

# SCAM ALERT

## High Risk

### Problem:

#### **WARNING: HM Courts & Tribunals Service Scam letter**

We have been made aware of a scam letter that has been sent to residents falsely saying that it is from a 'HM Courts & Tribunals Service'.

The letter states that the resident had been fined because they were *'found to be working against tax credit rules'* and because their children had a low attendance rate *'which is unacceptable in the UK'*.

This fake letter has HM Courts branding including their logo to make it appear more genuine. The letter threatens that £20,000 must be paid to a fake telephone number and threatens that unless money is paid their *'settlement scheme will be cancelled'*, *'stay in the UK will be prohibited'* and that the resident will be *'expelled from the UK for 10 years'*. The letter also uses very upsetting scare tactics stating that if payment is not made then the residents' children will be taken from them to *'an orphanage'*

### Action:

**Do not respond:** If you receive a letter that you think is a scam, ignore it and throw it away. Never reply

**Don't presume it is real:** HM Courts & Tribunals Service does not issue Penalty Charge Notices. Fraudsters will copy a business's logo and attempt to make the letter look genuine.

**How to spot a fake letter:** Be observant, often scam letters contain very obvious spelling and grammar mistakes, for example, it may say 'settlement' instead of 'settlement'. If in doubt do not respond.

**If you need advice or would like to report a scam contact the Citizens Advice consumer helpline on 0808 223 1133.**

For further information contact Stoke-on-Trent Trading Standards:

Public Protection Division, Civic Centre, Glebe Street, Stoke-on-Trent  
ST4 1HH