



ISSUE 52

SCAMS AWARENESS NEWSLETTER

MARCH 2025

WELCOME TO OUR

Monthly Newsletter



Energy Fraud

All you have to do is turn on the television, radio, or open a newspaper and you will come across a story about the impending increase in energy prices. Threatened spikes in energy costs combined with the current cost of living crisis is a gift for fraudsters.

Fraudsters like to manipulate us by offering us 'special deals' that may be 'limited offers' to draw us into providing them with our banking details.

WHAT IS AN ENERGY SCAM AND HOW DO WE AVOID BECOMING A VICTIM?

Fraudsters will pose as representatives of energy companies, Ofgem or even the government to obtain our personal and/or financial information. They will offer us an opportunity to switch to "an exclusive energy deal" which they tout as being much cheaper than any available alternatives. Additionally, there has been a marked increase in 'green scams' – solar panels, loft installation, biomass boilers – any environmentally friendly options to make our homes more efficient and sustainable.

If you are thinking about changing energy providers always do your research when looking into deals. [Compare Energy - Uswitch](#) is an Ofgem accredited site that provides helpful guidance on changing energy providers.

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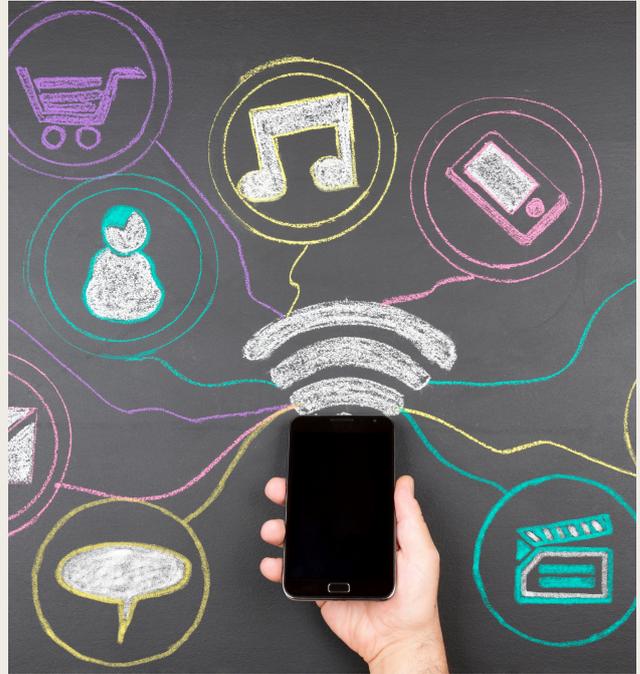


Phone scams

Fraudsters will aggressively sell energy and green deals, often referring to work they are allegedly carrying out in the local neighbourhood. Offers will be time sensitive, while they are in the area. The scam may refer to topical eco-friendly initiatives, such as loft insulation or solar panels. The products will fail to materialise once the fraudster has your money.

Home upgrades

If you already have solar panels, then watch out for scammers who contact you to warn that your panels are dangerous and need to be removed or replaced, or you need higher voltage optimisers. You may also be offered free checks on panels or charging points, which opens the door to charging you for unnecessary work.



How to spot an energy scam

Email, postal and text scams – beware of any unsolicited contact by post, text, WhatsApp, social media or email with details of an exclusive energy offer or eco-friendly products.

These offers usually involve non-existent (or long-finished) government grants and deals. Usually, messages will contain a URL link for you to register your interest.

Always be cautious about clicking on any Links or URLs from unsolicited sources. You may be inadvertently providing criminals with personal and banking information for them to exploit.

REMEMBER

Remember you can check to see if a company's website is legitimate with [GetSafeOnline](#) | [Check is a website is a scam or fraud](#)



Doorsteps

Our partners at Trading Standards have warned us about the rise in doorstep scams. They can take the form of door-to-door sales, someone pretending to be a trader, charity collector or even someone in need of help.

In this circumstance they will be offering you exclusive energy deals, or eco-friendly products to make your home more cost efficient. Never let a caller into your home if you are unsure of them. Never be pressured into making a decision on the doorstep.

Don't be taken in by offers of 'one-day only' discounts or 'scare stories' about risks to your property. Always do your research first before signing up for any energy offers or schemes.

Be alert and reporting

Things to look out for include:

WARNING

- Links or URLs that look strange - especially if you're being asked to click on them.
- A deal that sounds too good to be true.
- A request for personal information that you're usually advised not to reveal, such as passwords or banking PINs.

REMEMBER

Any indication that you might not be dealing with a real company - this could be anything from a poorly formatted or worded text to a logo that doesn't look right in an email.

Don't click on any links or divulge any personal or banking information unless you're 100% certain that the person or organisation contacting you is legitimate. If you are unsure, then always contact the organisation directly (making sure to get the number off its website and not from the communication itself) to check whether it is a legitimate offer or not.

Energy Bills Support Scheme



The Energy Bills Support Scheme was a government energy help scheme that ran over the winter of 2022-23 to provide electricity users with a £400 discount on their bills. It's no longer running and there are no plans to revive it, so you shouldn't expect to receive any texts or other communications about it.

Reporting energy scams



The best way to report energy scams is to contact [Action Fraud](#). This will help reduce the chances of anyone else being scammed in the same way.



- If you've handed over any money or you have concerns over the security of your finances, contact your bank immediately, use either the phone number on the back of your card or call the centralised number 159 to be connected to your banks fraud department.
- Phone scams – report as a phishing attempt at actionfraud.police.uk or 0300 123 2040. Consider the Telephone Preference Service on 0345 070 0707.
- Email Scams – forward emails to report@phishing.gov.uk
- Text scams – forward to 7726.
- Doorstep scams – call the police on 101 (999 in an emergency). Report to Trading Standards via the [Citizens Advice Consumer Service](#) or call on 0808 223 1133.

Bailiff/debt repayment fraud

A concerning new fraud trend is emerging and this is called bailiff/debt repayment fraud.

You may receive a letter, call, email, text or doorstep visit demanding debt payment. If you don't recognise the debt, you need to be wary and verify the request before paying up, as not all such demands are genuine. Here are some top-tips to be aware of

- Domains ending in '.legal' – these could be a scam, look for a UK domain.
- References to 'bailiffs' in the body of a letter – other than in a company name, firms refer to 'enforcement agents', not bailiffs.
- Threats of Home Office attendance at a removal action – the Home Office does not attend enforcement visits.
- References to appointments for a removal action – enforcement agents do not make appointments after notice has been given.
- Threats of police attendance at a removal action – police do not attend unless there has been a breach of the peace.
- Limited payment options – if bank transfer is the only option, that's likely to be a scam.
- Typos and grammatical errors – a genuine letter is unlikely to contain spelling or grammatical errors.

Counterfeit £20 notes

We have received reports from banks across Cheshire that there has been a surge in counterfeit £20 notes. Fraudsters are taking advantage of the increase in new currency, bearing the image of King Charles III, to trick us into accepting fake notes.

To familiarise yourself with authentic currency you can find a useful guide to currency features at the [Bank of England](#).



If you are affected by the content of this bulletin, you can talk to us. Our Scams Awareness and Aftercare Team can offer free support, advice and guidance. Contact our team today on:

 01625 612958

 scams@ageukcheshire.org.uk