All these scams have been recently reported to Warwickshire Trading Standards by Warwickshire residents.

Copycat Driving Licence Renewal Website Charged Consumer Nearly £100

Warwickshire residents wishing to renew their driving licences are warned to beware of 'copycat' websites that are charging consumers nearly £100 for a process that should cost £14.

Copycat scams often involve unscrupulous people setting up websites which closely mimic Government or other official sites and charge people a fee to use them that is much higher than the fee charged by the official website. In some cases, residents have been charged to renew documents that should be free of charge.

These 'copycat' websites may appear above genuine websites in a web search.

Official UK renew your driving licence website: https://www.gov.uk/renew-driving-licence

The https://www.gov.uk/ website is the best place to begin your search for any Government document renewal service.

More advice on copycat websites from Get Safe Online: https://tinyurl.com/4gwdta8l

Bogus Banking Texts

More Warwickshire residents have reported receiving scam bank text messages. The messages include:

- 'an unusual payment has been made from this device'
- 'a new payee has been authorised on 03/02/2021 at 13:03. If you do not recognise this, please visit…'
- 'unverified access reported. You must confirm your client details at… to prevent card limitations'

The recipients are directed to a bogus bank website via a link. Some text messages may also carry a fake bank helpline telephone number. These text messages may sometimes appear amongst genuine text messages you have received from your bank.

Never click on a link in a text message from your bank. Always log into your account via your bank's official app or via the web browser. If you wish to phone your bank, use the telephone number publicised on the bank's website or that printed on the back of your bank card.

More advice on blocking nuisance calls and texts from the CAB: https://tinyurl.com/pgldo3zu

Scam NHS COVID Vaccination Emails

Warwickshire residents have reported receiving very genuine looking NHS COVID19 vaccination booking emails. The emails direct recipients to a 'booking website' at which time they are asked for a £5 fee!

- **The vaccine will always be free on the NHS**
- NHS staff will never ask for, or accept, cash or other payment methods for vaccines
- The NHS will never ask you for your bank account or card details, your PIN or bank password
- NHS staff will never arrive unannounced at your home to administer the vaccine
- The NHS will never ask you to prove your identity by sending copies of personal documents such as your passport, driving licence, bills or pay slips

More advice from NHS England: https://www.england.nhs.uk/2021/01/docs-and-cops-warn-on-covid-19-cons/

Arrest Warrant!

More Warwickshire residents have reported receiving scam automated telephone calls stating that a warrant has been issued for their arrest and they must press 1 to deal with the matter.

Never respond to scam telephone messages. Always try and block the telephone number.

More advice on blocking nuisance calls and texts from the CAB: https://tinyurl.com/pgldo3zu

Online Trader Warning

The popularity of online share trading and cryptocurrency trading during the COVID lockdown has led to increasing numbers of fraudsters contacting would be investors via social media, offering them the opportunity to open a 'trading account'. The fraudsters then ask for money up front to open the account (often £1000 or more) and pretend to begin trading on behalf of the consumer before disappearing with the money. No account is ever opened, nor any investments made. Some fraudsters may send small amounts of money back to the investor for a short time, falsely claiming that the money is the return on their investment, as a precursor to asking for more funds.

If you are interested in investing, do your homework. These websites all contain advice and information you might find useful:

- Financial Conduct Authority: https://www.fca.org.uk/scamsmart/online-trading-scams
- Money Saving Expert: https://www.moneysavingexpert.com/savings/cheap-online-sharedealing/
- Money Advice Service: https://www.moneyadviceservice.org.uk/en/articles/should-i-save-or-invest

Thank you for your support.

To make a consumer complaint or for consumer help and advice, please contact the Citizens Advice Consumer Service on 0808 223 1133.
For more consumer help and advice, including details of our approved trader scheme, please visit our website: https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/tradingstandards
Sign up for regular scam alerts to your email inbox: https://mailchi.mp/warwickshire/scamawareness
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