

★ JOIN THE FIGHT ★

Suffolk Consumer Champion

Weekly Bulletin

10/03/2017

This week's top features



Council Tax Scams

Residents are advised to be on their guard after a number of reports of fraudsters contacting Suffolk residents by phone, text or email about their council tax.

One Ipswich resident has reported receiving an email from 'Online Council TAX UK' which claimed they were owed a refund, and requesting they provide their bank details via an online form.

The email quotes a 'council.tax.gov.uk' email address. This is not a legitimate Government email address. Suffolk Trading Standards has confirmed that fraudsters have been calling people pretending to be from councils and asking them to complete a survey. Again, the callers have no connection with any local councils.

People are advised not to engage with callers and not to give out any personal details, including bank details, if they receive unsolicited telephone calls, emails or texts.

If anyone believes they have been targeted by a scam, or know someone who has, they should call Trading Standards via 03454 040506.

Alternatively, they can contact Action Fraud on 0300 123 2040 or report it online through www.actionfraud.police.uk - Action Fraud is the UK's national reporting centre for fraud and internet crime.



HMRC Scam Calls

We have received more reports of Suffolk residents receiving calls from scammers pretending to be from HMRC. The most recent complaint received relates to the caller threatening a lawsuit.

The scammers pose as HMRC officials and inform the victim over the phone that the HMRC are filing a lawsuit against them. Usually this is a pre-recorded message that implores the victim to press 1 to "speak to a case officer".

Victims can then be pressured into making payments to the criminals, or can have sensitive information stolen from them, making them vulnerable to identity fraud.

The advice to avoid these scams is simple, since the HMRC do not make calls to threaten laws. So if you do receive such a call, hang up the phone.

If you receive a similar scam call, please report it to us via 03454 040506.



Loan Shark Awareness Training

Stop Loan Sharks England Illegal Money Lending Team investigate and prosecute illegal lenders. They are actively trying to contact those who are at risk to let them know there is help available and to prevent people who have financial difficulties from borrowing cash from a loan shark.

The team want to work with partner agencies who support those with financial difficulties and gather intelligence that will put loan sharks away. Key partners include housing associations, the police, Citizens Advice, debt advice services, as well as credit unions and anyone who works with vulnerable people.

The England IMLT are always looking for partners to work together with to support those borrowing cash from loan sharks.

The team can deliver the following with partner agencies, completely free of charge:

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- Bespoke illegal lending training for staff
- Presentations for service users/residents to raise awareness of illegal lending
- Certificates and evidence of illegal lending training
- One to one support for people who are illegally borrowing
- Publicity materials
- Housing best practice guide (jointly developed with the Chartered Institute of Housing)
- Campaign partner sessions/joint campaigns
- 'Loan shark proofing' policies and procedures
- Financial education resources for schools


If you would like to organise some training, or discuss their services further, contact Matt Thubron from England Illegal Money Lending Team on Matthew.thubron@birmingham.gov.uk, mobile: 07500 809340.

News stories and sources of advice

Product recalls



Fraud and Scam Advice



National Trading Standards News



Suffolk Trading Standards News



Consumer Rights



Safer Suffolk



Contact Us

Call: 03454 040506

TradingStandards@suffolk.gov.uk

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