

★ JOIN THE FIGHT ★

Suffolk Consumer Champion
Weekly Bulletin

12/05/2017

This week's top features



Fake text messages targeting parents

Fraudsters are sending out distressing messages to parents in the hope that they will reply and send mobile phone top-up voucher codes.

Victims initially receive a text message from a loved-one which says they are in hospital and that the only way that they can make contact is via text message.

One example message reads: "Mum i did try and phone from some 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 favour before it's 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.

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 us.

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

To report a fraud and receive a police crime reference number, call Action Fraud on 0300 123 2040 or use their [online fraud reporting tool](#).



Scam Facebook Vouchers

More scam vouchers being shared on Facebook! So far we have seen fake Morrisons, Tesco's, Sainsbury's and John Lewis vouchers being shared.

Have you seen a friend post one? If so, ask them to delete the scam from their profile. (you could share our Facebook post about the scam with them). The link in the message opens a fake website that asks users to complete a survey about their shopping habits. It asks for personal details that the scammers can then use and sell on. No one will receive the voucher promised.



Tumble Dryer Fire

Suffolk Fire and Rescue are urging people to check their tumble dryers and washing machines are in good condition after a fire destroyed a Kesgrave family's garage.

Two teams of firefighters were called to reports a fire had broken out at a home in Kinsey View on the Grange Farm estate at around 12.30pm on Friday 5th May.

Flames were put out using hose reel jets but the garage was completely destroyed by the blaze.

Trading Standards along with Suffolk Fire and Rescue are asking all Suffolk residents to take the following steps

1. **Check for recalls** - [Check your appliances here to make sure they have not been recalled.](#)
2. **Register your appliances** - That way you can be contacted easily if a safety recall is required. While the chances of a faulty product causing serious damage are small, the risk is still there and returning a faulty product or ordering its repair is very easy to do. To register all your appliances, regardless of age, visit [Register My Appliance.](#)
3. **Keep it clean** - Make sure you clean out lint and fluff from the filter and around the door after every use.
4. **Turn it off overnight** - Don't leave dryers, dishwashers and washing machines on overnight. If possible, unplug or switch off appliances at the socket overnight and when going out to avoid the risk of an electrical fault causing a fire.

If you have concerns about the safety of a product, please stop using it and report it to Trading Standards via Citizens Advice Consumer Service on 03454 040506.

Please note that there will not be an update from Trading Standards next week. The next update will be sent on Friday 26th May.

[Product Recalls](#)

[Fraud and Scam Advice](#)

[Consumer Rights](#)

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