



From mountain to sea

# Trading Standards Bulletin

## Bulletin No. 57

The articles in these bulletins are based on real life complaints made to Aberdeenshire Council's Trading Standards department unless otherwise stated to make them as relevant as possible to readers. Names, exact addresses etc. have been withheld to avoid identifying complainants and to comply with GDPR.

### **Doorstep Crime/ Cold Calling**

One resident in south Aberdeenshire recently had a cold caller come to her door offering to do some work tidying her garden. The resident unfortunately accepted the offer and the cold caller spent the next couple of hours 'tidying' the garden, though it was not obvious later that any work had been done. When the cold caller was ready to leave, he charged the resident the equivalent of £100 per hour for the work.

In a similar vein, Trading Standards have received a number of reports about men in the Deeside area cold calling residents, on occasion, claiming to work for Aberdeenshire Council, offering to undertake roofing work or other labouring tasks. These men are described as having Irish accents and wearing plain hi-vis jackets. They do not work for Aberdeenshire Council. So far, thankfully, we've received no reports of residents employing these men. However, please report any incidents of men matching these descriptions, if they come to your door, to Trading Standards and Police Scotland as per the contact details below.

Our advice remains the same when it comes to cold callers; just say no. The risk, as highlighted by the cases above, is just too great of the work being of a sub-standard nature; the resident being vastly overcharged, the cold callers being given a deposit for materials and then never being seen again and/or the cold caller(s) returning in the future to try their hand again.

Please see the previous bulletin, no. 56, which details how best to deal with cold callers. All previous bulletins, including no. 56, can be found [here](#).

### **Scams etc.**

#### Window Scams

One resident in the Buchan area recently reported that he had seen a number of online adverts on social media, many claiming to be supported by the Scottish



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Government, which provides help to buy replacement or energy efficient double glazed windows and doors by way of grants or funding.

This resident had contacted the company concerned and arranged for a sales representative to visit and provide more information. Unfortunately, the visit quickly turned into a high pressure sales pitch where the rep tried to get the resident to sign a finance agreement up front. During this meeting, the rep's area manager became highly abusive on the phone, angering the resident to the point that the rep was physically ejected from the resident's home.

In truth, this was all a scam. Neither the UK nor the Scottish Government currently support any such scheme, though the Home Energy Scotland Loan scheme does provide up to £4000 (including £400 cashback) to improve SINGLE glazed windows.

Some other points to note about these adverts are that they appear to target over 60's in particular and there is usually a mention of funding of £2500 if the windows or doors are over 5 years old.

Should you see any such scheme on social media, please steer well clear of them as indeed it is a scheme but not of the sort it claims to be. If you are looking at ways to make your home warmer; reduce your energy bills or lowering your carbon footprint, a good place to start would be at Home Energy Scotland, which can be found at <https://www.homeenergyscotland.org/>.

### **Misc.**

#### Vapes Seizure

Over recent months we have seen the incredible rise in popularity of disposable vapes, particularly amongst young people, to the point that they are many vapers' first choice, replacing in part the more 'traditional' refillable e-cigarette. Such is their popularity that counterfeiters have moved into the market of manufacturing and distributing thousands of these devices all over the country.

Salford City Council Trading Standards team recently had a notable success when they seized 77000 of these disposable devices in a single raid, many of which were found to be counterfeit. Details of the seizure can be found in a recent edition of the Journal of Trading Standards [here](#)

#### Sales Calls

Trading Standards frequently receives complaints about high pressure sales calls made to members of the public, often when they are registered with the Telephone Preference Service (TPS). The TPS is designed to prevent such

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calls. One such company, Green Logic UK, recently fell foul of the Information Commissioner's Office for repeatedly failing to adhere to the rules for these calls; almost 12000 in total. The ICO took a dim view of this and imposed a penalty on Green Logic UK to the tune of £40 000. Full details can be found [here](#)

### **Conclusion**

Please note that the advice given in these bulletins has been deliberately kept simple, so that if you are faced with a scenario such as the ones discussed here where fear, panic and alarm are often tools used deliberately by scammers, you will know what to do at that time. Remember, after the initial panic is over, you may have rights which Trading Standards can help you with. We can also help you with advice about any article mentioned in these bulletins.

If you have been the victim of a Doorstep Crime or an attempted crime, whether Bogus Caller or Rogue Trader, please report the matter to Consumer Advice Scotland so that Trading Standards can build a detailed, ongoing picture of the activities of these scammers throughout the Shire. This would be a great help to us to tackle this sort of crime.

If you have any information to share about the unlawful sale of tobacco or disposable vapes, please use the Contact Info below to pass that information to Trading Standards. If you would prefer, you can report the information anonymously to Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111.

### **Contact Info**

For non-urgent Trading Standards enquiries in Aberdeenshire, please contact Consumer Advice Scotland at <https://www.consumeradvice.scot/> or on 0808 164 6000. For urgent Trading Standards matters, contact Aberdeenshire Council's Trading Standards at 01467 537222.

Aberdeen City Council's Trading Standards department can be contacted by calling 0300 0200 292 or e-mailing [tradingstandards@aberdeencity.gov.uk](mailto:tradingstandards@aberdeencity.gov.uk)

Contact Police Scotland on 999 if you need urgent Police assistance or 101 for non-urgent matters.

For more information about scams please visit Friends Against Scams at <https://www.friendsagainstscams.org.uk/> or Take Five at <https://takefive-stopfraud.org.uk/>



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Please direct any media queries to [news@aberdeenshire.gov.uk](mailto:news@aberdeenshire.gov.uk) or 01467 538222 during office hours.

All previous Trading Standards bulletins can be found at:  
<http://publications.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/dataset/trading-standards-crime-and-scams-bulletin>