

Welcome to the National Trading Standards Scam Marshal newsletter: May 2019

Total Scam Marshals across the UK: 1,091



NATIONAL TRADING STANDARDS

Scams Team

«fname» «lname»
«add1»
«add2»
«county»
«pcode»

New Badges!

We are celebrating the fact that we have reached our 1,000th Scam Marshal with a new Scam Marshal pin badge!

Badges are being sent out to our Scam Marshals with this monthly update (if you haven't, please let us know and we'll get one sent out to you).

We hope that you wear your badge with pride and continue to talk to people you know about the important work that you do.

Nuisance phone log

In December 2018 we launched the nuisance phone log with great success.

The investigators have been working hard with the phone logs we have received and are working with phone providers to try and have these numbers disconnected.

The investigators are looking for more phone numbers and are keen to see if you are receiving calls from any new phone numbers.

If you receive nuisance and scam phone calls, please fill out the form we have included in this mailing.

Once the form is full, please send it in to us at our Freepost address (overleaf). Extra copies can be found on the resource section of the Scam Marshal website: www.FriendsAgainstScams.org.uk/ScamMarshals

Fake Lotteries

We are seeing fake lottery mailings coming into the office more frequently in recent months which are all following the same process.

A letter or email will arrive stating that the recipient has won a large amount of money on a foreign lottery, Spanish, Irish, Australian and Canadian are some of the most common. However, in order to release your winnings, a small admin fee is required, this fee is usually around £40.

If you have received these letters, you should report them immediately to Action Fraud; **0300 123 2040** (www.ActionFraud.police.uk) and then send them into us to investigate.

Always remember:

- ◇ You cannot win a lottery you have not entered.
- ◇ No legitimate company would **ever** ask you for money to release any lottery winnings.
- ◇ **Never** disclose any of your personal information.
- ◇ Genuine lotteries thrive on publicity, if they ask you to keep your winnings a secret then its **highly likely** to be a fraud.



PENSION & INVESTMENT SCAMS

Throughout 2019, our newsletter will concentrate on a particular pension or investment scam each month. This information is taken from the ScamSmart section of the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) website.



The most common of these include:

- Binary option scams - February
- Carbon credit trading scams—March
- Cryptocurrency investment scams—April
- **Early pension release—May**
- Forex trading scams
- Get-rich-quick, ponzi and pyramid schemes
- Land banking investment schemes
- Overseas property and crop scams
- Pension review scams
- Rare earth metal investment scams
- Restricted US share scams
- Share, bond and boiler room scams

Early pension release scams

You should be extremely wary of any scheme offering to help you release cash from your pension fund before you are 55, as it is almost certainly a scam. Generally, you can only release money from your pension before you are 55 in specific circumstances for example; having a terminal illness. Any company that is offering this will know that there are huge tax implications on withdrawing money from pensions before the age of 55 (up to 55% + extra charges). This means that doing it this way is highly unlikely to be in your interest.

How early pension release scams works

Investors often receive a phone call out of the blue, however contact can be made by email, post, word of mouth or at a seminar or exhibition. You could be offered a free pension review, then told that it is possible to take cash from your pension before you are 55. This could be called a 'loan', 'saving advance' or 'cashback'.

Your pension funds will then be transferred from your legitimate pension scheme into one set up by the criminals, which are often based abroad. You may then be charged a fee of up to 30%, for something which is often unclear and doesn't include any taxes you may owe for accessing your pension early. You may be 'loaned' an amount (often around half of your pension) and any money left over could be invested in high risk investments or simply stolen from your account.

How to protect yourself

If you get a call about early release pensions, the safest thing to do is **hang up**—it is illegal and most probably a scam. Always be wary if you are offered investments or free advice involving your pension—professional advice is not free, so a free offer out of the blue is highly likely to be a scam.

Always check to see if the company offering advice is registered with the Financial Conduct Authority, phone the FCA consumer helpline on **0800 111 6768** to check.

If you have been scammed

You can report the firm or scam to the FCA consumer helpline (number above). If you have invested in scam already, criminals are likely to target you again or sell on your details to other criminals so be wary of future offers, these may well be completely different. We also recommend reporting the scam to Action Fraud (**0300 123 2040**) as they are a central data processing centre for all types of scams. For general advice on scams, you can also contact Citizens Advice on **03454 040506**.

Is there anything else you would like to see in this newsletter?
Please feel free to give us some feedback, just pop it into your
freepost envelope when you send in your scam mail.

For more information on the team and our initiatives please
visit our website:

**NATIONAL
TRADING
STANDARDS**
Scams Team

Phone Call Log

Please record any unsolicited phone calls on this log and send back to the NTS Scams team using your freepost mail bags



NATIONAL TRADING STANDARDS
Scams Team

Name:

Phone Number:

Name:	Phone Number:	Date:	Time of Call:	How Much were they asking for? (£):
Company:				
Notes: Did you consent to receiving the call: Yes/No				
Name:	Phone Number:	Date:	Time of Call:	How Much were they asking for? (£):
Company:				
Notes: Did you consent to receiving the call: Yes/No				
Name:	Phone Number:	Date:	Time of Call:	How Much were they asking for? (£):
Company:				
Notes: Did you consent to receiving the call: Yes/No				
Name:	Phone Number:	Date:	Time of Call:	How Much were they asking for? (£):
Company:				
Notes: Did you consent to receiving the call: Yes/No				
Name:	Phone Number:	Date:	Time of Call:	How Much were they asking for? (£):
Company:				
Notes: Did you consent to receiving the call: Yes/No				
Name:	Phone Number:	Date:	Time of Call:	How Much were they asking for? (£):
Company:				
Notes: Did you consent to receiving the call: Yes/No				

Name:	Phone Number:	Date:	Time of Call:	How Much were they asking for? (£):
Company:				
Notes: Did you consent to receiving the call: Yes/No				
Name:	Phone Number:	Date:	Time of Call:	How Much were they asking for? (£):
Company:				
Notes: Did you consent to receiving the call: Yes/No				
Name:	Phone Number:	Date:	Time of Call:	How Much were they asking for? (£):
Company:				
Notes: Did you consent to receiving the call: Yes/No				
Name:	Phone Number:	Date:	Time of Call:	How Much were they asking for? (£):
Company:				
Notes: Did you consent to receiving the call: Yes/No				

Have you contacted your network provider about call blocker technology? Yes / No

Have you registered with the Telephone Preference Service? Yes / No

To help stop scam phone calls register for free with the Telephone Preference Service. The Telephone Preference Service (TPS) is a free service. It is a legal requirement that all organisations (including charities, voluntary organisations and political parties) do not make calls to numbers registered on the TPS unless they have your consent to do so. Some scams pose as the TPS and may contact you requesting you to renew your TPS registration at a cost. Remember the TPS is a free service and any call trying to charge you for it is a scam.

Contact the TPS on 0345 070 0707

If you still receive lots of scam calls you may want to invest in a call blocker. A call blocker is a small device that plugs into your phone and allows you to block calls from unwanted numbers. Your local trading standards service may be able to provide you with a call blocker or offer advice on the best one for you.

Once the nuisance phone log has been completed, please send it to:

NTSST
FREEPOST
MAIL MARSHALS



Please let us know if you would like to receive more logs when you send them into the team, You can also download more of these logs on the resources page of the Scam Marshal website at:

www.FriendsAgainstScams/ScamMarshals