

FRAUD ALERT!



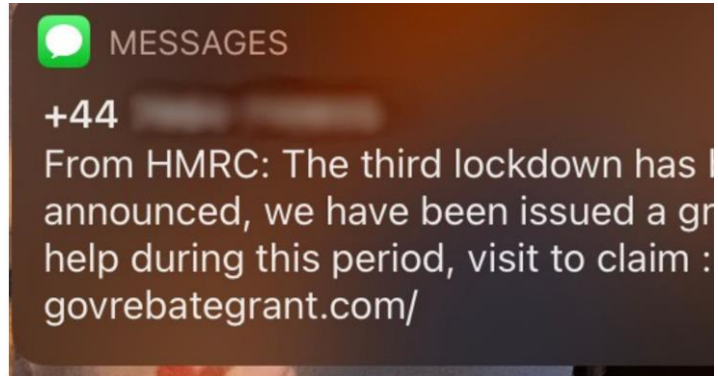
SWAP

INTERNAL AUDIT SERVICES

Investigations, Proactive Fraud Work,
Awareness Training

COVID-19: WARNING OVER TEXTS OFFERING FAKE 'THIRD LOCKDOWN' HMRC GRANT

A wave of scam text messages are being received across the UK, potentially duping people into giving up their card details in order to claim a non-existent government grant.



The Fraudulent Texts

We have been made aware that unsolicited text messages are being sent to members of the public purporting to offer a COVID-19 Grant due to the current lockdown.

The text includes a link to "claim" the grant and starts with the words GOV.UK or HMRC, suggesting the text message has been sent by or on behalf of the Government and is therefore an authentic message.

See example above, the fraudulent text claims to be from HMRC but links to a non gov website.

An HMRC spokesperson said: "HMRC will never offer a tax refund by text, email or phone. One way to check whether you are due a rebate is to log into your Personal Tax Account."

What you can do:

Fraudsters are taking advantage of individuals in need of COVID 19 grants, it is important that Councils take steps to prevent fraudulent activity against members of the public. We recommend the following:

- ✓ Alert members of the public to these fraudulent attempts.
- ✓ Encourage those who receive them to report them.

The National Cyber Security Centre advises: "Suspicious text messages should be forwarded to 7726. This free-of-charge short code enables your provider to investigate the origin of the text and take action, if found to be malicious."

HMRC advise: "Check [gov.uk for our scams checklist](#), find out how to [report tax scams here](#), and get information on how to [recognise genuine HMRC contact here](#)."

**PLEASE SHARE THIS ALERT AND HELP US TO PROTECT THE
PUBLIC PURSE**