

Police launch 'Shut Out Scammers' campaign



Police Scotland today launches its Shut-Out Scammers campaign, raising awareness of offenders who cold-call people at their homes and scam them out of money.

Doorstep criminals may offer to carry out work at a reduced rate, asking you to hand over cash straight away and often in advance of any repairs being carried out.

While half of victims are said to be vulnerable, officers are warning that all householders can be targeted by such fraudsters, many of whom have a link to organised crime groups.

Officers warn that anyone can become a victim of bogus callers after householders lost more than £700,000 in just six months to doorstep scams.

Between April 2018 and September 2018 more than £700,000 was taken from householders through doorstep and bogus crime.

Those who lose money to such frauds can suffer both

financially but also emotionally, with the crimes leaving them feeling more vulnerable.

Chief Superintendent John McKenzie, who leads Safer Communities, launched the campaign today (Monday) at the Clydesdale Bank in George Street, Edinburgh.

He said: "Nobody is immune to this kind of crime. It is incredibly invasive and victims often feel embarrassed about being deceived.

"We take doorstep crime very seriously and understand the significant impact it has on victims. It is vital that people report crimes to us when they happen.

"Our Shut Out Scammers campaign will help us stop more members of our communities being targeted by those intent on defrauding them of cash or gaining access to their homes."

Police Scotland is working with a number of partners on the Shut Out Scammers campaign in order to signpost the public to relevant prevention advice and support services.

These include Citizens Advice Scotland; Neighbourhood Watch Alert; Scottish Fire and Rescue Service safety checks; Trading Standards Scotland; Victim Support and Care and Repair.

Local communities and staff within businesses such as banks, building societies and shops are also asked to remain vigilant and report any concerns they have about people being coerced to transfer money or purchase goods on behalf of a bogus caller or rogue trader.

During the campaign, Police Scotland officers will hold workshops and roadshows offering prevention advice to householders across the country.

Chief Superintendent McKenzie added: "We want to make sure victims know where to turn to so that they can receive all the necessary support and assistance.

“There is no specific look to a bogus caller or rogue trader. Be alert and if you have any concerns at all, do not allow an individual entry to your home, or provide them with any form of payment and do not hesitate to phone the police immediately on 101 or in an emergency on 999.

“Always ask for ID and only let callers in if they have an appointment and you know that they are genuine.

“If you would like to receive any of our advice and guidance on preventing crime then you can visit your local police station, call 101 or visit our dedicated webpage at <https://www.scotland.police.uk/keep-safe/personal-safety/Shut-Out-Scammers>.”

Nick Winterbottom, Head of Customer Support at Clydesdale Bank, said: “Clydesdale Bank is pleased to support Police Scotland’s Shut Out Scammers campaign.

“Fraud prevention is a top priority for the bank and we work tirelessly to educate our customers on how to identify a potential scam. We also have regular mandatory training for our branch staff to ensure they are well equipped to spot any concerning signs and support customers who have been the victim of fraud.

“If any of our customers have any questions or concerns, we would encourage them to get in touch.”

Citizens Advice Scotland Chief Executive Derek Mitchell said: “A scam is a crime and should be treated as such. The Scottish CAB network is always happy to engage with campaigns like this to help people avoid scams, and to stress the importance of reporting them.

“Scammers rely on people not talking about them to friends and neighbours, so the more we talk about this issue the better. If you have experienced any type of scam we would urge you to report it. If we all work together we can beat the scammers.”

William Clark, Community Engagement Officer, Neighbourhood Watch Scotland, said: "Part of Neighbourhood Watch Scotland's focus is very much about encouraging communities across Scotland to look out for each and to be resilient with regards to issues of crime, including doorstep and bogus caller type crime.

"To do this, communities need to be reliably informed and given proper advice from key information providers. By signing up to Neighbourhood ALERT you will receive free message ALERTS which are targeted, timely and relevant to you and your loved ones."