

The following list describes assorted "scams", "spams" and other unsolicited attempts to obtain money by false pretences. Harrogate Chamber Secretariat has compiled this guide based on contributions from members, from DTI, from NYTS and other reliable sources, but no liability whatsoever can be accepted for the consequences of taking any of the suggested actions.

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| No | Origin | Full name & description of Scams | Suggested actions |
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| 1. | Advance Fee Frauds (419 type) From Nigeria +other African countries e.g. Algeria, Angola Côte d'Ivoire Dubai, UAE Liberia Rep. of Benin Rep. of Togo South Africa Tanzania Zimbabwe | Advance Fee Frauds – enticing victims with a bogus "business" proposal that promises a share of millions of dollars as a reward. The scam message usually promises to transfer huge amounts of money, purported to be part proceeds of certain contracts, into the addressee's bank account to be shared between the parties. A variation is enticing people to act as intermediaries in a high margin supply chain – that needs up front payments to secure supplies for a foreign buyer. Mobile or satellite telephone numbers and various foreign fax-back numbers are often given – sometimes to a different country from the sender. A favourable response to the letter is followed by excuses why the funds cannot be remitted readily. Subsequently demands are made for cash contributions towards various "taxes" and "fees" supposedly to facilitate the processing and remittance of the alleged funds. The use of fake government, bank or company titles and documents is a common practice. Some people who have fallen for this scam and travelled to meet their benefactors have been subjected to blackmail – and worse! | Forward letters and faxes to the National Criminal Intelligence Service, PO Box 8000, London SE11 5EN. Forward e-mails to: 419@spring39.demon.co.uk Forward e-mails to: Abuse@ISP.com where "ISP" is copied from the senders E-mail account. |
| 2. | Bank Account Update e.g. eBay First National Pay Pal US Treasury World Pay | Bank Account Update Requests – Unexpected e-mails may appear to come from known accounting or banking organisations asking customers to complete an on-line form to confirm their banking details such as user name, password, credit card numbers and ATM PIN number. They may imply that the account will be suspended if this is not done promptly. Such requests are usually BOGUS and should not be completed. The sending e-mail address is often forged to appear genuine but is false. | Forward to your Bank or Accounting Organisation and request verification. Only use your user name and password on secure banking web sites. |
| 3. | Cheap Software Mostly USA | OEM Software Offers via e-mail Do not fall for unsolicited "special offers" of well-known proprietary software at very low prices. They often use the abbreviation OEM, which means "Original Equipment Manufacturer". Such software cannot be sold legally other than as part of the original computer. It will not have a valid licence and will not be supported by the genuine Manufacturers. Do not give personal credit card information to such Advertisers as it may well be abused. Often the senders e-mail address is part of a scam chain. Even worse, clicking on some "special offers" may import new virus-spams | Ignore them. Buy software ONLY from reputable Dealers. |
| 4. | Data Registrar Baguley, Mancr. London Lytham St Annes Manchester Sheffield Southport | Data Protection Agency Services; Crown Data Collection Enforcement Agency; Data Registration Services; – and many similar names. Official-looking letters, telephone calls and even visits from this group of Companies give the impression that the recipient must register through them under the Data Protection Act - and threaten dire consequences for failing to do so. A fee £95 plus VAT is demanded. These Companies are not officially authorised and OFT has taken action against many of them. Whilst most businesses processing personal data are required by law to notify the Information Commissioner, they can do so direct for £35 pa. | Contact Information Commissioner:- Tel: 01625 545 745 Fax: 01625 524 510 Consult web site: www.dpr.gov.uk or www.dataprotection.gov.uk |

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| 5. | Domain Names From: Carmarthen South Wales Denmark Seychelles USA | Domain Registrar Services; Domain Registry of America; UK Internet Registry – and similar names Unsolicited telephone calls will claim to inform you that someone else is trying to register your business name as a new web site domain name. They ask if you have authorised this. If not, they will offer to register the domain name for you as the “proper” owner of the name. They say that they charge “only” £20 per annum for 10 years – but want the payment of £200 in advance! Another variation is a message to owners of a co.uk domain saying that the .com version is unregistered – and offering to do so for £69 and a further £169 for web and e-mail forwarding. In fact you can register UK domain names for as little as £9.99 for 2 years and international (.com) domain names for £29.99 for 2 years. A new variation from a firm called NODOTS in Denmark offers to register five similar names to your existing name for a discount price of £499 instead of the normal £999. They claim that users making a slight error when entering your URL would still connect to your website. In fact you can do this yourself very cheaply with any ISP. Further scams occur when domain names are due for renewal. A different Registrar may approach you with a “special offer” for 5-year renewal. Beware of offers of unauthorised “new” domain suffixes such as: .brit, .usa, .scot, and official domains such as “.eu” being offered prematurely. | Contact your own ISP or check with Nominet UK www.nominet.org.uk or other genuine Domain Name Companies such as www.simply.com |
| 6. | E-mails | Unsolicited e-mail messages Never respond to unsolicited e-mail messages from unknown senders. It is now illegal for them to be sent to individuals within the UK without their express consent. However most unsolicited e-mails originate overseas. It is fairly easy for the sender’s address to be “forged” so that it appears to come from a reputable source. Never click on unknown web site links. Check the full headers for the message and paste them into the start or end of the message. Forward the complete message and headers to the sender’s e-mail address but with “abuse” replacing the first part of their address. For example: abuse@yahoo.com and so on. Never respond to spam e-mail’s instruction to reply with “remove”. This is just a ploy to get you to react to the e-mail, which alerts the sender that your address is active, increasing the chance of more e-mails. | Forward the message with full headers to abuse@sendingspam.org For info on headers see: http://spam.abuse.net or http://help.mindspring.com or www.stopspam.org or www.earthlink.net Report repeated spams to: http://spamcop.net/ |
| 7. | Fax Backs From: Bedminster Bournemouth Isle of Man Korea UK USA | Premium Rate Fax-back requests – phone calls, faxes and e-mails requesting businesses to fax back full details of their products or services requested to a premium rate fax number – costing up to £1.50 per minutes for several minutes. Another variation is the offer of current catalogues of Police and Government Auctions by fax back to your own machine – a total of 20 pages. Another firm claiming to confirm fax numbers and then to stop further faxes has even used this scam! Premium rate fax numbers include 0906, 0990 and 0991. The latest trick is to send unsolicited text messages to mobile phones inviting a reply to premium rate mobile service numbers. | Complain to ICSTIS Freepost WC5468, London SE1 2BR. Tel: 0800 500212 Fax: 020 7940 7456 www.icstis.org.uk To stop unsolicited faxes register FREE with FPS: Tel: 020 7291 3330 www.fpsonline.org.uk |
| 8. | Holiday Clubs Bahamas Bolton Bury Chester Deesside Gibraltar Hyde Ireland Isle of Man Kent London Manchester Shrewsbury South Wirral Stockport | Holiday Club Memberships and Presentations Unsolicited telephone calls and e-mails to businesses and individuals claim to offer significant savings on holidays to destinations throughout the world compared to High Street Travel Agents. As an incentive to attend presentations they offer large prizes and complimentary holidays. In fact the prizes never materialise and membership fees are lost. The OFT advise recipients NOT to go to presentations to collect a “free” holiday. They have published a helpful leaflet “Congratulations! You have NOT won a luxury holiday! The DTI has moved to close down numerous Companies operating such scams, e.g.:- Buckingham Leisure Ltd; Callmasters UK Ltd, Manchester CCH International Ltd, Bahamas and Gibraltar; GB Research Ltd; Holiday Direct; Intersun Limited, London; Leisuremasters Ltd, London; Manor Farm Promotions; Mediterranean Marketing Ltd, Manchester; Riverside Travel Services; The Travel Association; Travel Concepts LLC; The Travellers Guild; Travelmasters Ltd, Manchester; Vacations Direct Ltd.. VIP Connections Ltd, Shrewsbury | Ask OFT for new leaflet Tel: 0870 6060 321 or See www.of.gov.uk Report to North Yorks. Trading Standards Tel: 0845 330 3313 Fax: 01609 768649 E-mail to: trading.standards@northyorks.gov.uk Consult new DTI & Trading Standards Web site: www.Ripofftipoff.net |

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| 9. | International Directories From: Austria Canada Czech Republic Liechtenstein Spain Switzerland Tchegue | International Directory Update Invoices – various overseas organisations purport to be compiling international printed, CD-ROM or Web-based directories. Some send requests for “free” updates that actually commit respondents to substantial charges and automatic renewals. Others send out official-looking invoices for pre-payment – often mailed from a different country to their return address. Recent examples include: European City Guide – based in Barcelona, Spain FAIRguide - published by Construct Data based in Austria Infotel Directories Inc., Montreal, c/o Pretoria Road, Chertsey, UK Intl.Yellow Pages & Fax Directories - United Media, Most, Czech Republic I T & T Fax Directory International – based in Zug, Switzerland Intl. Trade & Business Directory – based in Mauren, Germany Traveller’s Digest –based in Hamburg, Germany | Post papers to NYTS , Unit 4/5, Block B, Thornfield Bus. Park, Standard Way, Northallerton DL6 2XQ. Tel: 01609 768606 Fax:01609 768649 E-mail to: trading_standards@northyorks.gov.uk Consult web site: www.stopecg.org |
| 10. | Lotteries From: Canada Netherlands Spain UK Agents | World Wide Premier Lottery, Alpha Lottery Foundation inc, CoinGoGames, Global Lottery International, Hope Lottery, Mega Lottery, Lotto, Spanish Sweepstake, Sunsweetwin, etc. Award Winning Notification – massive prize money to be shared among several international winners – part of which they hope you will use to participate in a further high stakes lottery. They require you to register with their Agent within a very short period or lose the chance. The Agent then demands processing or handling fees, insurance and taxes to be paid to them first by cheque or electronic transfer before you get the winnings. If you do pay these you are unlikely to hear from them again! Do not fall for these scams, which are illegal confidence tricks. | Refer to North Yorkshire Trading Standards Tel:0845 330 3313 Fax: 01609 768649 trading_standards@northyorks.gov.uk NYTS will forward it to the OFT European Enforcement Team – or e-mail direct to: euroteam@oft.gsi.gov.uk See www.oft.gov.uk |
| 11. | Microsoft Offers | Microsoft Security Updates, etc There have recently been a number of “spoof” e-mails that claim to be from support@microsoft.com , offering security patches in attached files. These are hoaxes as Microsoft does not send out general e-mails from this address. Microsoft states that they never distribute software directly via e-mail. They may send an e-mail to inform customers that upgrades are available but they will only provide links to their download sites and never attach software to the e-mail. | DO NOT CLICK ON ANY ATTACHED FILES See: www.microsoft.com/security For safety, check the Microsoft Windows Update site regularly: www.windowsupdate.com |
| 12. | Prize Draws From: Australia Canada Germany Hong Kong Netherlands Spain Switzerland UK Agents USA | Lucky Winners in Prize Draws & Competitions – DTI have recently published guidance on scam mailings targeted at susceptible consumers. Typical examples include unexpected announcements such as: * Cheques for large cash sums already made out to the recipient. * Prize draw with a guaranteed prize if they purchase cheap goods. * List of valuable prizes that the recipient has “won” – which they will receive by sending a processing fee – for which they receive only a cheap piece of jewellery. * Unsolicited telephone calls saying that you have won money in a foreign lottery but you must send them some money first! * Invitations to join syndicates buying tickets in high-stake foreign lotteries - with no chance of winning anything at all. * Mailings from clairvoyants designed to frighten people into sending money to prevent bad luck. * Invoices for unsolicited valuable goods awaiting delivery - at a cost! * A new variation is a scratch-card that asks “winners” to call a premium rate 24hr hotline – 0906... at a cost of £1 per minute. | Forward mailing to OFT European Enforcement Team, Fleetbank House, 2-6 Salisbury Square, London EC4 8JX. Forward e-mails: euroeam@oft.gsi.gov.uk Consult new DTI & Trading Standards Web site: www.Ripofftipoff.net Register with Mailing Preference Service, Freepost 22, London W1E 7EZ. |
| 13. | Publications From: London Manchester Stockport | Sponsored Awareness Publications & Newsletters – and similar names. Several organisations have undertaken telesales campaigns seeking sponsorship, advertising or donations of say £200-£250 towards drug education and awareness advisory booklets that they purport to be publishing and distributing to schools. Other variants claim to be selling advertising in Student Handbooks or Restaurant Menus. Some even claim that they have previously spoken to someone who agreed to sponsor or subscribe to the publication. They demand payment, although they are unable to produce order documentation. Some will not supply a sample copy of their publication. DTI & NYTS have investigated and warned about these Companies:- Awareness UK & Child Awareness UK Ltd.; Anderson & Clarke Publications Ltd; Community Care Campaign (UK) Ltd; Hammer Reid Publications; Xenon Publishing Co Ltd | Report to North Yorks. Trading Standards Tel: 0845 330 3313 Fax: 01609 768649 E-mail to: trading_standards@northyorks.gov.uk Ensure that any advertising deals are confirmed in writing with full details and a sample of a previous edition of the publication. Ask for evidence of their circulation. Do not sign blank Direct Debits. |

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| 14. | Stop Spam | <p>Software claiming to stop spam forever Do not trust unsolicited e-mails offering software that claims to stop spam forever. Do not click on to websites linked to such e-mails without thorough investigation. Specifically you need to know who is really making the offer, so do NOT act on e-mails that provide no details of the Company making the offer with their full address, telephone and fax numbers.</p> <p>Most professional e-mail programmes such as Microsoft Outlook Express provide a FREE facility to automatically block and delete any messages with “naughty” words in their subject line or in the text of the message. They can also block identified senders of such messages.</p> | <p>DELETE THEM. Take no chances - do not click on website links in e-mails from unknown sources.</p> |
| 15. | Timeshare Offer | <p>Buying & Selling Timeshare Holidays You may be approached by telephone or in a hotel or on a beach and told that you have won a “free” holiday or a prize to get you to go to a presentation. Be very wary of the hard sell – ask for time to think it over and get independent advice. Do not be afraid or embarrassed to walk out if it is not what you want. Never sign anything you don’t understand, no matter how much you are pressured. Do not pay in advance. It is now illegal for a seller to take money on the spot. Insist that any promises are put in writing there and then. Remember if it seems to good to be true, it usually is. Re-selling timeshares is often difficult, so beware of callers who claim to have a buyer for your timeshare. Do not pay any fees in advance.</p> | <p>Request leaflet OFT670 from the Office of Fair Trading Tel: 0870 60 60 321 or www.of.gov.uk</p> <p>Report evidence of malpractice to OFT Tel: 08457 22 44 99</p> |
| 16. | Unwanted Mail | <p>Unsolicited Goods, Mail Shots, Faxes and Phone Calls Under the Unsolicited Goods & Services Act 1971 (as amended) it is an offence to demand payment for goods known to be unsolicited, that is they were sent to a person without any prior request made by them or on their behalf. Such goods may be retained as an unconditional gift and you do not have to pay for or return any unwanted goods.</p> <p>To reduce unsolicited mail, consumers may register with the Mailing Preference Service now operated by the Direct Marketing Association.</p> <p>Similarly for unwanted faxes and phone calls register with the Fax Preference Service and the Telephone Preference Service run by DMA.</p> | <p>If you receive demands for payment, report to N. Yorks. Trading Standards Tel: 0845 330 3313 Fax: 01609 768649 E-mail to: trading.standards@northyorks.gov.uk DMA Preference Services Freepost 22, London W1E 7EZ or www.dma.org.uk</p> |
| 17. | Virus & Worms From various countries | <p>Virus Attack through e-mails and attached files – recent examples: - <i>W32.Elkern removal tools; Worm Klez E immunity; A special excite game; Top class; A nice game: A good tool; Hello; How are you; See attached file for details; Approved; Your Application; My details; etc.</i></p> <p>Attached files that must NOT be opened include:- atm.scr, border.bat, details.pif, dif.bat, dif.pif, dif.scr, edition.bat, ewt.exe, href.scr, picacu.exe, rock.pif, setup.exe, setuplog.exe, setuplog.pif, taskbar.exe, tot.bat, and ynt.pif. In general, do NOT open any attached files with any of the following extensions: - bat, exe, pif, scr, vbs.</p> <p>Sometimes e-mails from a “friend” say that they have been infected and then explain in detail how to identify and delete the affected file in your computer. These are invariably hoaxes and can cause total malfunction.</p> | <p>DO NOT OPEN THEM. Contact your Anti-Virus Software Supplier – e.g. www.symantec.com www.mcafee.com www.ca.com/virusinfo www.trendmicro.com Update virus definitions automatically each week</p> |
| 18. | Web Site Listing | <p>Web Site submission to Search Engines Unsolicited e-mails offer to ensure “top listing” of your site on all the popular search engines for a “modest” fee. One e-mail even requests renewal of your “free” Top Sites listing – by clicking on to an unknown and unidentified web site. Most web designers and DIY programs already offer such a service. If yours does not, then use only reliable services that declare their ownership and location in full.</p> | <p>IGNORE THEM</p> |

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Harrogate Chamber of Trade & Commerce

PO Box 8, Harrogate, HG2 8XB Tel: 01423 879208 Fax: 01423 870025
E-mail: info@harrogatechamber.org Web site: www.harrogatechamber.org