.

### **NHS Covid Vaccine Scam Alert**

Lancashire Constabulary is warning residents to continue to be on the alert for scams offering the Covid vaccine. The scams can be received via phone, text or email. Often a link takes you to an extremely professional looking website and takes the user to a payment screen to enter their card details.

You will NEVER be asked to pay for the Covid vaccine. Please wait until you are contacted by your GP for further information on the vaccine. Report any suspicious messages to Action Fraud.

### **Courier Fraud**

Police are asking householders to be on the alert after a Lancashire resident was targeted with courier fraud. The fraudster purported to be calling from the bank and

advised the resident there was fraud on his account. He was advised that to safely secure his account, he would need to withdraw cash at the branch, which a courier would later collect. Thankfully, the bank managed to intercept this incident and no cash was handed over.

Victims of courier fraud are usually asked to withdraw an amount of money, usually around £6000, so that the numbers on the bank notes can be checked in line with the apparent investigation. Offenders encourage victims to stay on the phone during the transaction, before taking the cash home where the caller confirms that it is needed to be seized. Within the next hour, a 'courier' attends the address to collect the bank notes, usually quoting an agreed password, in an attempt to appear legitimate.

Please beware, the police or the bank will never phone you and ask you to withdraw funds for inspection. They will never ask you to transfer funds to a safe account and they will also never send someone to your home to collect cash, pins, cards or cheque books.

### **Scam Amazon Phone Call**

Beware receiving an automated message alleging to be from Amazon that states "We have noticed a suspicious transaction from your account for the purchase of an Apple iPhone 11 for the sum of £1400. If you wish to stop this transaction press button 1 or to speak to an Accounts Manager press button 2". This is a scam, please do not continue with the call.

### **Fee Charging Telesale Calls Suppression Scam**

A reminder that the Telephone Preference Service (TPS) that helps reduce unsolicited sales and marketing calls is a free service. The TPS will never ask for payment.

You may receive calls that claim to be from the TPS or from a phone service provider

asking for a fee to register or renew an expired or soon to expire TPS registration. These may be commercial companies offering services for a fee, some may be fraudulent calls. Do not provide your bank or credit card details to such businesses.

To join the TPS contact them on 0345 0700707 or go to [www.tpsonline.org.uk](http://www.tpsonline.org.uk).

### **Brexit Email Scam**

Beware of a text message phishing scam which uses the UK's exit from the EU as a cover for stealing personal information.

The text message reads: 'We need to verify your identity to keep up with EU standards'. The message then instructs the recipient that 'to avoid restrictions' they must visit a website to upload their personal details.

If you get this through, please do not action, just delete.

**Scams can be reported to Action Fraud, contact 0300 123 2040 or go to [www.actionfraud.police.uk](http://www.actionfraud.police.uk).**

**Contact the Trading Standards Service via the Citizens Advice Consumer Helpline on 0808 223 1133**