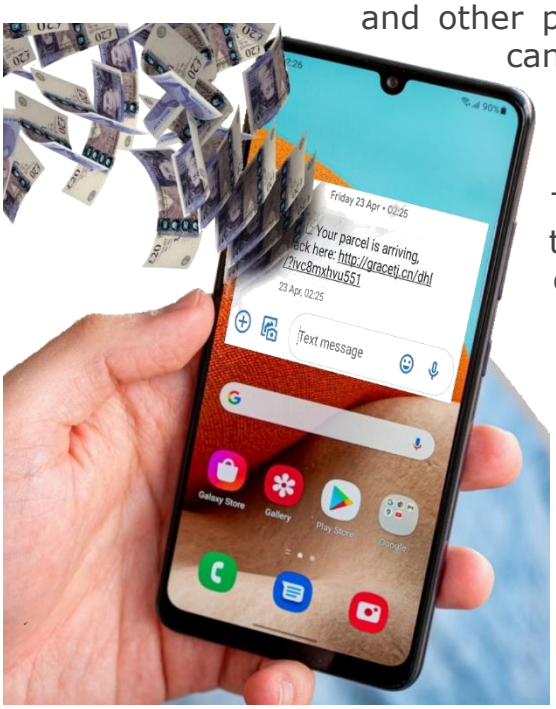
# SCAM and FRAUD ALERT

***From Hampshire and IOW Neighbourhood Watch***

## How to Avoid Text Scams and the Flu(Bot)

Over the last 18 months 'lockdowns' have meant we have increasingly looked to online services to buy and get things delivered. So it's no surprise that this has led to a massive increase in hoax texts pretending to be from firms like Royal Mail, DHL or Paypal, plus HMRC and even the NHS.




Texting has been recognised by scammers as currently the easiest way of contacting victims. 'SMS Phishing' or 'Smishing' starts when you get a fake text which includes a link.

Sometimes the link takes you to a very convincing but fake website to get you to provide bank details.

At other times malware such as a spyware app known as 'FluBot 'is sent to mobile devices.
This malware can harvest passwords and other personal information, it can also access your contacts to send out further messages.

The way spyware is distributed is constantly evolving to use different links, and masking the messages 'origins with different mobile numbers.

After you have provided info to the fake website or the spyware has done its job, you could get calls from someone sounding 'professional and friendly' about 'suspicious activity on your bank account' - and so the scam deepens.

**How to keep safe from this fraud**

- **Never click on *any* links you receive in text messages**, however legitimate they might look. If you're invited to track a package, or update details in an account, always visit the official website and log in that way.
- **Keep your phone's software up to date.** System updates help protect your phone from the latest security threats. Older, unsupported smartphones or tablets may be more vulnerable to spyware and malware attacks. Consider upgrading if you can.

Forward any suspected scam texts to 7726. If you think you are the victim of fraud or scam, you should report this to Action Fraud at: actionfraud.police.uk.

If you want help with any communication, our Cyber Champions are available to offer free advice. Just go to the Hampshire Cyber Watch Home page at https://hampshirecyberwatch.org/ and hit the red button: Request Support