

Fraud warning from SLC as new academic year approaches

SLC will pay more than £2 billion to 2 million students over the coming weeks and is reminding people to be vigilant. As payments make their way to students, the company is warning Freshers and returning students to not be tricked into disclosing personal details or clicking on links in emails or text messages, as they could be installing malware.

In the last three years alone, SLC's dedicated Customer Compliance teams has stopped £1.2 million being lost to fraudsters from students' bank accounts. The expert teams have a range of methods and fraud analytics to stop scammers in their tracks, but students need to know that they are the best and first line of defence.

Spotting a phishing email or SMS isn't always easy, but the Student Loans Company has some fraud facts to help:

- Check the quality of the communication – misspelling, poor punctuation and bad grammar are often tell-tale signs of phishing.
- Keep an eye out for any emails, phone calls or SMS messages you think are suspicious, especially around the time you're expecting a payment.
- Scam emails and text messages are often sent in bulk to many people at the same time and are unlikely to contain both your first and last name. These commonly start – 'Dear Student' – so be on guard if you see one like this.
- 'Failure to respond in 24 hours will result in your account being closed' – these types of messages are designed to convey a sense of urgency to prompt a quick response.
- Think before you click. If you receive an email or SMS that contains a link that you're not sure of, then hover over it to check that it goes where it's supposed to. If you're still in any doubt don't risk it, always go direct to the source rather than clicking on a potentially dangerous link.
- Scammers can use a variety of methods to try get students to pay money or share their personal details, including the use of fraudulent phone calls, social posts and direct messaging on digital platforms. If you are suspicious of being contacted, always use official phone numbers, your online account and official communication channels to verify the contact you received is genuine.
- Students should also be mindful of the information that they share about themselves on social media, and elsewhere online, to help guard against identity theft. Identity theft happens when fraudsters access enough information about a person's identity, such as their name, date of birth, customer reference number, course information or their current or previous addresses to impersonate them online and over the phone.
- Check out our guide to identifying a phishing scam at www.gov.uk/guidance/phishing-scams-how-you-can-avoid-them

Bernice McNaught, Executive Director, Repayments and Customer Compliance at the Student Loans Company, said:

“It’s no surprise that at this time of year students, especially Freshers, have a lot on their minds – getting to grips with classes and campuses, making new friends or exploring new surroundings.

“With so many things taking attention, it’s easy for students to drop their guard when it comes to mindfulness over online scams and fraudulent phishing. Unfortunately, digital scams, phishing and identity theft have become an everyday part of modern life, and scammers are all too aware that the three student finance payment periods in September, January and April each year are a prime time for them to try to trick students.

“Keeping money in students’ pockets is a high priority for SLC. Our Counter Fraud teams work to keep on top of the constantly evolving digital scams, to support students who may be in danger of losing their funds to fraudsters. The first line of defence against fraudsters is always students themselves. They can keep their account safe by following our simple tips.”

Customers in England should be aware that whenever their bank details are changed, they will receive an SMS from Student Finance England (SFE) to confirm the change. If a customer hasn’t changed their details but receives a message, they should log into their online account to review their information and also get in contact using an [official telephone number](#) as they could be the victim of identity theft and future payments may be blocked if they don’t.

There is also a range of additional advice and information on recognising and avoiding scams from Take Five, a national campaign aimed at stopping fraud: [Take Five – To Stop Fraud](#)

[Russell Agius has been appointed as a member of the Judicial Pension Board](#)

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Russell Agius has been advising on pension schemes for over 28 years. He is a Partner at Aon. He spends most of his time advising trustees but also has various corporate appointments. He has carried out secondments with the Department for Work and Pensions, the Pension Protection Fund and the Pensions Regulator.

The Judicial Pension Board (JPB) is responsible for helping the Lord Chancellor to manage and govern the Judicial Pension Schemes.

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Repeat burglar who attacked elderly woman receives increased sentence

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A repeat burglar who attacked an elderly woman will spend longer in prison



A repeat burglar who assaulted an elderly woman in her home has had his sentence increased to 4 years and 6 months' imprisonment as it was found to be unduly lenient after it was referred to the Court of Appeal.

Kyle Mark Thatcher, 30, committed three burglaries in Kent over a two-week period in April stealing thousands of pounds worth of goods. In the final burglary he attacked an 88-year-old woman who had disturbed him – pushing her over and causing an injury to her head.

At Canterbury Crown Court on 30 May 2022, he was sentenced to a prison sentence of 2 years and 8 months for the three domestic burglaries.

Following the sentencing, the then Solicitor General Alex Chalk MP, referred Thatcher's sentence to the Court of Appeal under the Unduly Lenient Sentence scheme as he felt that the original sentence was too low.

Thatcher's original sentence was found to be unduly lenient by the Court on 6 September and was increased to 4 years 6 months' imprisonment.

Speaking after the hearing, the Solicitor General Edward Timpson QC MP said:

Not only did Thatcher steal thousands of pounds worth of goods, he also injured a vulnerable woman trying to protect her home and belongings.

Those who break into people's homes for their own personal gain need to face the appropriate punishment and the increase in Thatcher's sentence sends that clear message.

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2020 Alexander Dalrymple Award presented to Vice Admiral Dr Harjo Susmoro

Indonesian Chief Hydrographer, Vice Admiral Nuridayat, presided over the presentation of the 2020 Alexander Dalrymple Award to Vice Admiral Dr Harjo Susmoro at a ceremony in Jakarta on 26 August this year. The award was presented by the United Kingdom's National Hydrographer, Rear Admiral Rhett Hatcher, on behalf of the United Kingdom Hydrographic Office (UKHO).

The presentation of the award was delayed by the pandemic and, following the easing of restrictions, the ceremony took place at the headquarters of the Indonesian Hydrographic and Oceanographic Centre, PUSHIDROSAL, in Jakarta.

Vice Admiral Susmoro was Chief Hydrographer of Indonesia between 2016 and 2020; he is currently Secretary General of Indonesia's National Resilience Council and the first Indonesian recipient of the award in its 15-year history.

Vice Admiral Susmoro was recognised by the UKHO as a result of his exceptional and inspirational leadership of hydrography at both a national and international level. He received the Alexander Dalrymple Award for his outstanding contributions to supporting the development of Indonesia's marine economy and improving disaster resilience in the region.

As Chief Hydrographer of Indonesia, Susmoro led the transformation of PUSHIDROSAL into one of the world's leading hydrographic offices. Under his leadership, Indonesia unlocked access to marine data through their national data portal and showed relentless progress in surveying and charting Indonesian waters. In addition to supporting the safety of commercial shipping in the area, PUSHIDROSAL's survey work unlocked new economic growth, enabling the first cruise ship visits to the islands of Lombok and Benoa.

PUSHIDROSAL played a key role in the search and rescue efforts in the aftermath of the tragic Lion Air flight 610, which crashed into the Java Sea in 2018. Furthermore, in the investigations after the Sulawesi earthquake and Anak Krakatau eruption, both of which caused deadly tsunamis, VAdm Susmoro led PUSHIDROSAL's contribution in developing and improving the tsunami warning system, helping to better protect coastal communities against such natural disasters.

Commenting on the 2020 Alexander Dalrymple Award, Rear Admiral Rhett Hatcher, UK National Hydrographer, said: "I am delighted that the 2020 Alexander Dalrymple Award recognises Vice Admiral Susmoro's outstanding achievements. After a delay caused by the pandemic, I am very pleased to have finally been able to present the award in rightful recognition of his work. Vice Admiral Susmoro's legacy is writ in the close friendship and collaboration between PUSHIDROSAL and the UKHO and I look forward to continuing our work so that

together we can support safe, secure, and thriving oceans.”

Vice Admiral Dr Harjo Susmoro added: “It is a real honour to be presented with this award. Indonesia has demonstrated itself as an active contributor to the region and to the international hydrographic community, and I am humbled to be recognised in this manner and extremely proud of the work of my team.”

Vice Admiral Nurhidyat, Indonesian Chief Hydrographer, further commented: “With the recognition of hydrography as an essential ingredient in the success of the Indonesian economy and the safety of communities, Vice Admiral Dr Harjo Susmoro led the development of technical skills and surveying capabilities both within PUSHIDROSAL and regionally.

“I am delighted that Vice Admiral Susmoro has been recognised with the Alexander Dalrymple Award and I am proud to continue his legacy, particularly in ensuring that the long history of friendship and cooperation between Indonesia and the UK continues to flourish.”