

Trading Standards News

A summary of work and Facebook posts by the Trading Standards Service



Leicestershire
County Council

Welcome to our June 2022 Newsletter

Our teams have had a really busy few months and we hope you enjoy reading about it!

Remember to stay up to date with our latest news by [following us on Facebook](#).

Contact Citizen's Advice Consumer helpline on 0808 223 1133 or [Citizen's Advice online](#) for advice on all Trading Standards matters.

Scams in the news

War in Ukraine

Unfortunately, scammers are quick to capitalise on whatever is in the news and in March we were alerted to scams purporting to raise money for those affected by the conflict in Ukraine.

Fraudsters have used a variety of methods to get potential victims to part with their cash, including selling t-shirts, soliciting cryptocurrency donations, and sending scam emails soliciting funds.

Always: Check a charity's name and registration number at [Gov.uk check a charity](#) to confirm its legitimacy.

- Type the address of the charity website rather than clicking on a link when donating online.
- Report suspicious emails by forwarding them to: report@phishing.gov.uk

For more information and report a scam email visit [Action Fraud](#).

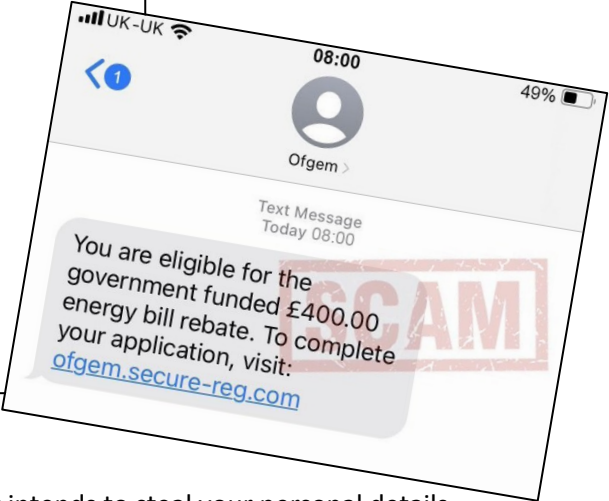
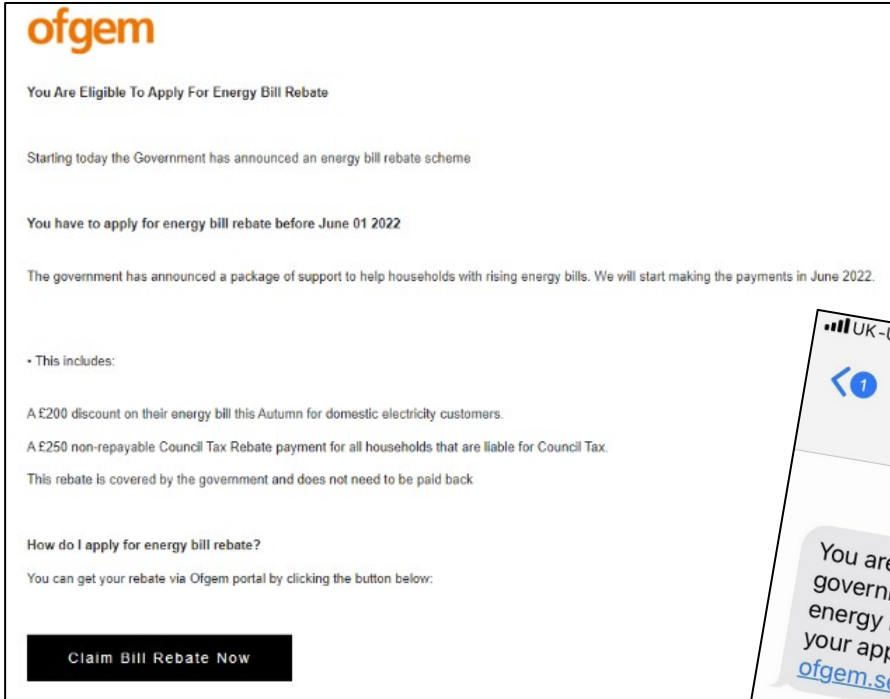
Rise in energy prices and the cost of living

May and June have seen a rash of energy related scams and frauds as everyone became more concerned about rises in energy bills.

First, an email purporting to be from **Ofgem** with details of how to receive your £150 rebate began doing the rounds, closely followed by texts and recorded phone messages also apparently from Ofgem offering help to claim further energy rebates.

Please give safely

www.gov.uk/checkcharity



Ofgem never send these kinds of messages, they are scams.

- Do not ring a number given - someone on the end of it intends to steal your personal details.
- Do not click on a link unless it is from someone you know and trust.
- To report a suspicious text message for free forward it to 7726.

Genuine information on how to receive energy rebates can be found at Gov.uk.

For more information on energy scams visit Ofgem.gov.

Product safety

Dangers of button batteries

Leicestershire Trading Standards were pleased to support the **Office for Product Safety and Standards** #Nilbymouth campaign during April. The campaign highlighted the dangers of button batteries and small magnets when swallowed by small children.

- Button batteries are found in many household gadgets and toys, they react with saliva to make caustic soda, which is used to unblock drains.
- If a child swallows a button battery and it gets stuck in their food pipe, it can burn a hole. This causes internal bleeding and can kill.
- Larger lithium 'coin cell' batteries (about the size of a five pence piece) are the most dangerous.
- Smaller batteries can be inserted into places such as ears and noses, causing serious injuries for children if undetected.



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- If you think your child has swallowed button batteries, take them straight to A&E. Take the product packaging, toy, or gadget with you if you can.

More information and a great video giving practical advice can be found here: [Gov.uk Button batteries advice](#) and [YouTube Button batteries advice](#).

Dangers of small magnets

During checks at East Midlands Airport our team took a sample of a magnetic toy. Magnetic toys can be extremely dangerous and must comply with strict rules relating to magnet strength. If a child swallows magnets, they can be forced together in the intestines or bowels. This squeezes the tissue and cuts off blood supply, which can quickly cause harm and kill.

When this product was formally tested the magnet strength was found to be almost 15 times permitted strength. The product had a CE mark which has obviously falsely been applied to convince consumers that the goods are safe. This was for sale on a well-known fulfilment house and the goods have now been removed from sale.



Small magnets can be found in many products including adult desk and magnet sphere construction toys, fridge magnets, fake piercings, and drink charms.

Safety advice:

- Keep products with small or loose magnets away from young children.
- Magnets can be released from faulty toys, inspect toys for damage and remove from use.
- If your child has swallowed magnets, they may have stomach pain, vomit, have a fever, or point to their throat or stomach.
- If you think a child has swallowed small magnets take them straight to A&E.

More information can be found at: [Capt.org](#).

Food safety alerts and recalls



April also saw several large-scale food safety recalls concerning potential salmonella contamination in everyday foods.

The most widely publicised alert concerned Kinder surprise chocolate products. Some Kinder products were still to be found several weeks after the recall began in smaller independent stores.

Another alert concerned chicken found in many high street branded supermarket wraps, sandwiches, and salad products.

Stay up to date on the latest food safety and food allergen alerts by visiting: [Food Standards Agency food alerts](#) or keeping an eye on our Facebook page.

Animal welfare prosecution

Our Animal Health Team investigates reports relating to farmed animal welfare in the county.

A firm has been fined £44,000 after a Leicestershire Trading Standards investigation. 27,000 chickens died at a farm in Leicestershire following poultry shed malfunction.

Read more here: [Animal Health prosecution](#).

To report any concerns you may have about the welfare of farmed animals use [Online Reporting Form](#).



Illegal tobacco and vapes



During April and May, we investigated reports of counterfeit vaping products. Our team seized a quantity of counterfeit Elf Bar Vapes from a shop in the county.

Counterfeit goods are unlikely to be made to the same standards as the genuine products, which can present safety issues to the users.

We are continuing to investigate sales of illegal vaping products which are routinely seized for destruction. These include genuine branded items that are not compliant with UK safety regulations and standards.

Trading Standards acts on intelligence reports, including those from members of the public. To anonymously report illicit tobacco activity, use our [Online Reporting Form](#).

Our team has continued to be kept busy looking into reports of the sale of illegal tobacco and vaping products in the county.

Trade in Illegal tobacco products is proven to be linked to organised crime networks. Its sale costs the Treasury £2bn each year, harms legitimate businesses and presents dangers to public health.

In March, as part of a joint operation with Leicestershire Police, we seized illegal cigarettes and tobacco from a local store.



And finally...

Getting away from it all

Hoping to put a difficult 2 years firmly behind us, many have been planning holidays to somewhere, anywhere, other than here. Unfortunately, this meant travel chaos for many over the spring half term break with warnings of further airline disruptions in the coming summer months.

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Find out what to do if you have a flight cancelled or delayed. You might be able to get compensation.

Know your rights before you book:

[Airlines and your rights](#)

And, because you so deserve that lovely break you're planning make sure you follow these top tips to avoid holiday fraud:

- When booking, use a credit card where possible, for purchases over £100-£30,000 you will receive Section 75 protection under the Consumer Credit Act, this offers extra protection if anything goes wrong.
- Use secure payment methods recommended by reputable retailers.
- Always avoid paying by bank transfer, especially if you're booking with someone you don't know.

Get more advice and tips on how to do your research from [Action Fraud: How to avoid Holiday Fraud](#) and from [Get Safe Online: Holiday and travel booking advice](#).



Leicestershire Trading Standards Service

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