



From mountain to sea

# Doorstep Callers and Scams

## Bulletin No. 67

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 so please feel free to share the contents with friends, family, neighbours or community groups you are a part of.

### Doorstep Callers

Nothing to report but here is a message from the Shut Out Scammers campaign 2023.



### Scams etc.

#### Amazon Prime Scam

Trading Standards have received a number of reports recently from around the Shire from residents who have received automated telephone calls, allegedly from Amazon, advising them that their Amazon Prime account has expired and that their bank cards have been charged a £95 renewal fee. If the call recipient has any concerns they are urged to press the numbers 1 or 2 on their keypad to speak to Customer Support staff.

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In some instances, the recipients do not even have Amazon Prime accounts or the Caller Display shows a local number calling (Banchory).

In truth this matter is a scam and has nothing to do with Amazon. In all likelihood, if a recipient does press the number 1 or 2 on their keypad, they will be taken to a premium tariff number where they will be kept on hold for a lengthy period before hanging up in frustration or being cut off. Later they will see a hefty phone bill due to this call. (This latter part is speculation and based on previous experience as, so far, we're pleased to advise that we've received no reports of anyone actually pressing 1 or 2.)

Some points to remember:

- This scam has nothing to do with Amazon and recipients are receiving calls at random, whether they have Amazon Prime accounts or not,
- Don't be fooled by the Caller Display showing a local number. These calls are probably coming from abroad and when Trading Standards have called the 'local number' back, we've been advised that the number is not in service,
- DO NOT press 1 or 2 or otherwise follow the instructions in the call,
- Try to note the number the call is coming from,
- Then – hang up,
- If you are concerned about possible payments being taken from your bank account or bank card, instead call the Stop Scams 159 number to report your concerns to your bank, or call your bank direct. Further information about this number can be found [here](#),
- Report the matter to Trading Standards using the contact information at the end of this bulletin.

### Amazon Gift Card scam

Staying with Amazon, a resident in the Buchan area recently received a phone call from a well-spoken young woman with an Asian accent who was on a mobile number. This woman claimed that someone had been buying Amazon gift cards on the resident's Amazon account with his Visa card and had bought £900 worth of cards so far.

The woman passed the resident to a 'colleague', a well-spoken man with an English accent who tried to obtain more information from the resident. Both callers were friendly and polite. Realising at this point that it was a scam, the resident hung up on the caller and blocked the number.

It appears that the couple were looking to obtain details from the resident of their Amazon account and Visa card, so that they could go on a spending spree at the resident's expense.



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Some points to consider:

- This was indeed a scam but had nothing to do with Amazon or Visa,
- This appears to be a variation of the 'safe account' scam where scammers call up their victims, pass them some alarming news to panic them into acting hastily and revealing financial information which the scammers then use to steal from the victim,
- Amazon and Visa (or banks for that matter) will not call people up from mobile numbers,
- If you receive a call like this please DO NOT provide any financial information to the caller, they may try to steal from your account(s),
- If you have an Amazon account, please DO NOT provide any details about it to the caller, they may try to access your account to make purchases and have them sent to another address,
- If you have any unused Amazon vouchers, DO NOT provide the details of these to the caller, the caller may try to use them to make purchases on Amazon for themselves,
- If you receive a call like this, it's a scam. HANG UP as soon as you realise it's a scam,
- If you can, do what this resident did and note the caller's number, then block it,
- If you are still concerned about the call, call the 159 Stop Scams phone number (see above for details),
- Report the matter to Trading Standards so that we can alert other people through this bulletin. Contact details are at the bottom of the bulletin.

### **Misc.**

#### Call Blocker devices

The National Trading Standards Scam Team have secured a number of call blocking devices that can be provided to vulnerable consumers, free of charge, who have been defrauded by a telephone scammer or who have been left unsettled and anxious by these unwanted calls. If you, a relative or someone you know would benefit from one of these devices, please contact us on [trading.standards@aberdeenshire.gov.uk](mailto:trading.standards@aberdeenshire.gov.uk) so we can discuss further and perhaps apply for one on your behalf.

### **Conclusion**

Please note that the advice given in these bulletins has been deliberately kept simple, so that if you are faced with such a scenario where fear, alarm and panic



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are tools often used deliberately by scammers, you will know what to do at that time.

If you have been the victim of a Bogus Caller or other form of scam, please report the matter to Consumer Advice Scotland so that Trading Standards can maintain a detailed picture about scammers operating in 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/>

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>