
CTSI issues warning over new COVID-19-related scams

In the wake of the spread of the COVID-19 coronavirus, the Chartered Trading Standards Institute (CTSI) has issued a warning to the public about a series of new scams related to the virus.

It has come to light that emails claiming to be from the government are offering a tax rebate to support people through this challenging period.

The emails, which look official, inform the recipient of the rebate amount and request that they click a link to receive it. At the link, the recipient is asked to fill in personal details, including their credit card number and address. These details allow the scammer to take money directly from the recipient's bank account.

Other email-based scams include one claiming to be from the World Health Organisation (WHO). The email, which claims to hold crucial coronavirus safety advice, has an attachment which downloads a keylogger, allowing scammers to follow the online movements of the user, and gain access to their device and personal details.

Citizens Advice (CitA) has launched advice on coronavirus scams. CitA has an excellent scam checker, and you can access it by [clicking here](#).

There have also been multiple reports of unfair pricing practices on many in-demand goods, such as hand washes and face masks. On this topic, the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) made a statement, which said: "It will consider any evidence that companies may have broken competition or consumer protection law, for example by charging excessive prices or making misleading claims about the efficacy of protective equipment. And it will take direct enforcement action in appropriate cases."

CTSI Chief Executive, Leon Livermore, said: "It is abhorrent that unscrupulous individuals are using this difficult time as an opportunity to immiserate others further. Consumers should now be extra vigilant, and aware of these new scams that take many forms. The general rule of scams applies - if it seems too good to be true, then it probably is.

"CTSI is monitoring these developments and will update the public as we receive further intelligence. In the meantime, the public should follow the official government advice, and take all necessary precautions."

ENDS

Notes for Editors:

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Chartered Trading Standards Institute (CTSI)

CTSI is a training and membership organisation that has represented the interests of the Trading Standards profession since 1881 nationally and internationally. We aim to raise the profile of the profession while working towards fairer, better informed and safer consumer and business communities.

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CTSI's members are engaged in delivering frontline trading standards services in local authorities and in businesses.
www.tradingstandards.uk