

# Trading Standards



## UNWANTED MAIL, TELEPHONE CALLS, FAXES AND EMAIL

Are you guaranteed a prize?

Is there money waiting for you in a lottery fund, but you have never bought a ticket?

Are you the winner of a free holiday?



**STOP!**

If it sounds too good to be true it probably is

Most of us receive letters making these offers, however it is not uncommon for the senders of these letters to target older people. We are usually invited to send money to claim our prize.



Ask yourself some questions

1. Have I recently entered a competition?
2. They say I have won – Why do they want me to pay?
3. Do I know where the money I send is going?
4. What are they REALLY offering me? – **READ THE SMALL PRINT.**

Sometimes it is quite clear that the money you send is going abroad. You may be asked to send it to an address outside the UK, or the mailing will ask you to fill out a bank giro credit to a bank outside the UK. More commonly, the address will be in the UK usually a PO Box. **Don't be fooled.** This UK address is used only to collect the mail and the mail is forwarded to another address, often abroad. Even if an overseas address is given it does not mean that the mail stops there. It is not uncommon for the mail to be forwarded on again making it very difficult to trace.

### THINK

- If they are offering a large selection of prizes you are most likely to receive the cheapest of them – you may not get what you expect. **Read the Small Print.**
- If your money goes abroad and you do not get the promised prize it is virtually impossible to go abroad to claim it.

**BEWARE** – If you respond to such an 'invitation' to claim a prize, you are likely to receive more and more similar 'invitations' asking for larger and larger sums of money.

## WHAT SHOULD I DO ABOUT THIS?

One option is to take the letter to your nearest paper-recycling centre or put it in the bin.

If it appears to come from Europe, send it to the European Enforcement Team at the Office of Fair Trading. Their address is at the end of this leaflet.

Register with the **Mailing Preference Service (MPS)**. This is likely to help but may not eliminate all mailings of this type. Contact details are at the end of this leaflet.

If you are a carer for an elderly or vulnerable person – keep an eye out - If they are getting this type of mailing and you suspect that they are sending money, **show them this leaflet**.

If you have sent money and not received anything write again and complain. If this does not get a response there is probably very little else you can do to try to recover your money.

### REMEMBER - THESE OFFERS ARE MADE BY LETTER, PHONE, FAX AND EMAIL.

If someone telephones saying you have won a free prize such as a holiday be very wary. **DO NOT GIVE OUT YOUR CREDIT OR DEBIT CARD DETAILS. Be careful, only make payment when you know exactly what is being offered, what you are paying for and who you are paying your money to. The holiday may be free but you may have to pay for flights or expensive insurance. Be careful – it may be that you pay an administration fee' but have no guarantee of getting the holiday.**



Again – if it sounds too good to be true it probably is.

Registering with the **Telephone Preference Service (TPS)**. may stop such calls. Details are at the end of this factsheet.

Unwanted communications often arrive via your **Fax Machine**. You are paying for the paper! The **Facsimile Preference Service (FPS)** may be able to stop such faxes. Registration with the **FPS** is open to both **consumers** and **businesses**. Details are at the end of this factsheet. It is against the law to send unsolicited sales and marketing faxes without the recipients' prior consent. Be very wary of fax communications purporting to be from 'official' bodies. They sometimes ask that the recipient telephones or faxes back on a premium rate telephone number. If you are suspicious of a fax of this type, telephone Kent Trading Standards. If it contains a premium rate telephone number (090 prefix) certain information should be included in the fax. For further information contact ICSTIS – Full title and address at the end of this factsheet.

**These messages also arrive via your email.** Again be very wary and do not give out your credit or debit card number unless you know exactly what you are going to get and who you are dealing with. If you want to make a payment do so only over a secure link indicated by a small padlock picture at the edge of the screen. **There is now a ban on sending unsolicited email to individuals.** This type of communication is sometimes referred to as **spam**. These rules only apply to email sent from within Europe. Much of this email is sent from other countries. To try to limit this you may want to register with the **Email Preference Service** via a link from the **MPS website** - details at the end of the leaflet. Many internet service providers also take steps to



reduce it. If you receive **spam** also report it to your internet service provider. If you receive unwanted email and you believe that originates in Europe then report it to **The Office of the Information Commissioner** – Details at the end of this leaflet.

**Do not respond to spam emails, even by ticking the ‘unsubscribe’ button. The worst spammers have simply sent out millions of emails with addresses that they have made up. Your response may stop you getting that message again but it will also move your address to the list of known emails and will lead to you receiving many more.**

**IF IT SOUNDS TOO GOOD TO BE TRUE - IT PROBABLY IS.**

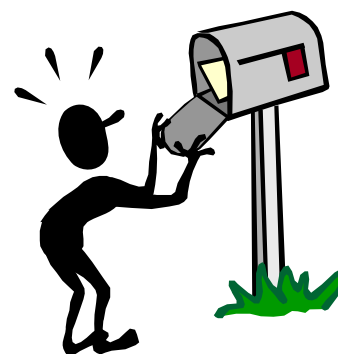
**Mailing Preference Service (MPS)**

DMA House  
70 Margaret Street  
London W1W 8SS

**Tel 0845 7034 599**

Fax 020 7323 4226

[www.mpsonline.org.uk](http://www.mpsonline.org.uk)



**Telephone Preference Service (TPS)**

DMA House  
70 Margaret Street  
London W1W 8SS

**Tel 0845 0700 707**

Fax 020 7323 4226

[www.tpsonline.org.uk](http://www.tpsonline.org.uk)

**Facsimile Preference Service**

DMA House  
70 Margaret Street  
London W1W 8SS

**Tel 0845 0700 702**

Fax 020 7291 4226

[www.fpsonline.org.uk](http://www.fpsonline.org.uk)

**Email Preference Service - contact via [www.e-mps.org](http://www.e-mps.org)**

**Information Commissioner's Office**

Wycliffe House  
Water Lane  
Wilmslow  
Cheshire SK9 5AF

**Tel 01625 545745**

Fax 01625 524510

[www.informationcommissioner.gov.uk](http://www.informationcommissioner.gov.uk)

**ICSTIS (Independent Committee for the Supervision of Standards of Telephone Information Services)**

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4 Maguire Street  
London SE1 2NQ

**Tel 0800 500 212**  
Fax 020 7940 7456  
[www.icstis.co.uk](http://www.icstis.co.uk)

**Office of Fair Trading  
European Enforcement Team**

Fleetbank House  
2-6 Salisbury Square  
London EC4Y 8JX

Email [euroteam@oft.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:euroteam@oft.gsi.gov.uk)

**Trading Standards Website:** [www.tradingstandards.gov.uk/kent](http://www.tradingstandards.gov.uk/kent)

**For further consumer advice please call Consumer Direct on the local rate number given below**

**08454 04 05 06**

