

Consumer Alerts – October 2021

Cold Callers Selling Housewares

Cold callers offering household wares have been reported cold calling in the Ribble Valley area of Lancashire. The sellers claim they have recently been released from prison and are on probation.

Please remember the Probation Service do not instruct people to carry out door to door selling for them or on their behalf. Never feel pressured to buy anything, often items can be expensive and of poor quality.

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

Scam NHS Covid Pass Email

Criminals are using the NHS Covid Pass as a way to target the public by convincing them to hand over money, financial details and personal information. They are sending text messages, emails and making phone calls pretending to be from the NHS and offering fake vaccine certificates for sale online and through social media.

A Lancashire resident received such an email headed 'UK Digital Covid 19 certificate – your NHS order has been dispatched' and the email asked you to click to 'accept the invitation'. A closer look showed the email had been sent from an email address in Japan, nothing to do with the NHS.

Remember, the NHS App is free, the NHS Covid pass is free and the NHS will never ask for payment or for financial details. For information on how to get your free NHS Covid Pass visit www.nhs.uk/nhscovidpass

HMRC Warn of Tax Scams

HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) is warning students and young people to be aware of potential tax scams when taking up part time jobs. Being new to interacting with HMRC and unfamiliar with genuine contact from the department could make them vulnerable to scams. In the past year almost one million people reported scams to HMRC.

Nearly half of all tax scams offer fake tax refunds, which HMRC does not offer by SMS or email. The criminals involved are usually trying to steal money or personal information to sell on to others.

HMRC advice is to be wary if you are contacted out of the blue by someone asking for money or personal information. If in doubt, – do not reply directly to anything suspicious, contact HMRC through GOV.UK and [search GOV.UK for 'HMRC scams'](https://www.gov.uk/search?q=HMRC+scams) .

Scam Post Office Text

Beware of receiving a text pretending to be from the post office claiming you have a parcel to collect, then asking for payment of £1.99. A resident in Pendle received this scam text and was asked for further details of a card number, bank account number and sort code.

This scam is most likely to catch people out who are expecting the delivery of a parcel. Avoid clicking on any suspicious links and if in any doubt check directly with the parcel delivery service and check their website for information on current scams.

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