

Consumer Alerts – May 2022

Beware doorstep salesmen.

Doorstep salesmen selling household and kitchen wares have been reported operating in the Kirkham area of Lancashire. Such sellers are often young people who may claim to be ex-offenders working as part of a rehabilitation scheme. They can carry ID cards that they show you but any company detailed is unlikely to be legitimate.

Please be aware the sellers are not doing this work as part of any probationary service scheme. Often the goods are sold at inflated prices and are of low quality.

Trading Standards advice is to always say no to cold callers.

Energy Rebate Council Tax Scam

Beware receiving a phone call claiming to be associated with the council and advising you are due a £150 rebate. The scammers will ask for personal details including bank details for the rebate to be paid to you, but this may lead to further unexplained monies coming out of your bank account. Variations of this scam have also been reported being sent by email and text message.

Your local council will not ask for bank details over the phone. All households in council tax bands A to D will be eligible for the rebate, it isn't means tested and does not need to be repaid. If you pay your council tax by direct debit you will receive the energy rebate directly into your bank account. If you don't pay your council tax via direct debit then you will be sent a letter with details of how to claim the rebate.

Scam text re Covid test kits

For the majority of residents in England (unless you meet certain criteria), lateral flow tests now have to be paid for. The

scammers have introduced a new scam in which you receive a text that states 'You have been in close proximity to someone who has been contagious, you will need a test' and provides a link to click on. Clicking on the link takes you through to a very convincing copycat NHS website and begins asking for your name, date of birth and your card details for payment for a kit.

This is a scam where money is taken from your account for a non-existent test kit. Alternatively the scammer could simply be collecting information from you which may be sold on. This may then be combined with other information already known about you to give the impression of legitimacy to a further scam sent to you.

Scam Tesco email

There are a couple of Tesco scams currently doing the rounds in the North West. The first is an email offering free groceries with the usual link to click on asking for personal details. The second again is an email stating you are due compensation due to a 'system error'. Never be tempted to click on the links, be suspicious.

Details of phishing scams can be forwarded to the National Cyber Security Centre at report@phishing.gov.uk

The Safetrader scheme can help you find a trader in your area, contact 0303 333 1111 or go to www.safetrader.org.uk

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

Further information about current scams can be found on our Facebook page, www.facebook.com/StanleyDards/