

Warning over Council Tax refund scam

The London Borough of Barking and Dagenham (LBBD) is aware of a Council Tax refund scam that is currently operating across the country.

We have received reports of scammers calling residents and claiming that they're from the "Barking and Dagenham Council Tax Team" or "The Tax Recovery Agency".

These scammers will ask you to pay them a fee for refund on your Council Tax, in some cases they will advise a false refund sum of up to £2,000.

Scammers are often very persistent in asking you for your bank card details including your personal pin number.

As soon as they are challenged or asked to verify their details they will quickly hang up.

Scams can happen in several ways, either by phone, email, text or at the front door. Scammers may use several tactics to get you to part with your money including:

- asking you to pay a fee for a refund that doesn't exist
- claiming that you must pay a fee to challenge your Council Tax Band or that you must have an agent representing you to do this
- asking for excessive bank details including your pin number

The Council Tax Team at Barking and Dagenham would never ask you to pay a fee to process a refund or for basic information relating to your account.

The Council Tax Team will also never ask you for your personal bank pin number when dealing with a financial transaction such as setting up a Direct Debit or taking a payment.

If you are due a refund credit, we will always notify you of this in writing by post with details of the reason and the amount.

If you think your Council Tax account is in credit and/or that you are due a Council Tax refund you can check your account online via the My Account portal https://myaccount.lbbd.gov.uk/web/IL1_Login.aspx. You can also view your Council Tax account, set up or amend a Direct Debit, apply for single persons discount, make banding enquiries, advise of a move in or out and make a payment

You can also contact the Council Tax Team by calling **0208 227 2926**, or sending an email to ctax@lbbd.gov.uk.

If you are in any doubt whatsoever about who is speaking to you on the telephone you can contact our switchboard number to verify the caller's identity.

The Valuation Office Agency are responsible for determining the council tax band for your home and if you need to challenge this, you can do this free of charge, please visit their website <https://www.gov.uk/challenge-council-tax-band>.

The Valuation Office Agency have provided some useful information about Council Tax scams and what you can do to avoid them, and how you can check/challenge your Council Tax band free of charge. This information is available via their website at www.gov.uk/government/news/warning-bogus-council-tax-refund-scams.

If you have been the victim of a scam please contact the police straight away, and/or report it to the Action Fraud website, <https://www.actionfraud.police.uk/>.