

Police Scotland launch #ShutOutScammers campaign

Police Scotland has launched its #ShutOutScammers campaign in partnership with Trading Standards Scotland to advise the public how to spot a rogue trader, or bogus caller, on their doorstep this summer.

The coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic and physical distancing guidance presents a unique set of circumstances to us all. It is also an opportunity for criminals to exploit the crisis to their economic advantage.

As limitations on movement and social interaction begin to ease and the ability to have outdoor work done at home and in gardens resumes, there is a concern unscrupulous traders may target the most vulnerable in our society.



Rogue traders and bogus callers operate throughout the year but incidents generally peak in May, June and August. Current restrictions mean more people are at home when they would usually be at work, and as a result they may encounter more doorstep callers who know householders will most likely be in

when they ring the doorbell.

Police Scotland is asking the public to follow its advice if they receive an unexpected, and unknown, caller at the door:

Always ask for identification;

Never feel pressured into making an on the spot decision;

Never hand over money on the doorstep.

More advice can be found on the Police Scotland website and via Trading Standards Scotland.

Superintendent Tim Ross, Safer Communities Division, said: “We don’t want to cause the public any unnecessary concern, but we are anticipating the criminal element within our society may use the current public health crisis as an opportunity to scam people out of their hard-earned money.

“It’s not always easy to spot a rogue trader or bogus caller so we are asking the public to take some simple, but effective action to stop them becoming a victim. Anyone can be fooled – these people are professional con artists.

“Always verify ID and research companies before agreeing to any work being undertaken. You can also consult your local Trusted Trader Scheme and it is always recommended to get three quotes for a piece of work.

“Never let anyone make you feel pressured into making an on the spot decision, and never hand over any money until you have received appropriate paperwork (contract/service agreement/invoice) and understand what the terms and conditions are.

“We are also asking people to look out for family members and neighbours who may be vulnerable, and may be seen as an easy target by rogue traders. Share this advice with friends and relatives – and encourage them to phone a trusted person, or

the police, if they are in any doubt about someone who has turned up unannounced.

“While this is likely to be a busy time for our officers, we are here to help 24 hours a day. Please be vigilant, and if you have any concerns at all, either for yourself, or a vulnerable family member, friend or neighbour, please do not hesitate to phone the police immediately on 101, or in an emergency on 999.”

Councillor Kelly Parry, Chair of Trading Standards Scotland and COSLA’s Community Wellbeing Spokesperson said:

“As lockdown eases, we are seeing an increase in doorstep crime. Scammers are taking advantage of people’s anxieties and uncertainties about the Covid-19 pandemic and are adapting their methods to the changing circumstances. Rogue traders go to great lengths to appear legitimate by advertising their services through company websites, glossy leaflets and social media and obtaining liveried vehicles and workwear with a company logo.

“The partnership approach between Police Scotland and Trading Standards Scotland is essential to disrupt rogue traders, protect consumers and raise awareness of these scams. It is more important than ever that we work together to shut out doorstep scammers and to ensure that legitimate traders can get back to work as part of the nationwide economic recovery from the pandemic.

“Trading Standards staff continue to work to identify and protect scams and to protect Scottish consumers.”