

Trading Standards News

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



Welcome to our Autumn 2023 Newsletter

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.

Trading Standards in the news

Leicestershire pottery fraudsters conned buyers with fake Cornishware

Trading Standards warns collectors of antiques and collectibles that things may not always be as they seem when buying rare items. Buyers could be told that they are purchasing an 'investment piece' or find themselves befriended by sellers in specialist groups convincing them to part with lots of cash for potentially worthless items. As far as possible, checks should be made to determine the authenticity of the piece and that the value is accurate. If it sounds too good to be true, it probably is.

This warning comes after two individuals were prosecuted for £40,850, in November 2023, of fraud by Leicestershire County Council's Trading Standards service.



The court heard that the fraud involved Cornishware storage jars, which are popular with collectors. The jars are labelled with the names of various food items. Some of the items are very common, while rarer items sell for hundreds of pounds.

The defendants bought common, lower-priced pots, altered the wording on them and then sold them as rarer pots. In one case, a jar marked 'sago' was purchased for £29.99. The label on the jar was altered to the much rarer 'walnuts' and then sold for £400.

The defendants were ordered to pay full compensation of £40,850 to the victims. Find out more on our website: [Leicestershire County Council](#).

Are you disposing of your vapes safely?



Recent research, conducted by [YouGov](#) found that in 2022:

- 14 million single use vapes were bought per month.
- Batteries inside discarded single use vapes could power 1,200 electric vehicles.
- Over 50% of single use vapes get thrown away.
- 1.3 million single use vapes were thrown away every week or 5.4 million per month

When vapes are thrown into general waste bins they pose a significant risk of fires if the lithium batteries are damaged or subject to changes in

temperature. Products containing lithium batteries, including vapes, are implicated in 700 fires every year in dustcarts and waste-processing centres.

In addition, the toxic chemicals they contain are sent to landfill sites resulting in a loss of the valuable materials they contain and potentially polluting the environment. Never bin hidden batteries, or electricals, don't put them in your rubbish or recycling bins as they could then start fires in your home, in bin lorries on your street, or at waste-processing centres. Instead, remove batteries from electricals if you can and recycle the batteries and electricals separately. If you can't remove the batteries, then always recycle your electricals separately.



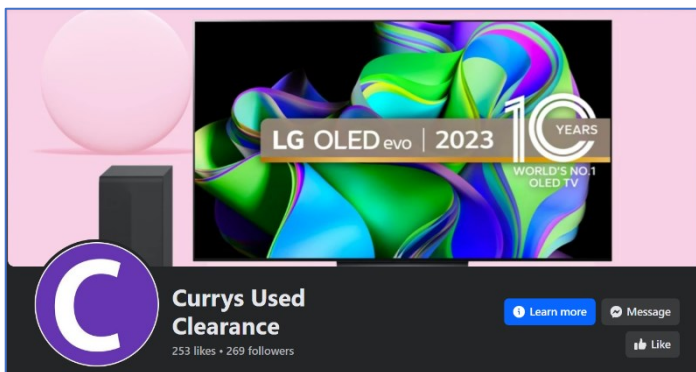
Waste vapes should be taken either to a household recycling centre or back to where they were purchased. If you're not sure where to take them, use the recycling locator at [Recycle your electricals](#).

Scams in the news

Watch out for fake Curry's Facebook posts!

Trading Standards have warned consumers about a Facebook page purporting to be "Curry's Used Clearance". The page advertises heavily discounted products and links to 2 fake websites.

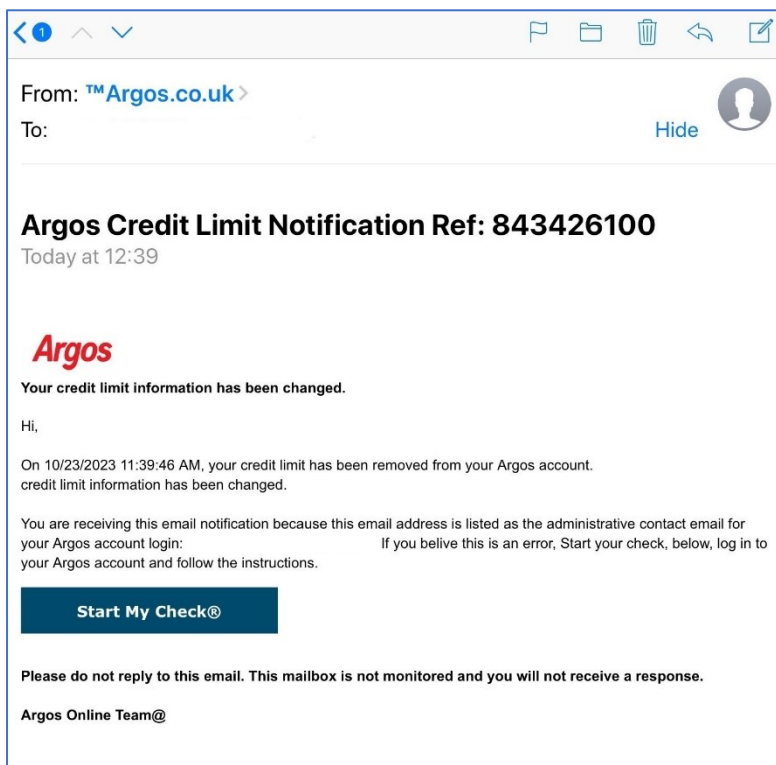
In the build-up to the Black Friday sales, scammers often target shoppers with too-good-to-be-true offers. Curry's has confirmed that both the Facebook page and websites are fraudulent.



Find out more and how to spot a scam like this at [Which](#).

Beware of fake "Argos" emails!

This is an example of an "Argos" scam email going around at the moment, which has a link that will take users to a website page that is very similar to the genuine Argos site, where you are asked to hand over personal and financial details.



It is common for scammers to use names of well-known organisations or businesses to obtain money and/or personal details from their consumers.

Stop and take a minute when receiving unexpected emails. Call the legitimate company or organisation to check details, using a number or website address from a recent bill.

You can find out more about suspicious Argos emails here: [Argos.co.uk](#).

For advice on reporting scam emails visit: [Action fraud](#).

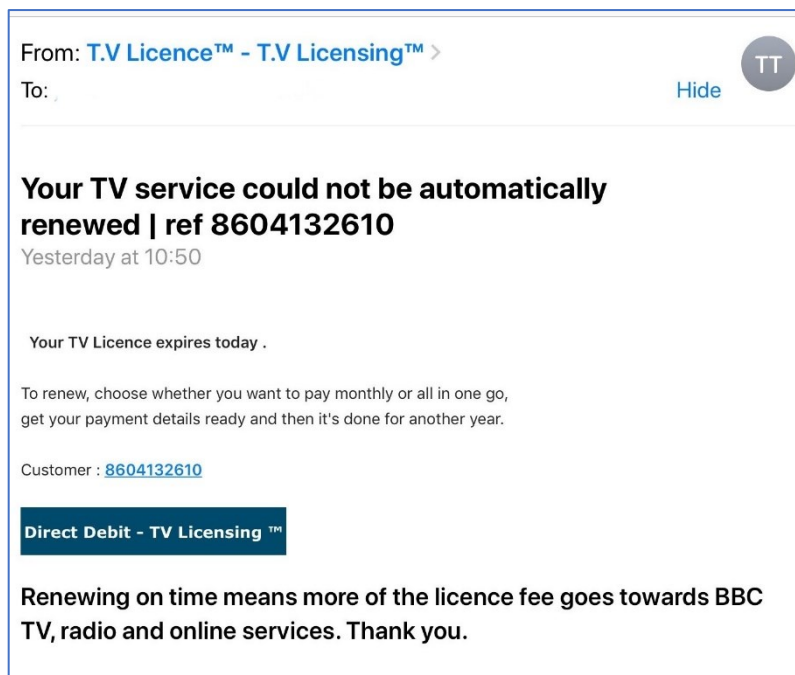
Had a TV licence direct debit renewal message?

TV Licensing scams are on the rise such as this scam email recently received by a local resident. The email mimics genuine TV licence logos and has a link that will take users to a website page that is very similar to the genuine site. On the fraudulent site you may be asked to hand over personal and financial details.

Find out more about TV licence scams and how to avoid them:

Tvlicensing.co.uk

You can forward all suspicious emails to report@phishing.gov.uk.

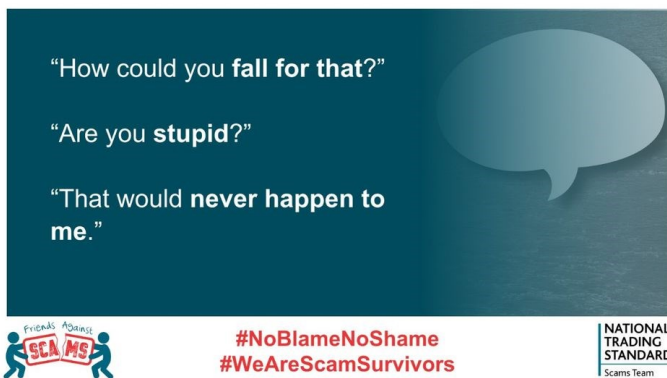


No blame, no shame

The phrase 'fall for a scam' is often used, but you don't hear 'fall for a burglary'. This language puts blame on the victim.

We need to change the language we use when talking to, and about victims of fraud, scams, and financial abuse.

Read more here: Friends Against Scams.



Are they really your friend?



An incredible 56% of the people supported by Stop Loan Sharks England in the first half of this year thought they were borrowing from a friend when they took out a loan.

Illegal lenders can be clever, charismatic, manipulative people who are very charming until you cross them.

Don't let these false friends have control over you and your finances!

Stop Loan Sharks investigates and prosecutes illegal money lenders and provides support for borrowers in the UK. If you have borrowed from a loan shark or are worried about someone else, they can help. Call 0300 555 2222 they are open 24/7 or use their webchat at [Stop loan sharks](#).

Does your child play with water beads?

Water beads are readily available to buy online. They may be sold as sensory toys or used in pellet or water guns. Many come with no warnings about the danger of children swallowing them.

When dry, water beads are tiny and can easily be swallowed without detection. If swallowed they could expand to many times their original size, posing a serious risk of blockage in a child's bowel. Some water beads grow to more than 15 times their original size, up to the size of golf balls.

If you suspect a child has swallowed a water bead, seek medical help immediately. Find out more about the dangers here [Child Accident Prevention Trust](#).



If you don't take care when buying online, you could be funding a fraudster. Read our top safety tips.

www.getsafeonline.org/onlinebuying #OnlineBuying

Don't fall victim to fraud this festive season.

The busiest time of year for buying online is also a busy time for online criminals!

How can you avoid funding a fraudster?

- Don't pay for an item by transferring money directly to people or companies you don't know. If it's a fraud, your bank may not be able to recover or give you back your money.
- If you can, pay by credit card if the cost is over £100. Your credit card company is jointly liable if something goes wrong with a product or a service you purchase.

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- Make sure a website is authentic by carefully checking the address is spelled correctly. Ideally, type it in rather than clicking on a link in an email, text, or post. Check a website at: www.getsafeonline.org/checkawebsite.
- Learn how to spot fraudulent advertisements on social media, online marketplaces, and forums. Never part with your payment – even a deposit, for goods you haven't seen in person.
- Make sure payment pages are secure by checking that addresses begin with 'https' ('s' is for secure) and there's a closed padlock in the address bar. But remember: the https and closed padlock mean that the page is secure, but the site could still be operated by fraudsters.
- Log out of the web page or app when payment is completed. Simply closing it may not log you out automatically.



The internet is a great place
but before you buy,
check it's legit.

Visit www.getsafeonline.org/checkawebsite

GET SAFE ONLINE #CheckaWebsite cifas Leaders in fraud prevention BARCLAYS

Read more expert, easy-to-follow advice from [Get Safe Online](http://www.getsafeonline.org).

Looking forward to a tittle over the holidays?

Could you recognise fake alcohol?

- Make sure you purchase alcohol from a reputable retailer
- Beware of unknown brand names and prices that seem too low
- Crooked and badly printed labels may indicate counterfeit alcohol
- Vodka, the most counterfeited spirit should be completely clear with no sediment in the bottle.

If in doubt, don't buy it or drink it! Get more tips and advice from [Drinkaware](http://www.drinkaware.co.uk).

Leicestershire Trading Standards is taking part in a national project investigating the prevalence of fake alcohol. To report concerns of fake alcohol to us, use our online [Report it](#) form.



Leicestershire Trading Standards Service

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