

Leicestershire Trading Standards Service

Doorstep Crime and Scams



Who we are

- Victoria Arrenberg – Trading Standards Officer (Unfair Trading Practices)
- Zina Visa – Scams Liaison Officer (Financial Safeguarding Team)
- Other teams cover:
 - » Animal health and welfare
 - » Food and metrology
 - » Business compliance
 - » East Midlands airport team
 - » Illicit tobacco



Trading Standards Priority

Protecting vulnerable residents from being victims of
rogue doorstep traders and scammers

To reduce crime and make communities safer

Contact details are at the end of this presentation



Objective

To increase awareness of Door Step crime and Scams

- What is a Door Step Crime or Scam?
- Who are the perpetrators
- What to look out for
- The impact on health and wellbeing
- What Trading Standards can do
- Contact Numbers



Who are potential victims of Doorstep Crime and Scams

- Individuals with cognitive difficulties such as Dementia and Learning Disabilities
- Physically Disabled
- Victims are often vulnerable/lonely/socially isolated/bereaved
- Evidence of neglect/Care and Support needs – neglected properties/ramps/rails



Door Step Crime



What is doorstep crime?

Where a person is conned out of money/possessions in their home by:

- Cold callers – by phone or in person
- Invited traders
- ‘Legitimate guise’ companies
- Opportunist
- Inferior work (sometimes no work at all) and charge exorbitant fees



A criminal offence may have taken place

Not just financial abuse but emotional



The offenders

Sometimes career criminals

Difficult to trace because they usually do not have fixed business address and are highly mobile

False names/addresses/mobile numbers

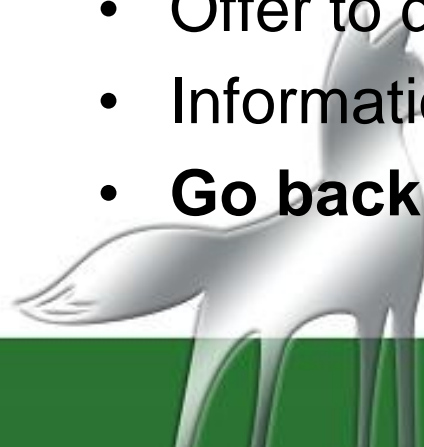
Professional flyers/leaflets 'examples of work'

Smartly dressed/ID



How do these **criminals** operate?

- Cold calling – arriving at an address uninvited / phoning to make an appointment and purporting to represent a legitimate company or care agency
- Say work is needed on a part of the property that the resident can't see
- Charge what seems to be a low price but £50 becomes £500 and the £5000
- Use high-pressure sales tactics - **COERCION**
- Offer to drive the customer to the bank
- Information passed to other criminals
- **Go back and back and back.....**



Patrick Hadley Doran (22)



- Bullied and intimidated elderly customers into paying for substandard work (aggressive trading)
- Victims in their 60s and 80s
- Demanded full payment half-way through completing work in an aggressive manner
- Threatened to dig up another drive with a pick axe when the customer refused to pay for poor work
- Tried to take another customer to the bank for cash
- 8 months imprisonment, suspended for 2 years
- Ordered to pay £900 compensation to 80 year old victim



Keith Shirley Matthews

- Keith Matthews from Quorn, Leicestershire, ran a TV aerial repair business where he was caught faking unnecessary work and overcharging customers.
- Was caught pouring a drink over an aerial socket to claim there was a leaky roof and on another occasion he charged an elderly man almost £4,900 for a job that should have been £490
- Leicestershire Trading Standards began an investigation after his appearance on the BBC programme and he was found to have been duping customers between April 2011 until March 2012.
- Guilty of 13 counts of fraud and fraudulent trading at Leicester Crown Court in 2013. Imprisoned for 3 years.
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RBog9q3PiHM>



Where do we get the information from?

- Citizens Advice Consumer Service (CACS)
- Police
- Banking Protocol
- Carers, Friends, Neighbours
- Adults & Communities
- Action Fraud



Contacts with Potential Victims

- Carers
- Regular medical visits/appointments
- Daily/weekly routines – Post Office/Bank/Hairdressers
- Meals on wheels service
- Community contacts
- Friends and family
- Clubs, groups, church
- Neighbours
- Postal services

Opportunity for many to identify potential issues



Taking 5 minutes to ask a question

- Met anyone new lately?
- Are you making some changes?
- I can see you have been offered the chance to have some home improvements done?
- Have they been recommended by family/friend?
- Have you got other quotes?
- That's a lot of mail you're getting?
- Can I look at that leaflet/brochure?



Advice

- Follow recommendations from family/friends who have had similar work done
- Obtain at least 3 quotes
- Do not to agree to anything on the doorstep, not to make payments in cash
- Do research on the company. Google check can show up reviews as people will not necessarily complain to Trading Standards.



What can we do for the victims

- Take appropriate action in line with the enforcement policy
- Reinforce the message that these are professional criminals
- We will carry out 'target hardening'
- Safeguarding referrals
- Provide door stickers, leaflets, guidance and dummy cameras
- Inform consumers about the banking protocol
- Information on victims of crime, befriending services, ongoing support
- Use social media and neighbourhood link to send out warning messages



We need to work together.....

- Trading Standards and the Police are the key agencies to deal with Rogue Traders
- Protect vulnerable people
- Cold callers are linked to wider criminality – Modern day slavery, People trafficking, distraction burglary, illegal money lending
- If a consumer is a victim of one crime, they are often a victim of another
- By Working with colleagues and partners we can help people remain independent in their own homes and possibly prevent a move into residential care



Scams

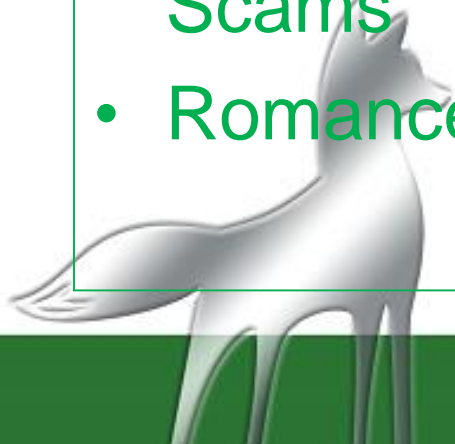


Types of Scams

- Telephone scams
- Mass Marketing Fraud
- Computer Scams
- Courier Fraud
- Investment/pension Scams
- Romance Scams

All target people for money through:

- *Emails*
- *False websites*
- *Remote access of PC*
- *Promise of large bonus/pay-out/discount*
- *Online/phone relationships*



Scam Mail



- Prize draws
- Sweepstakes
- Foreign lottery schemes
- Fake charities

How fraudsters work

- They can target very large numbers of people from the UK and overseas
- As technology evolves, scammers constantly change their methods and tactics
- Scams are increasingly being driven by highly organised criminal groups

Tactics include

- befriending and ‘grooming’ techniques
- seemingly professional documentation and websites
- impersonating a bank, the police or other officials
- threats or intimidation
- offering high value rewards

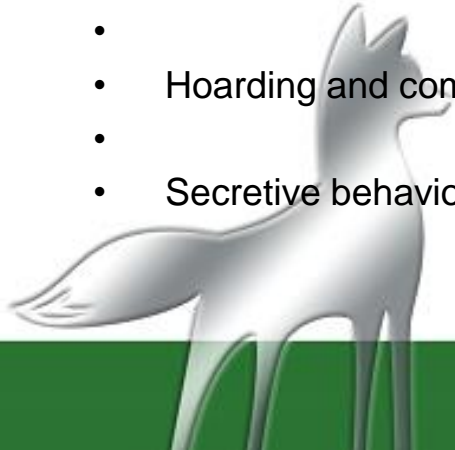


Why do people respond to scams?

- **Provide a financial gift for their family**
- **Boredom or loneliness**
- **Recently widowed or suffered a personal loss**
- **Inexperienced at dealing with personal finances**
- **Experiencing financial hardship**
- **Have impulsive characteristics**
- **Feel pressure to respond**
- **Habit, compulsion or addiction**



- Lots of paperwork/letters, stamps, cheque books, trips to post office, unusual cash withdrawals/transactions
- Unnecessary products, free gifts, vitamins, tablets, creams
- Numerous telephone calls, giving bank/card details,
- Poor quality or unnecessary home improvement work
- Final demands/being pressured for payments, time limited offers
- Change in circumstances - financial/relationships/poor living conditions/hoarding
- Change in character - behavior/self neglect/secretive/lying/isolating self
- Lack of self care and attention
-
- Hoarding and compulsive tendencies
-
- Secretive behaviour/telling lies



Trading Standards can help to protect against financial abuse by:

- Identifying and supporting victims of scams
- Providing information and advice on how the adult at risk can protect themselves
- Offering 'No Cold Calling' door stickers free of charge to any resident within the county
- Provide information on call-blocker devices for people who are bothered by nuisance or scam phone calls.
- Scam victims can be supported by Trading Standards through home visits if required
- Delivering scams awareness training to local community groups, professionals, financial institutions & care providers



- The County Council has supported over 750 Leicestershire residents, and through these interventions prevented over £500,000 of financial abuse
- Coaching to support residents to recognise they are a victim and take steps to reduce their vulnerability
- Liaison with family members to ensure suitable arrangements are in place, and contacting service providers to activate call-blocking services to reduce unwanted and scam telephone calls
- The installation of technology and other equipment to reduce unwanted and scam calls
- Liaising with banks and other financial institutions
- Safeguarding referrals to Adult Social Care
- The assessment of residents visited for referral to First Contact Plus



The Impact of Doorstep Crime and Scams



Door Step Crime and Scams are Under reported

Why ?

- Not understanding/accepting they are a victim
- Fear of repercussions
- Embarrassment and self blame
- Fear of the loss of independence
- Lack of mental capacity – increasing dementia rates
- Social isolation and loneliness



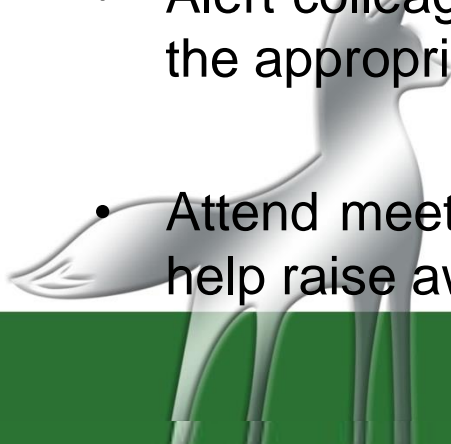
The effects of being a victim may vary but the consequences can be highly damaging and long-lasting

- Financial detriment, leading to debt and drop in day-to-day standard of living
- A decline of a person's physical health,
- Loss of independence
- Mental health issues such as anxiety or depression
- Decreased self esteem and motivation
- Estrangement or isolation from family and friends



Trading Standards will continue to :

- Accept referrals from anyone that has concerns about a resident being a victim of a doorstep crime incident or scams
- Improve public awareness of scams and fraud
- Remove stigma and embarrassment about being a victim of scam
- Work with vulnerable consumers and their families
- Alert colleagues to any potential safeguarding issues via referrals to the appropriate agency (attend meetings if requested)
- Attend meetings of partner agencies, services and organisations to help raise awareness of the role of Trading Standards



Please feel free to contact us if you have any intelligence about rogue traders, require our assistance helping a vulnerable consumer or want to discuss what our involvement in a case could be.

Leicestershire County Residents

- **E-mail: tradingstandards@leics.gov.uk**
- **Duty Officer: 0116 3058000**

Leicester City Residents

- **Email: trading.standards@leicester.gov.uk**
- **Duty Officer: 0116 454 3200**

Rutland Residents

- **Email: trading.standards@peterborough.gov.uk**
- **Duty Officer: 01733 453542**

