

Police and Council warn over bogus callers



Householders are being given handy tips to be alert to rogue traders offering winter home improvement services in the capital.

This warning comes as a new campaign, organised by the [City of Edinburgh Council](#) and Lothian and Borders Police, starts across the city this week.

At this time of year, the cold weather gives rogue traders an opportunity to target vulnerable residents, especially older people.

However, it is possible to prevent doorstep crime and there are some simple steps to help deal with bogus callers:

- if a trader knocks at your door, do not agree to on-the-spot house repairs, or sign anything there and then
- be wary of special offers or warnings that your house is unsafe
- do not make snap decisions; take time to talk to someone you trust before you decide
- never agree to give anyone cash and do not go to the bank with him or her
- ask for a written quotation, which includes the name and address of the trader, what work they propose to do and

how much it will cost.

Another helpful tip is for people to become nosy neighbours, as the single biggest deterrent for bogus callers is community vigilance – in other words, keeping an eye on neighbours and family.

Councillor Ricky Henderson, Health and Social Care leader for the City of Edinburgh Council, said: “Rogue traders will often target households around this time of year, offering all sorts of bogus winter improvement advice. We would urge people to be very wary about accepting anything from someone who has just turned up on your doorstep.

“These simple steps will help people, especially those who might be vulnerable, to think twice before agreeing to have any work carried out on their home.

“Another good way of preventing these doorstep callers taking advantage is to be a nosy neighbour! There’s nothing wrong with checking on your neighbours and older relatives to make sure they are OK and not experiencing any problems.”

Detective Chief Inspector Sara Buchanan, from [Lothian and Borders Police](#), said: “We are committed to tackling bogus caller crime in Edinburgh through Operation Aristotle, our dedicated bogus caller crime investigation unit with specially trained officers.

“As part of our preventative approach, we are asking people in local communities to be vigilant, and to call the police immediately if they notice any suspicious activity taking place in their street.

“This is particularly important for anyone with older or vulnerable neighbours, and we would urge people to look out for friends and neighbours who may be at risk.”

The leaflets are being distributed to Council housing offices,

social work centres, libraries, Citizen Advice Bureaux and community centres. The initiative follows on from the successful [No Cold Calling zones](#) which have been set up across the city to deter unwanted callers.

If anyone is concerned about door step callers, they should contact Lothian and Borders Police on 0131 311 3131 or Social Care Direct at the City of Edinburgh Council on 0131 200 2324.

More information on doorstep crime can be obtained from [Citizens Advice](#) on 08454 040506.