

SPELTHORNE COMMITTEE ACCESS Now (SCAN)



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VACCINE FRAUDSTERS TARGET THE VULNERABLE WITH SCAM TEXTS

Vulnerable Britons are being targeted with fraudulent messages offering them access to coronavirus vaccinations, trading standards bosses have warned.

The Chartered Trading Standards Institute (CTSI) said that text messages had been sent out including links to fake NHS websites that asked recipients for bank details, supposedly for verification purposes. Such messages were first reported at the end of December on the Western Isles of Scotland, but the CTSI says they are 'by no means limited to the region'. Since then Slough Borough Council has issued its own warning to residents about text message asking people to 'sign up' to get the COVID vaccine through an 'application form' which asks for personal information and bank card details. Derbyshire Constabulary reported texts offering a link to an 'extremely convincing' fake NHS website but insisted this was a scam. It comes as the Government announced a target of vaccinating 14 million people in the highest priority groups by February 15.

According to the CTSI, the messages - which state that recipients have been identified as 'eligible to apply for your vaccine' - are the latest in a series of Covid-related scams in circulation since last March. Katherine Hart, lead officer at the CTSI, said: 'I have been tracking and warning the public about Covid-19-related scams since the beginning of the pandemic, and at every stage of response, unscrupulous individuals have modified their campaigns to defraud the public. The vaccine brings great hope for an end to the pandemic and lockdowns, but some only wish to create even further misery by defrauding others. 'The NHS will never ask you for banking details, passwords, or Pin numbers and these should serve as instant red flags. Do not provide any information to the scammers, but please also report suspicious messages to Action Fraud, or if in Scotland, Police Scotland, as this provides intelligence and assists authorities in combating scams.'



WHAT YOU CAN AND CANNOT DO DURING THE NATIONAL LOCKDOWN

On 4 January 2021, the Prime Minister announced a new national lockdown to help tackle the high and rising cases of COVID-19 across the country. Everyone is required to follow the new national restrictions, which include:



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1. Requiring people to stay at home, except for specific purposes.
2. Preventing gathering with people you do not live with, except for specific purposes.
3. Closing certain businesses and venues, like hospitality and non-essential retail.
4. Support children and young people to learn remotely until February half term, except for vulnerable children and the children of critical workers who may still attend school.

The new national lockdown restrictions are rules that apply to everyone and which everyone must follow. The full details of these rules can be found online at <https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus>.

As part of the lockdown, the Government is also advising all clinically extremely vulnerable people to take extra shielding measures to protect themselves. This advice will apply until 21 February 2021.

Whilst you are strongly advised to follow these extra precautionary shielding measures to help keep yourself safe, this remains advice, not the law. You must, however, follow the lockdown rules that apply to everyone.

Advice summary

Clinically extremely vulnerable people are advised to stay at home as much as possible. You can still go outdoors carefully to exercise or to attend health appointments. You are strongly advised to work from home if you can. If you cannot work from home, then you should not attend work. You may be eligible for the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (furlough).

Please make sure your GP has your most up to date contact details, including your home address and, if possible, a personal email address, so that we can contact you quickly in the event that guidance changes in the future.

If you need any additional support to help you follow the guidance, your local council may be able to help. You can contact your council and register for support at the Shielding Support website: <https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus-shielding-support>



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SPELTHORNE COUNCIL LEADER'S LETTER TO RESIDENTS AFTER NATIONAL LOCKDOWN ANNOUNCEMENT

The Prime Minister announced last night a new national lockdown would come into effect today, Tuesday 5 January. Full details on these measures can be found at www.gov.uk/guidance/national-lockdown-stay-at-home

This Council has been on an emergency footing since March last year and will continue to work tirelessly to support residents and local businesses as the coronavirus pandemic remains. We have in place support systems for residents who require it and our Support4Spelthorne helpline remains available for residents - please call 01784 446446 or email covid19welfare@spelthorne.gov.uk

Our ongoing response to Covid19 continues on a virtual footing and our services ensure residents still had access to the support they needed while maintaining 'business as usual' across our remaining services. Regular engagement with regional and local resilience forums over the last 10 months has ensured a coordinated and effective response to this unprecedented situation and we will continue to work with our partners through this latest stage in our response

While these latest measures are not unexpected, we recognise it has a huge impact on all our lives and it is not the start to 2021 that we had hoped for. However, it is clear from public health data and the pressure across our National Health Service that these measures are necessary in order to save lives.

I also want to reassure residents that there is a light at the end of the tunnel with the vaccination programme underway. Spelthorne Borough Council are working closely with the NHS and have been actively offering some central sites in our Borough to be utilised which will remain available should the NHS need them.

I want to thank everyone who has been following the rules to stop the spread of the virus but I also want to pay tribute to the essential workers and volunteers in our Borough who have provided healthcare, sustenance, education, support and safety. You have been pillars of our community and your work is truly appreciated.

Please play your part, stay home to save lives.



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COVID CHAMPIONS

Spelthorne Borough Council, in partnership with Surrey County Council and Public Health England. The Covid Champions are a group of volunteers formed of community leaders, Councillors and residents who will be working closely with the Council to help to support our communities by communicating clear and consistent messaging relating to COVID19.

The Council will be updating the Champions with the latest information and guidance about the Coronavirus pandemic for them to share within their own networks. Equally, these weekly briefings will be an 'open floor' for the volunteers to raise any questions and provide ideas to the group that the Council can action in order to best support and reach residents across the Borough.

Cllr Maureen Attewell, Portfolio Holder for Community Wellbeing, said: "As we continue to face the Coronavirus pandemic we know that there is a lot of misinformation out there which is why we are working even closer with our residents to deliver Borough specific and national up to date news.

"A Covid Champion is all about sharing key information throughout your own community. Whether through social media, posters, What's App groups or by speaking to your friends and family. By this information coming through a trusted voice, they can help people to understand what they need to do to keep everyone safe and informed during the pandemic".

To enquire further email covidchampions@spelthorne.gov.uk



DVLA URGES MOTORISTS TO BE SCAM AWARE

Disabled Motoring December 21st, 2020

The Driver and Vehicle Licencing Agency (DVLA) is advising its customers to be aware of scams as they have risen dramatically in recent months.

The DVLA is reminding motorists that the only way to access official information about DVLA and its services is by visiting gov.uk. The agency never asks for bank details via email and never sends text messages regarding vehicle tax refunds. Motorists are advised to report any suspicious emails they receive to the National Cyber Security Centre via www.ncsc.gov.uk/information/report-suspicious-emails.



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The DVLA five top tips for staying safe online are;

- to only use www.gov.uk when searching for DVLA contact details,
- Avoid websites offering to connect to DVLA's Contact Centre,
- if you believe you have fallen victim to a scam report it to the police via Action Fraud,
- never share driving licence images or vehicle documents online,
- never share bank details or personal data online.

The latest scams affecting motorists ask drivers to verify their driving licence details, offer vehicle tax refunds, highlight a missed vehicle tax payment, and request bank details.

This warning comes after new statistics released by the agency show a 603% increase in reports of fraudulent calls, emails and texts coming through to their contact centre in the three months up until September this year, compared to the same period in 2019.

Public reports of email scams saw the largest rise going up from 603 to 3,807, an increase of 531%.

Phil Morgan, Head of Fraud Policy Investigation at DVLA, said: "These new figures demonstrate that scammers are becoming more persistent in their efforts to target motorists. These more recent scams may at first seem legitimate, however they are designed to trick motorists into providing their personal details.

We never ask for bank or credit card details by text message or email, so if you receive something like this, it's a scam".

2021

COVID19 - TELL US HOW YOU'VE BEEN AFFECTED

Let us help to publicise your virtual meetings or activities.
Nominate any 'Local Heroes'.

If you feel you can share your experiences of COVID in one of our newsletter or on our web site forum.

Please contact me on info@spelthorneaccess.org.uk or via the website forum <https://www.spelthorneaccess.org.uk/forum>

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Staines Shopmobility

making staines accessible

Two Rivers (West Car park),
Mustard Mill Road,
STAINES, TW18 4BL.

Telephone 01784 459416

**Now open every Wednesday, Thursday, Friday
and Saturday from 9.30am until 4.15pm.**

**This is subject to change at short notice if
further restrictions are brought in by the
Government, so please check our website or
call us www.stainesshopmobility.com
www.facebook.com/stainesshopmobility**

MEMBERSHIP CHARGES

*Membership is available on a daily or annual basis.
Please contact manager for details*



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(CIO) 57628**

2021

DISABILITY RIGHTS UK (DRUK) – NEWS IN BRIEF

We are the leading charity of its kind in the UK. We are run by and for people with lived experience of disability or health conditions.

Our key decisions are made through our members who elect the Board of Trustees: and by our Senior Management Team.

We work with our members to influence national policy on independent living, benefits, education, employment, transport, human rights and other issues – shaping policy through direct experience and expertise. We also work with our local individual and organisation members to empower and to influence local policy and services. To contact Disability Rights UK (DR UK) see www.disabilityrightsuk.org/contact-us

Clinically Extremely Vulnerable Guidance - Updated

Government guidance for people who have been identified as 'clinically extremely vulnerable' has been updated today (Thursday 7th January 2021). Please click [here](https://www.disabilityrightsuk.org/sites/all/modules/civicrm/extern/ur.php?u=59155&qid=9078372)
<https://www.disabilityrightsuk.org/sites/all/modules/civicrm/extern/ur.php?u=59155&qid=9078372>



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Select Committee: Pandemic Effects” On Disabled People’s Access To Services

Disabled people have suffered a range of profoundly adverse effects from the pandemic, including starkly disproportionate deaths, says a report published today by the Women and Equalities Committee.

Committee Chair, Caroline Nokes MP, said “Disabled people who already faced substantial barriers to equal participation in society have suffered a range of profoundly adverse effects. Our inquiry heard extensive evidence from disabled people of the profoundly unequal adverse effects: our report makes the case for an independent inquiry into the causes.”

You can read more by clicking

<https://www.disabilityrightsuk.org/sites/all/modules/civicrm/extern/url.php?u=59156&qid=9078372>

Shaping Our Lives Publish Report Highlighting Disability Issues Raised By COVID-19

Lived Experience Alliance members Shaping Our Lives have published a series of key reports highlighting the disability issues that COVID-19 raises. "The voices of disabled people were getting lost, even while their “vulnerabilities” were mentioned almost daily in the news" This article highlights the need for action, and for a louder collective voice, which the Alliance are actively developing, along with our partners and allies.

You can read more

<https://www.disabilityrightsuk.org/sites/all/modules/civicrm/extern/url.php?u=59157&qid=9078372>

COVID-19 Vaccination: What Do People With Sensory And Physical Disabilities Most Need To Know?

Lucy Wills, our new Lived Experience Alliance Manager, has written a blog on the vaccination roll out and key information for disabled people.

<https://disabilityrightsuk.blogspot.com/>

Rail Replacement Vehicles: Extension Of Non-Accessible Period To 30 September 2021

The government has agreed to allow coach and bus operators who provide rail replacement services, to apply for time limited special authorisations for a period of up to 9 months from 1st January 2021 to 30th September 2021.



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Disability Rights UK's new Rail Policy Adviser, Stephen Brookes, said "I think everyone saw this coming. We seem to be busy saying 'I told you so' over so much going on particularly with Covid creating a reoccurring theme where accessibility is a growing victim of policy change and cost cutting. This is just not acceptable."

You can read more by clicking

<https://www.disabilityrightsuk.org/sites/all/modules/civicrm/extern/url.php?u=59159&qid=9078372> .

Blue Badge Permit 'Shocking Disparity' Revealed

A BBC investigation has revealed that people with hidden disabilities and conditions such as Autism and Parkinson's Disease are much less likely to be approved for a Blue Badge. Of 109 councils who responded to a BBC Shared Data Unit Freedom of Information Request, 80% had higher approval rates for physical conditions. In ten councils the disparity between physical and hidden conditions was more than 50%.

Disability Rights UK's Head of Policy, Fazilet Hadi, said "The unequal treatment of disabled people with non-visible impairments in the blue badge application process is truly shocking. Councils need to urgently review their processes."

"The current failure to provide blue badges to people with non-visible impairments is discriminatory and causing real hardship".

You can read more by clicking

<https://www.disabilityrightsuk.org/sites/all/modules/civicrm/extern/url.php?u=59178&qid=9078372> .

Government Recruiting Disability And Access Ambassadors

The Cabinet Office has announced it is recruiting Disability and Access Ambassadors to "help ensure businesses are doing all they can to support their disabled customers".

The fourteen posts will support government with their handling of the COVID-19 pandemic and also feed into the National Disability Strategy.

You can read more

<https://www.disabilityrightsuk.org/sites/all/modules/civicrm/extern/url.php?u=59160&qid=9078372>



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SCAN EDITOR'S Note - Ambassadors undertake this voluntary role alongside their day job and are not paid to undertake it.



SURREY LIBRARIES CORONAVIRUS UPDATES

In line with Government advice, libraries in Surrey will continue to offer Click and Collect and computer services under the current lockdown which started on 5 January 2021.

Please [check opening hours](#) before visiting.

Please check opening hours before visiting.

<https://www.surreycc.gov.uk/libraries/news-and-events/news/coronavirus#opening>

Addlestone will not be open until Tuesday 6 April 2021 as it is in a shared building that is going to be closed.

Keeping everyone safe

We are committed to keep you and our staff safe, so we have a number of measures in place to enable us to operate in COVID secure way. We are also working with the Community Partnered Libraries to support them and what services they can provide in the next few weeks. This will be confirmed shortly.

Computer access available

Please note: Computer access will not be available at the following libraries - **Bagshot, Bramley, Frimley Green, Lightwater, New Haw, Stoneleigh, Virginia Water and West Byfleet.**

Scanning facilities will also be available but only at the following libraries: **Camberley, Dorking, Epsom, Godalming, Guildford, Redhill, Staines, Walton, Weybridge and Woking.** Time limit of 30 minutes on the scanner PC.

Which Services Are Paused At This Time?

- Bus Passes and Blue Badges.
- Use of study spaces, seating areas and meeting rooms.
- Newspapers.
- Face to face events and Digital Buddy sessions.
- Photocopying.



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Safety And Social Distancing Measures

We have comprehensive safety and social distancing measures. These include:

- rigorous cleaning in our libraries and hand sanitiser provided at library entrances.
- limiting the number of customers in our libraries at any one time.
- clear signs asking you to observe social distancing.
- protective screens at counters where you need to interact with our staff.
- separating returned items from the rest of the stock for 72 hours in line with Public Health England advice.
- reducing the amount of contact needed. Services which require close contact such as event and activities, use of public PCs and bus passes will be temporarily paused or moved online.
- introducing a new self-issue system giving you the option to borrow items via your smart phone in the libraries that are open.



WAYS TO PUT THAT CHRISTMAS TREE TO GOOD USE –

www.Thrive.org.uk

Around 8 million real Christmas trees will need disposing. Many will go to landfill which has environmental and financial costs, the latter reckoned to be £22 million for taxpayers.

Thankfully landfill isn't the only option.

Get mulching

Chopping your tree's branches into small pieces results in material that can be used as a mulch. Mulching around shrubs, trees and plants protects the soil from rain erosion and frost damage. Also, while needles are a pain on your carpet, they can be just the job when scattered around plants that thrive in acidic conditions. Using your tree in the garden in these ways will cut its carbon footprint by up to 80 per cent compared to going to landfill, according to the Carbon Trust.

Add to compost

Productive compost heaps need a balance of green and woody material, so adding some parts of your tree to them is fine. But don't over-do it as the needles take a fair while to break down.



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Branch out

Christmas tree branches can be cut off and put around the base of plants and shrubs to provide insulation and protection from frosts.

Feed the birds

Birds appreciate help finding food at this time of year and a Christmas tree can make a natural feed holder. Before 'decorating', make sure the tree is secure in a pot and won't topple over in strong winds. Then add food decorations, such as apples attached to branches with string or scoop out half a lemon or grapefruit, put holes in the skin and tie to the tree to form a bowl which can be filled with seeds.

Encourage wildlife

Cutting your tree up and piling up the trunk pieces will create an environment that insects and wildlife will soon call home.

Replant

If your tree has a root, then giving it a new lease of life in the garden is a great option. Read these tips

<https://www.daviddomoney.com/how-to-plant-out-a-real-christmas-tree-in-the-garden/> on what to do from Thrive Ambassador David Domoney.

Recycle

JustHelping offer a festive tree recycling service which donates money to charities such as hospices. Last year £500,000 was raised by recycling 44,000 trees. <https://just-helping.org.uk/>



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