

# Essex Police Fraud Alert System

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31 July 2020

## Council Tax Refund

There are a number of emails still circulating claiming to be from HMRC/Local councils, such as the below example received by a Braintree resident. Some of the suspicious features to look out for include:

- Whilst the email appears to have come from a .gov.uk email address, holding the cursor over the email address will show it may be a Hotmail address or registered in another country
- The email is not addressed personally to the recipient but instead to their email address
- The email asks that the recipient click on a link which will likely link to a malicious site.

If you receive any suspicious emails, please forward them to [report@phishing.gov.uk](mailto:report@phishing.gov.uk)

**From:** [Council Tax - GOV.UK](#)

**Sent:** 15 July 2020 00:14

**To:** [XXXXXXXXXXXX@hotmail.co.uk](#)

**Subject:** You have a new message from GOV.UK about your Council Tax | You are getting a CTR. | Your COUNCILTAXGOV.co.uk #202-9336698- 6514752 of 1 item /Ref:/4mrmazi43

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You have a new message from GOV.UK about your Council Tax

Hi [XXXXXX@hotmail.co.uk](#),

### Working out your Council Tax

You'll need to know 3 things:

- the valuation band for your home in England and Wales or in Scotland
- how much your local council charges for that band
- whether you can get a discount or exemption from the full bill

You are getting a Council Tax Reduction (this used to be called Council Tax Benefit) considering you're on a low income or get benefits.

- Total amount of benefits: **GBP 385.50**
- The refund amount will be transferred directly on your Debit/Credit Card.

**Apply now to claim the reductions made over your past 5 years of Council tax payments.**

[Claim your Council Tax Reduction Now →](#)

The information in this electronic e.Mail message is private and confidential, and only intended for the addressee.

Thanks

The Government Digital Service Team

## Puppy Scams

We are continuing to receive reports about scams involving the purchase of a puppy (or occasionally a kitten). Criminals have been exploiting the Coronavirus pandemic and using it as an excuse to not allow victims to visit the puppy before asking that they pay a deposit. Many times, the animals simply don't exist.



Never release any monies until you have seen both the puppy and the mother at home—this includes if you are asked to pay a deposit to secure the animal.

More help and advice regarding buying a puppy can be found on the Dog's Trust website [here](#).

## 'Spoofed' Text Messages

We have received a number of reports from Essex residents this week regarding text messages that appear to have been sent from their mobile providers. These texts state that there is incorrect information on their account and to click a link contained within the text message to update this information.



O2: Payment for your latest bill could not be processed by your bank. Please update your payment information via: <https://02-update.billing902.com?o2=2>

**Remember** criminals are able to make their number appear as if it comes from a genuine organisation (known as 'spoofing') and these messages will even appear in a chain of messages that have legitimately come from your mobile provider/bank etc.

If you are concerned, contact you mobile provider via their website or a trusted phone number to confirm but **never click the link**.

