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For immediate release

Warning about Council Tax banding scam

New Forest District Council has been advised some customers have been contacted by companies calling themselves Council Tax Claims Ltd and Council Tax Review Service regarding their council tax banding.

This scam has been happening nationally. NFDC are advising people to be alert to these or similar tactics:

- charging an up-front fee of around £65, sometimes the company will refer to this as a finder's fee and then not challenging your band on your behalf.
- insisting you are definitely in the wrong band, when in fact your band is correct.
- saying they are from the local council and asking for your bank details so they can provide a refund. You may then find that money is taken from your account.
- claiming that you must, by law, be represented by an agent to challenge your band when in fact anyone can do this.

How to avoid falling victim to scammers

- remember that you can have your council tax band checked free of charge by contacting your local Valuation Office (03000 501501).
- inform the police if you believe that anyone is impersonating staff from your local council or if a cold caller refuses to leave your home.
- contact your local Trading Standards Service if you feel you have been the victim of a council tax scam.
- don't give your bank details to anyone that contacts you by phone or who calls in person.
- don't let anyone into your home without first seeing appropriate identification.
- don't feel under pressure from a cold-caller to pay an immediate up-front fee. Take the time you need to think about it. What's the rush?
- don't accept cold callers' claims that your band is wrong, without first seeing evidence of what they are claiming. There is nothing wrong with being sceptical.
- don't speak to anyone who is reluctant to give you their company address or contact details.

More information about council tax is available at newforest.gov.uk

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