

Essex Police Fraud Alert System

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11th June 2021

MOBILE PHONE UPGRADE SCAM

Summary



The NFIB are aware of an ongoing scam where consumers are being cold called by individuals impersonating employees of legitimate mobile network operators and suppliers.

Victims are offered early handset upgrades, or new contracts, at significant discounts. Once customers have been convinced that the deals are genuine and agree to proceed, suspects then ask for their online mobile account credentials, including log-ins, address and bank account details.

Suspects then place orders with genuine companies on behalf of victims, however select a different handset to that requested and have it shipped to the customer's address.

Upon receipt, suspects assure victims that this has been an error and instruct them to 'return' the handset to a different address not affiliated to the mobile company. These addresses are usually residential.

Upon intercepting the 'returned' handsets, the suspects cease contact and victims find themselves stuck with no phone and liable for the entirety of a new contract taken out in their name.

The NFIB have received over **300** reports since January 2020 with reported losses in excess of **£86,000**.

What you need to do

- Cold calls about mobile upgrades and contracts - If you're unsure that the person calling you is an official representative of the company they claim to be from, hang up and do not reveal any personal information.
- Only contact your mobile network provider on a number you know to be correct. For example, 191 for Vodafone customers, 150 for EE customers, 333 for Three customers, 202 for O2 customers, 4455 for Tesco Mobile, 789 for Virgin Mobile and 150 for Sky Mobile.
- If you receive a device that you did not order or expect, contact the genuine sender immediately. The details for this will be within the parcel.
- NEVER post a device directly to a given address. All genuine Mobile Network Operators would send out a jiffy bag for you to return without you incurring additional cost.

For more information about how to protect yourself online, visit
www.cyberaware.gov.uk and takefive-stopfraud.org.uk



If you or someone you know is vulnerable and has been a victim of fraud, please call **Essex Police** on **101**
Report fraud or attempted fraud by contacting **Action Fraud** at actionfraud.police.uk or call **0300 123 2040**

Keep up to date with fraud and
do **even more** Online **at** essex.police.uk



FURTHER COUNCIL TAX SCAMS CIRCULATING

As fake council tax emails continue to circulate, find below our top tips for spotting fraudulent emails.

----- Original message -----

From: "Council Tax | GOV.UK" <test@crabandlobster.co.uk>
Date: 09/06/2021 08:55 (GMT+00:00)
To: XXXXXXXXXXXX
Subject: You've got 1 message - Ticket No. BTHVHUKLWS

The email has clearly not come from an official .gov email address

Council Tax Refund Notification for user client XXXXXXXXXXXX

The email is addressed to the recipients email address, it does not refer to them by name as official correspondence will do

User ID 6028346282224024782

We would like to inform you that you still have an outstanding Tax Refund of £3782.39 from an over-payment.

You can get your refund fast, straight into your bank account, if you claim online through your Council Tax Account.

If you claim online you could receive your refund within 3 to 5 days.

The email encourages you to click on a link which is likely to take you to a malicious website which may steal your data or install malware on your device

[Claim your money now](#)

Refund Summary:

Issuing date - Wed Jun 09 2021

There is an element of urgency to put you under pressure to click the link

1. You have 24 hours to submit your refund.
2. Follow the instructions on your screen.

Why you have paid too much tax?

Incorrect spelling and grammar can be a good indicator of fake emails

Each year we check everyone Pay As You Earn account to see if the correct amount of income Tax was collected . We have now looked at the latest information we hold for this year and have worked out that you have paid too much tax. We provide a full calculation and explanation in this document .

Note:

If you don't complete the required form, you will not receive your refund.

Council tax help and support for landlords.

Head of Digital Support for Business and Agents



Remember to Take Five with any unexpected emails: **STOP CHALLENGE PROTECT.**

Report suspicious emails to
report@phishing.gov.uk



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