

Community safety series - article 7

Play Your Part by watching out for bogus callers

With the warmer weather encouraging doorstep callers onto our streets, residents are being warned to watch out for bogus deals or offers to check services.

Statistics show that spring and summer is when unscrupulous traders or thieves posing as officials tend to target unsuspecting householders, some of whom will be elderly or frail.

Suffolk County Council Trading Standards officers are working with Suffolk police, Neighbourhood Watch, Anglian Water and others across the county to protect people from becoming victims of bogus callers.

You can play your part by keeping watch and reporting any concerns by calling Consumer Direct on 0845404050, or contacting your area Safer Neighbourhood Team on 01473 613 500, or visit www.suffolk.police.uk

Remember Lock Stop Chain Check (the four steps to safety)

- LOCK - make sure your back door is locked before you go to the front door
- STOP – think ‘Are you expecting anyone?’
- CHAIN – secure the door chain before opening it
- CHECK – ask for and double-check the caller’s identity. If you are in any doubt, don’t let them in

Tips for dealing with bogus traders

- Don’t agree to any work at your doorstep, or let the job start before you have a chance to change your mind
- Does the work really need doing? If so, shop around and get some quotes and personal recommendations before going ahead.
- A good trader/builder is always in demand, does not need to chase work by knocking on doors and will give you time to consider the estimated price.
- You have a right to cancel any contract signed on the doorstep within seven days. You must be given a cancellation notice with any work. If you are not, the contract is void and no one can force you to pay.

Did You Know?

About half of all bogus callers claim to be from utility companies such as ‘the water board’. Householders can check their identification card is genuine by calling Anglian Water on Freephone 0800 145 145 (24 hours)