

# Lancashire County Council Trading Standards Service

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## Consumer Alerts

**March 2012**

### **Letter Scams**

A consumer received a letter from Madrid saying she had won a lottery. The letter asked for personal details and bank details to make the payment. In a similar scam, the consumer received a letter saying they had won a prize in the Olympic Lottery. The letter asked for a payment via Western Union to release the funds.

Never give your bank details to anyone you are unsure of. Money transfer companies, such as Western Union, advise their customers to verify the reputation and legitimacy of the person they are sending money to. For more information see [www.westernunion.co.uk](http://www.westernunion.co.uk).

### **Telephone Scams**

This phone call, allegedly from the Ministry of Justice, said that the consumer was owed £3850 due to banking errors. The caller asked for a payment of £200 to release the rest of the money.

Consumer received a phone call alleging they could reclaim Personal Protection Insurance of £4385. The caller asked for a Ukash voucher for £99 to be sent in order to progress the claim. Ukash advise their customers to look after their vouchers as they would cash and to never give them to people asking for payment upfront.

There has been a number of telephone scams relating to computers this month. The caller alleges a fault or virus on the consumer's computer and asks the householder to log on and follow certain instructions so the caller can gain remote access to their computer. Sometimes the caller actually asks for consumer's personal details and bank details.

In another lottery scam, which targeted an elderly lady, the caller asked for £300 in cash to cover the Government taxes. The caller said they would collect the cash in person.

A consumer reported receiving a text message offering a tv licence for only £23. The text also asked for the consumer's credit card details.

Trading Standards Advice: Please do not give your personal details, bank details or credit card details to anyone unless you are very sure of their identity.

### **Cold Calling Incidents**

Residents in the Longton area report they have been visited by a man who claimed to work for Lancashire County Council and was offering cavity wall insulation for

£140. There have also been reports of similar incidents in other areas where the callers alleged they were offering local council grants. For information about the help available with the cost of buying and installing energy saving products, such as loft insulation, visit [www.directgov.gov.uk](http://www.directgov.gov.uk) or speak to your local district council.

There have been a number of reports of mattresses being sold from the back of a van. One consumer said a man stopped her in the street offering her a memory foam mattress for £140. When she refused the man persisted, even following her down the street. Others people have said that the trader concerned has offered to drive them to the cashpoint.

There have been a number of reports of door to door selling of a dubious nature. In Adlington a resident complained of someone selling manure door to door and in Burnley there have been reports of two men (allegedly representing paving contractors in Manchester) cold-calling residents and offering to pave their drive/patio.

Contact the Trading Standards Service via Citizens  
Advice Consumer Helpline on 0845/04 05 06

