

The Fraud & Scam Bulletin May 2022

Your monthly update direct from West Mercia Police on the latest
scams and frauds

Three types of fraud are highlighted this month as well as an opportunity to join online seminars to help people identify Fraud and be more aware

Council Tax Energy Rebate Scams

Many people will be expecting to receive a £150 Energy Bill rebate payment into their bank accounts from their local councils.

Some councils have already made this payment, but others still have to process these payments.

In the meantime, fraudsters are using this opportunity to phone/email/text members of the public claiming to be from "*The Council*" and requesting their bank details so the payment can be made.

Those who have fallen for the scam have then found large sums of money have been taken from their bank accounts.

Councils will never ask for your bank details over the phone, if you have not got a Direct Debit set up for your Council Tax, then they will contact you in writing for the details.

If you receive one of these calls, put the phone down and report it at www.actionfraud.police.uk

Ticket Fraud

Ticket fraudsters scammed victims out of almost £4 million in the last year, as music and entertainment lovers bought tickets for festivals and events online as coronavirus restrictions eased.

Spot the signs of ticket fraud and protect yourself:

- Only buy tickets from the venue's box office, official promoter or agent, or a well-known and reputable ticket site.

- Avoid paying for tickets by bank transfer, especially if buying from someone unknown. Credit card or payment services such as PayPal give you a better chance of recovering your money if you become a victim of fraud.
- Be wary of unsolicited emails, texts or adverts offering unbelievably good deals on tickets. If it sounds too good to be true, it probably is.
- Is the vendor a member of STAR? If they are, the company has signed up to their strict governing standards. STAR also offers an approved Alternative Dispute Resolution service to help customers with outstanding complaints. For more information: star.org.uk/buy_safe
- Buying from a STAR member means you are buying from an authorised ticket supplier signed up to their code of practice

Source; Action Fraud

Charity Fraud

Unfortunately, fraudsters may take advantage of our generosity when giving to charity. They may claim to be raising money for a fake charity or impersonate a well-known charity.

They often focus on current events such as the pandemic and NHS or the situation in Ukraine

Most fundraising appeals are genuine, so the risk of fraud should not put you off giving to charities. However, you should be vigilant and make sure you are giving safely to legitimate organisations.

The Fundraising Regulator and Charity Commission for England and Wales advise you to pause and check before donating. This includes:

1. Check the charity name and registration number at uk/checkcharity.
2. Look out for the
3. Also check the Fundraising Regulator's online Directory to see if a charity has committed to good fundraising practice at org.uk/directory.
4. If you're still unsure about giving, always ask the organisation for more information. Legitimate causes will be happy to respond and answer your questions.

Fundraising appeals with generic wording, such as 'to help people with COVID-19' should be approached with caution. An appeal should always be clear on exactly what the money will be used for.

When you meet a fundraiser in-person, check their credentials:

- Street collectors should wear an ID badge that is clearly visible.
- Any collection buckets should be sealed and undamaged. Most fundraising materials should feature a charity's name, registration number and a landline phone number.
- If in doubt, ask for more information – a genuine fundraiser should be happy to answer your questions.

When giving online, make sure the charity is genuine before giving any financial information:

- Type in the charity website address yourself, rather than clicking on a link, and look for the registered charity number on the website.
- Don't click on the links or attachments in suspicious emails.
- Never respond to unsolicited messages or calls that ask for your personal or financial details.
- Beware of any online advertisements that just feature a mobile number.
- Ignore requests to donate through a money transfer company as this is a popular scam.
- Only donate to online fundraising pages created by a person or organisation you know and trust. If in any doubt, contact the charity directly.

Source: Action Fraud

Do you want to know more about Fraud?

Fraud Safety Webinar: 10am, 24th May - <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/266604129127>

Fraud Safety Webinar; 2pm, 23rd June - <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/266626175067>

Fraud Safety Webinar: 10am, 21st July - <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/305513437917>

Fraud Safety Webinar: 7pm, 24th August - <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/330607876057>

IF YOU THINK YOU ARE BEING SCAMMED OR DO NOT RECOGNISE THE CONTACT

- **STOP:** Taking a moment to stop and think before parting with your money or information could keep you safe.
- **CHALLENGE:** Could it be fake? It's okay to reject, refuse or ignore any requests. Only criminals will try to rush or panic you.
- **PROTECT:** Contact your bank immediately if you think you've fallen for a scam and report it to Action Fraud

If you've fallen for a scam, report it to **Action Fraud on 0300 123 2040** or via actionfraud.police.uk.

Scam Text messages can be forwarded to 7726 to help phone providers take early action and block numbers that generate spam on their networks.
Forward **Fake Emails** received to report@phishing.gov.uk.

SOURCE: TAKE FIVE

For further information visit:
<https://www.actionfraud.police.uk/>

<https://takefive-stopfraud.org.uk/>

