

Information Network Bulletin

June 2025 Edition

Welcome to the latest edition of the Information Network Bulletin brought to you by Croydon Council's Trading Standards team.

In addition to general news from the team, it includes details of some of the latest scams and fraud alerts which we have become aware of in recent months.

We hope that you find it useful.

Beware energy supplier switching scams

Some years ago, energy supplier switching scams were rife. Persons would all at your door offering the services of a supplier and asking to see our last gas and electric bills to see how much you were paying and whether their supplier could beat the price. What the unscrupulous sales persons did, was take down your supplier account number etc and then switch you to the supplier that they were working for so that they would get commission for you switching supplier.

This service has received a report from a Croydon resident who received a telephone call from someone representing an energy supplier. The caller who appeared to know the nature of the resident's work and told them that this would qualify them for special discounted prices. They asked the resident how much they currently pay and asked for a picture of their gas and electric meters which the resident sent them. The caller then offered the resident energy supply prices that were higher than he was paying, so he declined. The caller said that he could beat the resident's current payments and the resident asked for this in writing and then contacted them to say that he was not interested in the offer.

A few days later, the resident received an invoice for energy usage, as the caller had signed him up to the new energy supplier and payments were then taken from his account.

Croydon Trading Standards remind residents to be cautious when they are cold called, whether they are being offered discounted energy or broadband prices or investments with fantastic returns.

**Remember, if it sounds too good to be true,
it probably is.**



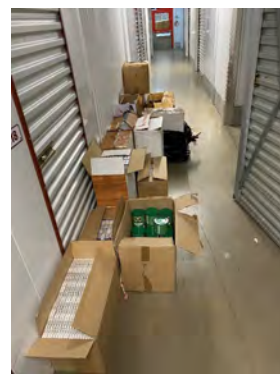
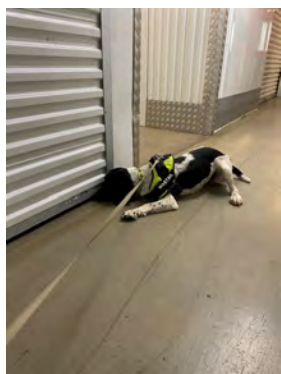
Illegal tobacco dealer faces Justice.

On 26th March 2024 during a proactive enforcement day, Croydon Trading Standards along with a tobacco search dog and handler, visited a local self-storage business to check compliance with products being stored there.

During the course of the visit the tobacco trained sniffer dog positively indicated on a ground floor storage unit. The person responsible for this unit was then called and asked to attend and open the unit. This he complied with, and Trading Standards then inspected the items being stored within it.

Inside this unit were multiple boxes which contained illegal cigarettes and illegal hand rolling tobacco products. In total 6300 packets of cigarettes and 34 tubs of hand rolling tobacco were seized from the unit. The approximate street value of these products would have been in the region on £38,000, and if they had been genuine, that figure would have been approximately £70,000.

Pictures of the trained search dog in action, and the products which were seized.



A criminal investigation into the person responsible for renting this storage unit commenced in early April 2024. After a lengthy investigation a Polish national, Mr. Sylwester Krauze, pleaded guilty at Croydon Magistrates Court on 10th June 2025 to multiple offences.

In giving judgement, the Judge took into account the representations on the potential harm to the most vulnerable in the borough who may be tempted by cheap cigarettes. He also took into account the defendant's good character prior to the offences and that he was in paid employment. He gave credit for the early guilty plea and apparent genuine remorse, and recognised the defendant was motivated by greed.

A sentence of 26 weeks imprisonment, suspended for 12 months, was imposed in relation to the offences. A condition of 120 hours of unpaid work was attached to the sentence which will be administered by the Probation Service.

If he commits a further offence within 12 months, or breaches the unpaid work condition, he will be brought back to Court and the suspended sentence will be activated.

Costs of £6,139.55 were awarded to be paid in instalments of £400.00 per month.

A surcharge of £154.00 was imposed.

Scamnesty 2025

Every single day people across Croydon receive scam mail through their letterboxes. Criminals use these fake prize draws, health cure offers, so-called lotteries from around the world and psychic/clairvoyant letters to try to part us from our money.

Throughout the summer we are asking YOU to watch out for this type of mail, and send any letters, you receive, free of charge to the National Trading Standards Scams Team; so that further investigations can be carried out by their team.

You don't have to pay to send your letters to the team, just put the mail in an envelope and address it to the freepost address below. No stamp needed.

FREEPOST, NTSST, MAIL MARSHALS

If you are worried about any letters that are being delivered to your home, whether they are genuine or what you should do with any offers being made to you in the mail, always remember that whatever it says in the letter, you should take your time to read them through carefully, to talk the letters through with a family member or a trusted friend.

Also, you can get free impartial advice from the Citizens Advice Consumer helpline on 0808 223 1133. Lines are open Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm but closed on Bank Holidays.



Illicit Tobacco in Croydon

Croydon Trading Standards are continuing our work to remove illegal tobacco from the borough.

If you are aware of any shops or traders selling illegal tobacco, which includes counterfeit and non-duty paid cigarettes or hand-rolling tobacco, foreign brands of cigarettes with no legal market in the UK and banned oral tobacco, or any traders selling singles, please report them to us.

The sale of illegal tobacco products undermines legitimate traders, puts peoples health at risk and puts traders at risk of prosecution and having their alcohol licence reviewed if they are found to be supplying illegal products.

The main way to report any issue to Trading Standards in the first instance is via the Citizens Advice Consumer Advice line on **0808 223 1133** or via their '**Chat Service**' or an **online reporting form** – all found at <https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/consumer/get-more-help/if-you-need-more-help-about-a-consumer-issue/>

Alternatively, you can email us at trading.standards@croydon.gov.uk

How to report a variety of scams easily



National Cyber
Security Centre
a part of GCHQ

Here's how you can report a wide variety of scams quickly

The National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC) sets out a number of different ways to report scams depending on the type:

- **Emailed scams.** If you get a dodgy looking email, you can report it to the NCSC by forwarding it to report@phishing.gov.uk. Remember not to click on any links within these emails.
- **Text scams.** If you get a suspicious text message, you can forward it to the number 7726 – this will allow your provider to track the origin of the text and arrange to block or ban the sender if it's a scam. You can also report scam text messages to report@phishing.gov.uk – remember to provide a screenshot of the text message.
- **Website scams.** If you notice a website or URL that doesn't look quite right, you can easily report the web page to the NCSC directly via its [online form](#).

<https://www.ncsc.gov.uk/section/about-this-website/report-scam-website>

- **Scam adverts,** including ads on newspaper websites, paid-for search engine ads, or ads appearing on social media. These can currently be reported to the Advertising Standards Authority through its [online form](#).

<https://www.asa.org.uk/make-a-complaint/report-an-online-scam-ad.html>

Stay alert when renting through online platforms

This service recently became aware of a resident seeking a place to rent who was scammed out of their tenancy deposit.

The resident was using a well known online platform to find herself a new property to rent. The platform is one where landlords can advertise their properties and prospective tenants express an interest and the subsequent references, deposits, etc can all be done via the platform which then offers protection to both the landlord and prospective tenant.

However, in this instance, once the tenant expressed an interest she started to receive all communication from the agent, apparently handling the property for the landlord, directly to her by text message or by WhatsApp rather than through the online platform. His email appeared to be that of a genuine letting agent based in South London.

The resident met with the agent, paid a holding and tenancy deposit into what she was told was the landlord's account, though she did not view the property which was quite a distance from Croydon. When she tried to contact the agent to pick up her keys she was unable to get through to him and there was no response to her messages and emails. When she looked at the online platform the property and all the details had disappeared and on contacting the office of the 'agent' they did not know him.

Avoid Summer Travel Scams

Money Saving Expert Martin Lewis warns of travel scams that cost the British Tourist millions of pounds every year!

Protect yourself from scams by watching out for clone websites, fake deals and bogus cancellations, as fraudsters continue to use a variety of sophisticated methods to trick holidaymakers out of their cash.

Below we've listed five common holiday booking scams and how you can protect yourself from them. For more help avoiding scams, see our [30+ ways to stop scams](#) guide.



Fake accommodation deals – if it sounds too good to be true, it probably is

Picture it...

- You're browsing social media when you come across a post offering a gorgeous luxury villa to rent – and, due to a recent cancellation, it's 25% off. All you need to do to secure it is pay a deposit using a reputable money transfer service.
- You've found a listing for a charming cottage on a popular holiday booking website. It looks like the perfect home away from home – and it's much cheaper than other properties in the area. The host asks if you wouldn't mind paying them directly by bank transfer as it's cheaper for them that way – they'll even give you a discount.
- You're looking for a glamping break online but all the spots you've checked are fully booked for the summer. Then you come across an advert on social media showing last-minute availability. You click through and everything looks as expected, so you go ahead and book. You're reassured when a confirmation email pops into your inbox minutes later.

Sadly, these are all examples of accommodation scams – which are among the most common types of holiday fraud, according to travel industry body ABTA. Criminals can hack into legitimate accounts and post scam ads on social media, all in an attempt to steal your cash. In the worst cases, you may turn up only to find the accommodation you booked isn't available – or doesn't exist.

You should also beware of cloned websites

Fraudsters can also set up convincing fake websites that duplicate legitimate sites – sometimes down to the smallest detail. They can then use these to steal your money or harvest your personal information or payment details. According to TSB, fake website scams are one of the most prevalent tactics the bank is aware of fraudsters using including fake AirBNB listings, clone Booking.com websites, discounted flight tickets on social media, 'problems' arising with a booking asking you book again, bogus cancellation refunds that require your banking and personal details and sham giveaways which require you persona details to enter.

For the full article with tips on how to avoid travel scams visit:

<https://www.moneysavingexpert.com/news/2025/05/holiday-booking-scams/>

The Cost of Beauty - 2025

The Chartered Trading Standards Institute (CTSI) has launched a renewed campaign to warn consumers about the potential dangers of using certain illegal and unsafe cosmetic products.

With more people opting to save money by doing their cosmetic treatments at home, CTSI is spotlighting the serious - even life-altering - effects that can happen when opting for illegal products, or when products are not administered by a trained professional.



We all know that professional salon services can be very pricey and it can be tempting to take matters into your own hands. However, trying any of these treatments at home with unregulated, potentially dangerous products is simply not worth the risk to your health and safety.

A recent survey of Trading Standards officers found that unsafe cosmetic products are the biggest emerging threat to UK consumers and CTSI has launched their latest '#CostofBeauty' campaign which raises awareness about the safety issues associated with three key cosmetic areas:

- Professional use Lash Lift and Tint Kits
- Nail Glue
- Nasal Tanning Sprays

Eyelashes



"At-home" lash lift and tint kits have become more popular but they come with serious risks. These products should only be applied by salon professionals and they should not be used at home.

The kits contain strong chemicals – like perming solutions and dyes – that can cause irritation and allergic reactions to the skin or eyes, which could lead to redness, itching, and swelling. If these chemicals should come into contact with the eye, they can cause corneal burns, severe irritation, or infection that could result in lasting damage.

Additionally, overusing lash lifts can weaken your natural lashes over time, making them more prone to break or shed. Without the correct professional hygiene standards, the risk of developing infections – such as conjunctivitis – rises.

Consumers are advised to -

- have "at-home" kits only applied by professionals
- consider alternatives, including mascara or lash extensions from a trained technician; and
- avoid overuse to not weaken your lashes

The Cost of Beauty - 2025 (cont.)

Nails



Nail adhesives, or nail glue, are commonly used to apply artificial nails or nail art. They are readily available but come with health and safety risks, particularly if they are not used properly.

Nail adhesives often contain ethyl cyanoacrylate or other acrylates, which may cause skin irritation, redness, blistering, or allergic reactions. The fumes from the adhesives can irritate the respiratory system, including headaches, throat irritation, and dizziness. If nail adhesives make contact with your eye, it can cause severe injuries.

Additionally, repeated use of nail adhesives can weaken your natural nails, making them more brittle, prone to peeling, and more likely to split. Peeling glued nails off can cause permanent damage to the nail plate. Applying nail adhesives to damaged nails, or incorrect application that traps moisture beneath the artificial nails, can cause bacterial or fungal infections.

Consumers are advised to –

- not buy nail glue online from unknown sellers
- buy nail glue or any other related products from reputable retailers
- apply in a well-ventilated application to reduce respiratory issues
- perform a patch test to check for sensitivity or allergies

Nasal tanning

As nasal tanning sprays are not considered medicines or medical devices, they are not subject to the standard safety testing regime. They are often sold on unregulated online platforms, where the consumer may not be aware of the risks.

Nasal tanning sprays, or nasal tanners, promise an all-over tan without sun exposure. Many products contain the synthetic hormone Melanotan 2, which has reported side effects of nausea, vomiting, high blood pressure, and a possible link to skin cancer.

Inhaling sprays can also irritate the respiratory tract, potentially causing coughing, sneezing, and nasal congestion. Repeated use could lead to chronic respiratory issues.

Consumers are urged to:

- Avoid nasal tanners entirely
- Understand the risks of buying products online
- Consider healthier, safer alternatives



Consumers can report any suspicious cosmetic products, or if they have experienced any adverse reactions after using a product to Trading Standards immediately by calling the free Citizens Advice Consumer Helpline on 0808 223 1133.

Find out more about the CTSI Cost of Beauty campaign at <https://www.tradingstandards.uk/news-policy-campaigns/campaigns/cost-of-beauty-2025/>

Rogue Traders are cold calling in your area



Rogue Traders are active in the Croydon area. They carry out leaflets drops, cold call by door knocking, or advertise on online platforms.

Please DO NOT engage with, or use the services of, anyone who cold calls.

Genuine, professional tradespeople rarely need to cold call – especially roofers or builders that suggest that they have spotted a problem with your property and offer to fix it for you!

We have had reports of substandard work, unnecessary work being done, work paid for that never starts, aggressive, rude and forceful behaviour. If traders are aggressive, threatening or intimidating, always call the police on 999.

If you receive a flyer and want to report it to Trading Standards, please take a photo and email it to us at trading.standards@croydon.gov.uk

If you require a trader, please look at the following Approved Trader Schemes:

Trust Mark - www.trustmark.org.uk/find-a-tradesman - 0333 555 1234

Buy With Confidence – www.buywithconfidence.gov.uk – 01392 383 430

Which? Trusted Traders - <http://trustedtraders.which.co.uk/> - 0117 405 4689

ALWAYS get several quotes in writing from several traders before having any work done. Ensure it includes a breakdown of costs of labour and materials and comprehensive cancellation rights, terms and conditions. If you have an emergency – please do not automatically use Google and contact the first results that appear – these are often paid for adverts and increasingly they appear to be linked to rogue traders.

If you have been scammed or duped into contracting with a business or a trader and parted with money, please report to Citizens Advice Consumer Advice Line on 0808 223 1133 or go to the following website to report online:

<https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/consumer/get-more-help/if-you-need-more-help-about-a-consumer-issue/>

Warning about winter fuel scam texts

Pensioners are being warned about scam texts falsely claiming they need to apply for the Winter Fuel Payment.

The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) has confirmed that the Winter Fuel Payment is now automatically issued, requiring no application from eligible individuals.

Eligibility for the payment has been expanded.

Fraudulent texts often request bank details, payment, or create a false sense of urgency with application deadlines.

Authorities advise vigilance and urge people not to provide personal information in response to these scam messages

If you think you've been scammed, take the following steps:

- If you've already responded to a scam, end all further communication immediately.
- Call your bank directly and cancel any recurring payments – or, for speed and ease, you can call the secure 159 hotline that connects you directly to your bank if you think you might be being scammed.
- Report the scam to the police through Action Fraud on 0300 123 2040 or report a scam anonymously on the Action Fraud (www.actionfraud.police.uk/)
- If you want more help, contact Citizens Advice Scams Action via the Citizens Advice website, or call its Scams Action helpline on 0808 250 5050.



Doorstep Crime Advice Leaflet

Croydon Council Trading Standards is supporting The National Trading Standards Scams Team, by supplying the latest Doorstep Crime Awareness leaflet in the languages most spoken across Croydon. We want to help even more members of our community take a stand against scams and be aware of this crime.

We have some printed copies of the awareness leaflets, in English, Gujarati, Polish, Portuguese, Tamil and Urdu, available from our office, or if you are able to download this resource yourself here is the link: www.friendsagainstscams.org.uk/resources-and-materials.

You can also learn more from a free online interactive session which helps further raise your awareness of scams and help protect you & your loved ones from these crimes. This training is available in British Sign Language as well as an accessible version for people with a learning disability.

Once completed, you will not only receive a certificate, but you will be armed with the knowledge to confidently speak with your friends and family about scams, and the devastating effects these frauds can have on people in our communities. Take the training here:

<http://www.friendsagainstscams.org.uk/become-a-friend/Croydon>

Is this bulletin helpful?

Contact Trading Standards to request a free door sticker advising cold callers that they are not welcome. If you are a victim of scam mail, contact us to receive a free copy of our toolkit on how to avoid falling victim and how to stop the letters.

Additionally, please let us know what you think of this bulletin and what Trading Standards topics you would like to see covered in future editions.

Contact Trading Standards:

Tel: 020 8407 1311

Email: trading.standards@croydon.gov.uk

Citizens Advice Consumer Service:

Tel: 0808 223 1133

Web: www.citizensadvice.org.uk

If you have a radio teleswitch or dynamically teleswitched energy meter

You might have been told by your electricity supplier you need to have your radio teleswitch (RTS) or dynamically teleswitched (DTS) electricity meter replaced. This is because the radio frequency it uses to switch between peak and off-peak rates is being switched off.

There'll be a phased approach to the radio frequency switch-off, starting on 30 June 2025. You might have problems with your heating and hot water if your RTS or DTS meter hasn't been replaced.

Check if you need to replace your meter

You might not know if you have a radio teleswitch (RTS) or dynamically teleswitched (DTS) meter. You might have one if:

- your house is heated using electricity
- you have electric storage and water heaters
- you get cheaper energy at different times of day, for example if you have a peak and off-peak rate for electricity

Your teleswitch might be in the same box as your meter or in a separate box. If it's in a separate box it will usually be black.

Check the box, it might have 'radio teleswitch' or 'radio telemeter' printed on it.

Important:

If you're not sure if you have an RTS or DTS meter

Contact your electricity supplier to check if your meter needs replacing.

Your electric heating and hot water could stop working if you don't have your RTS or DTS meter replaced before the radio frequency is turned off.

Getting your meter replaced

If you've been contacted by your electricity supplier they should have told you how and when your meter is being replaced.

Radio teleswitch (RTS) and dynamically teleswitched (DTS) meters are being replaced with smart meters.

You won't have to pay your supplier to install a smart meter. If the smart meter needs to be in a different place to your old meter, you might need to pay for it to be moved. Your supplier will tell you if your meter needs to be in a different place.

Smart meters can work in the same way as your meter does now. You should still get an automatic peak and off-peak rate and it should turn hot water systems on and off.

Your electricity supplier should recommend a smart meter tariff that will work in a similar way to what you have now, for example Economy 7.

If your new tariff can't work in exactly the same way as your current meter, your supplier should explain what will change. For example, if your peak and off-peak times are slightly different.

If you haven't been contacted by your electricity supplier and you'd like a smart meter - contact them and ask for one. [Check how to get a smart meter installed](#).

If you also have a gas meter and you want your supplier to replace it with a smart meter, ask your supplier. You don't have to have your gas meter changed if you don't want to.

If your gas and electricity supplier are the same, your supplier might be able to change both your meters to smart meters at the same time.

If you can't get a smart meter

You might not be able to get a standard smart meter installed if you live in an area with poor signal.

If you live in an area with poor signal, you might need to have a special type of smart meter installed. It will be pre-set with the times for switching between peak and off-peak rates.

If you haven't heard from your supplier and you don't think a smart meter will work in your home, contact them to check.

If you have a shared meter

If you think you have a shared RTS or DTS meter, contact the person or company you pay for your energy - this could be a landlord or management company.

If you don't replace your RTS or DTS meter

Your electric heating might stop working as you expect. For example your hot water might be left on permanently or your storage heaters might use electricity at a more expensive time.

Your supplier won't know when you're using your electricity, so you might be charged the wrong amount. For example, you could be charged a peak rate for electricity you use during your off peak hours.

Your supplier might stop offering a RTS or DTS tariff, and move you onto a single rate tariff. This means you won't get a cheaper rate for using electricity at night. If your heating system isn't changed it might end up costing you more than you expect.

If your electricity supplier tells you they need to replace your meter, don't ignore them. They should try and work with you to find a solution that works for you.

Other heating options

You could look at other heating systems for your home such as:

- connecting your home to the gas grid and installing central heating - this might not be possible if you live in certain areas
- installing a heat pump - this is a low carbon way of heating that uses less electricity, but it can be expensive to install

You might be able to get help with the cost of a new storage heater or heat pump, or getting connected to the gas grid and getting central heating.

[Check if you can get help making energy efficiency changes to your home.](#)

Get more help

[Contact the Citizens Advice consumer service](#) if you need more help - a trained adviser can give you advice over the phone or online chat.

The consumer service will be able to help if you:

- can't have a smart meter installed
- are being charged for a smart meter
- have problems with your smart meter after installation