

## **Fake Government Grants Fraud Alert - 14.12.17**

Individuals and businesses are being warned to watch out for cold calls and online contact from fraudsters who are offering victims the opportunity to apply for Government grants for an advance fee.

To make the grants look legitimate fraudsters have set up bogus companies and convincing looking websites that claim to be operating on behalf of the UK Government.

Fraudsters cold call businesses and individuals offering the grant and if they're interested direct them to fill out an online application form with their personal information.

Once the fraudsters have that information they'll contact back victims and congratulate them on being accepted onto the grant programme.

### Pre-paid credit cards

Applicants are then asked to provide identification and are instructed to get a pre-paid credit card to deposit their own contribution to the fake Government grant scheme. Fraudsters will then contact victims on the phone or are emailed and asked for the details of their pre-paid credit card and copies of statements to in order for them to add the grant funds.

Of course the grant funds are never given by the fraudsters and the money that's been loaded by the victim onto the card is stolen.

If you receive one of these calls, hang up immediately and report it to us. We've already taken down one website fraudsters have been using to commit this fraud and are working with Companies House to combat this issue.

### How to protect yourself:

Be wary of unsolicited callers implying that you can apply for grants. You should never have to pay to receive a government grant, and they definitely won't instruct you to obtain a pre-paid credit card. The government should have all the information they need if a genuine grant application was submitted, therefore any requests for personal or banking information either over the phone or online should be refused.

### What to do if you're a victim:

- If you think your bank or personal details have been compromised or if you believe you have been defrauded contact your bank immediately.
- Stop all communication with the 'agency' but make a note of their details and report it to Action Fraud.
- If you have been affected by this, or any other type of fraud, report it to Action Fraud by visiting [www.actionfraud.police.uk](http://www.actionfraud.police.uk) or by calling 0300 123 2040.

The information contained within this alert is based on information from gathered by the National Fraud Intelligence Bureau (NFIB). The purpose of

this alert is to increase awareness of this type of fraud. The alert is aimed at members of the public, local police forces, businesses and governmental agencies.

***Message Sent By***

Action Fraud (Action Fraud, Administrator, National)