



- The HMRC scam is still being reported:
  - A local resident had a call from the “Inland Revenue” saying he owed them income tax of £2000. The caller knew his National Insurance number. He contacted HMRC who told him to contact the police as it was a scam.
  - Another resident received a phone call telling him he owed £900 in tax. When the resident said he didn’t, the caller told him if he hung up he would send the police round. The call was received from a withheld number.
  - Another resident received a phone call from a male purporting to be from the Inland Revenue telling her she owed £1996 and that she had to pay up. He threatened her with the police arresting her in the next 30 minutes. She was asked for, and gave, her National Insurance number. The call was received from a withheld number.
- A Fleetwood resident received a phone call from 002548563214 and the caller informed him that he was entitled to a refund of £6755 in relation to hidden bank charges and the company was operating under the auspices of Claims Assist and Ministry of Justice. The caller knew the residents surname and home address. By talking to him he also managed to obtain his year of birth, bank name and first name. No money was requested from or obtained from the resident during the call. The caller ended the call by advising the resident that somebody would be bringing the money owed to him to his doorstep in three days.

**If you receive any of these calls or text messages, please DO NOT give out any personal details or bank details and contact your service provider and Action Fraud as soon as possible on 0300 123 2040 or at [http://www.actionfraud.police.uk/report\\_fraud](http://www.actionfraud.police.uk/report_fraud)**

- Whilst travelling in Wennington a car was flagged down and a male asked the occupants if they could speak German. He said his car (a BMW) had run out of fuel and his credit card was being declined. He offered the driver two gold rings to help him which was declined and they drove away whilst the male was on his phone. There was a younger male and an older male.

Another vehicle was flagged down in Cockerham by a male in a black suit who was driving a BMW car. The male said he was from Germany, had run out of fuel and didn’t have any money or a credit card and was asking for money to buy fuel.

- A resident in Morecambe noticed something was wrong with her car when she was leaving Morrisons car park. She pulled over on the promenade and noticed her rear offside tyre was flat. She was going to take it to a local tyre garage to get it replaced when a foreign male stopped and offered to help. He replaced the wheel and wanted to get in the vehicle to test it. The driver offered to pay him, he refused and she drove off. She later realised that her purse was missing from her handbag, which had been opened.

- There have been reports in Fleetwood of males selling boxed chainsaws, power washers and generators from their vehicles.

**Trading Standards advice is never buy goods on the doorstep. If you are suspicious of any activity report it to the Citizens Advice Consumer Helpline on 03454 040506 or contact the police on 101.**

- A Lancaster resident had a telephone call from "Telephone Preference Management" (telephone number 002090256779) who asked him to confirm his name, address, expiry date and last four digits of his credit card to make a one-off payment in order to avoid nuisance calls. The resident pointed out that the TPS is a free service and that they were trying to charge him to protect him from them! They rang off!

**The Telephone Preference Service (TPS) is the only official UK 'do not call' register for opting out of live telesales calls. Organisations that want to make live telesales calls in the UK are legally required to screen their sales lists against the TPS list. They are aware of a number of organisations that call people claiming to be the TPS and try to charge consumers for registration. It is FREE to sign up to the TPS register. They will never contact anyone requesting payment or credit card details. For further information about the TPS, visit [www.tpsonline.org.uk/](http://www.tpsonline.org.uk/)**

- A Blackpool NHW member received a phone call, supposedly from "Norton 360". The caller said he was ringing because of problems downloading updates. He had the resident's correct email address and wanted to help him solve the problem. The caller became suspicious and contacted Symantec who said it was a scam call. He has had numerous further telephone calls from the same caller.
- A Fleetwood NHW Co-ordinator has been receiving calls from 01912590506 claiming to be Talk Talk, saying he was having trouble with his internet and they will be sending a new router but need some information from him. When he said he had checked with Talk Talk they put the phone down.

**Remember – Microsoft, Talk Talk, etc., will never contact you in this way. So never give access to your computer. If someone gets remote access they could install spyware to watch your every move and steal your confidential information, including banking details and passwords.**

19<sup>th</sup> August 2016



- A Morecambe NHW Co-ordinator has received an email purporting to be from the DVLA and stating:

“DVLA assume any responsibility to update the data of citizens who own registered cars, therefore, please act in this case.”

Then asking him to access an online form to fill in some details.

Although these websites look genuine and often have real links to the DVLA website, they are a scam.

### **Copycat Websites – Advice from Trading Standards**

Copycat websites charge a fee to process or renew official documents, such as driving licences, health cards, passports or visas, or when making applications online, which you could do yourself for free or a much cheaper fee.

Although it's not against the law for a company to offer a service similar to an official body, the website should carry a clear disclaimer explaining that it's not official or affiliated in any way.

### **Ways to spot a copycat website**

1. Is it a paid search engine ad? Look out for paid-for search engine results. These are the boxed adverts displayed at the top of search engine result pages. Quite often the official site is the first or second non paid-for link that appears below these.
2. Read the homepage. Take a couple of minutes to double-check the site – don't dive into filling out an application form. Visit the homepage and read the text there. It may even declare the site is not officially affiliated with the official body.
3. Check the web address. Don't be fooled by a '.org' web address – this is no guarantee of an official website. Any website that is claiming to be an official government website should have a '.gov.uk' address.
4. 'https' vs 'http' – although it's not always a guarantee, you can check for 'https' at the beginning of the website address. On pages where you are entering personal information, 'https' acts as an encryption to protect your personal details whereas websites with 'http' don't encrypt your details.

- **Action Fraud is warning about spam text messages that target parents. The scammer sends a text from an unknown number claiming to be the son/daughter of the parent.**

One example text reads:

*"Mum I did try and phone from some one else phone signal is really bad, there has been a terrible car accident. I'm in the ICU ward in hospital my phone ain't switching on and needs charging. I'm on this mobile number please make sure you reply to this number, my friend didn't make it he died before we got to hospital and his sister's fighting for her life. Mum I had my seatbelt on, I've got a head injury but I'm ok. Going into Xray to be seen, please make sure you message me back and don't phone cause mobile phones aren't allowed here so please text in case I'm in there. I will go outside and phone you mum its really bad I need you to do me a favour before its too late, as soon as you get my text please reply by text I need you to do me a favour mum, time is running out and I need you to do something mum".*

After responding to the message the fraudsters ask victims to purchase a mobile phone top-up code and text it back to them. Once the fraudsters have the code, they can get the cash credited to their own mobile phone account.

#### **Variations of the scam:**

There are variations of the scam which include shorter versions of the text messages being spammed out by fraudsters.

These messages can quite easily evolve into more elaborate scenarios and are designed to play on your emotions and get you to react quickly without thinking.

If you receive one of these text messages, don't send any codes or money, delete it and report it to Action Fraud.

**If a family member was hospitalised, they would never be forced to use a mobile phone that required credit to activate it.**

A resident in Poulton-le-Fylde has reported that her friend got a text claiming to be from her saying she was in hospital and could she please get her a phone voucher. As she couldn't get in touch with her, her friend sent a message back asking questions that only she would know and they replied saying, oh forget it, and they are ignoring all calls. The number the text came from is 07759753818.

19<sup>th</sup> August 2016