



ISSUE 56

SCAMS AWARENESS NEWSLETTER

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WELCOME TO OUR

Monthly Newsletter

Doorstep Fraud



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The Scams Awareness & Aftercare Project collaborates with both Cheshire West & Chester and Cheshire East Trading Standards teams. Recently, both teams have seen a rise in doorstep fraud. In this month's newsletter, we'll be highlighting some common examples of doorstep scams and sharing top tips on how to stay safe and how to report this crime.

What is a Doorstep Scam?

A doorstep scam happens when someone comes to your door to trick you into giving them money or letting them into your home. They might pretend to be a salesperson, a tradesperson, someone official, a charity worker, or even someone asking for help.

Scammers don't always act aggressively—they can seem polite and friendly. But that doesn't mean you should trust them.

Common Types of Doorstep Scams:

- **Rogue Traders:** These are people who claim to have spotted a problem at your property and offer to fix it—often at an inflated price.
- **Pushy Door-to-Door Sellers:** Be cautious of sellers offering huge discounts, limited-time deals, or saying they only have a few items left.
- **Fake Utility Workers:** Scammers may pretend to be from your gas or electricity company but won't have proper ID to prove it.
- **Impersonating Police or Bank Staff:** Watch out for people claiming to be police officers or bank staff asking to see your PIN or cards. Real police would never ask for this information at your door.

- **Unexpected Deliveries:** Be wary of goods or packages you didn't order being delivered to your home.
- **Fake Charity Collectors:** These scammers pose as charity workers, often being pushy or unable to provide a registered charity number. Be wary of scammers leaving clothes bags for collection.
- **Strangers Asking to Enter Your Home:** Some may ask to come inside for reasons like using your phone or bathroom. Don't let strangers in without good reason.
- **Ex-Offenders Scheme:** They are often part of an organised gang, dropped off in an area to sell cheap cleaning and other products. They will target kind-hearted people and 'guilt-trip' them into paying large sums for poor quality goods. They also note vulnerable people's names and addresses and pass these details on to other criminals

Warning Signs of a Rogue Trader:

- **They Won't Provide a Written Quote:**
"If they refuse to give you a written quote, it's a red flag." Without one, it's hard to compare prices or contact them later if things go wrong. Always ask for a clear, itemized quote from multiple providers before agreeing to anything.
- **They Pressure You to Make an Instant Decision:**
A trustworthy trader will never rush you. If someone is pushing you to make an immediate decision, calmly explain that you need time to get other quotes. Take time to ask different tradespeople why the work is needed and why they suggest certain materials. Don't forget to ask friends, family, or neighbours for recommendations—they might know a good, reliable tradesperson.
- **They Don't Have a Website or Online Presence:**
Not all tradespeople use social media, but an online presence (like reviews or a website) can provide helpful information. However, even rogue traders can have professional websites, it's wise to search their name to check what others say.

- **They Claim to Be Working Locally, but You Can't See Their Past Work:**
If they're doing work in your area, ask if you can visit their other projects or speak to past customers. If they refuse, it could be a warning sign. A legitimate tradesperson will usually be happy to show you previous work and give you references.
- **They Ask You to Take Out Cash for Payment:**
DON'T pay in cash. You've no proof of payment. Never pay up front for work. A small deposit after agreeing on a written quote can be normal but don't make further payments ("for materials or wages") as the job progresses. Only pay the balance when the job's been completed and you're completely happy with the work.



How to Protect Yourself from Doorstep Scams:

You're not obligated to open the door to anyone you don't know. When answering the door, remember to follow these steps: **Stop, Lock, Chain, and Check.**

- **Stop:** Ask yourself, "Am I expecting anyone?"
- **Lock:** If you're not expecting anyone, lock any other outer doors before you open the front door. Some scammers work in teams.
- **Chain:** Use your door chain, but don't forget to remove it if someone with a key—like a carer or cleaner—needs access. Look through the peephole to see who's outside.
- **Check:** Always ask for identification and examine it carefully. If you're still unsure, call the company the person claims to represent. Use a contact number from a bill or directory. Don't feel rushed—if they're legitimate, they won't mind waiting. If you feel pressured or unsafe, reach out to friends, family, or the police. Ask them to leave if you feel uncomfortable until you have a friend or family member with you.

Other ways you can avoid doorstep scams:



- Never buy from door-to-door sellers.
- Ask [Age UK Cheshire](#) for a 'No cold callers' sign or get a printable version online and put it on the front door or in the window.
- Set up a password with your utility providers to be sure they're genuine. Ask your energy supplier if you can join their [Priority Services Register](#) for extra protection.
- Don't be embarrassed to say 'No' or ask people to leave.
- Never sign anything on the spot – take time to think about an offer, even if it seems genuine. When it comes to home improvements, it's always best to get several written quotes before deciding.
- Don't accept deliveries of anything you didn't order that's addressed to you. If you accept them without realising, contact the company they were sent from or the local police.
- Never hand over your bank cards, cash, jewellery or any other valuable items to anyone claiming to be from the police or your bank.
- Don't be afraid to tell a little white lie – "Thank you for the information, I will let the Landlord know" is a good way to get rogue traders off your doorstep.

Top Safety Tips:



- ✓ Install a Ring Doorbell or CCTV: A doorbell camera or CCTV can help you keep an eye on who's at your door.
- ✓ Don't Agree to Work Over the Phone or With a Cold Caller: Never agree to have work done by someone who calls you unexpectedly or shows up at your door without an invitation.
- ✓ Do Your Research: Don't just trust posts on social media or approval sites. Always check their background before agreeing to anything.
- ✓ Get Three Quotes: Always get at least three different quotes. Ask family or friends for recommendations too.
- ✓ Take Your Time: Don't let anyone rush you into a decision. Honest traders will give you time to think things over.

Useful Links:



Say No To Fraud – saynotofraud.uk
Buy With Confidence – buywithconfidence.gov.uk
Citizens Advice Consumer Service – [Consumer - Citizens Advice](https://citizensadvice.org.uk/consumer)
Stop! Think Fraud – stopthinkfraud.campaign.gov.uk
National Trading Standards - [Welcome to National Trading Standards](https://www.tradingstandards.gov.uk)



Report It:



If you've had a bad experience with a trader, report them to Trading Standards:

- Call **Citizens Advice Consumer Helpline** at **0808 223 1133** or their website [Report a scam - Citizens Advice](https://citizensadvice.org.uk/report-a-scam)

If a trader refuses to leave your property, or if you feel threatened, intimidated, or if they become aggressive, don't hesitate to call the **police on 999**.

If scammers are going door to door in your area, **call 101** to report to the police.

If you are affected by the content of this bulletin, you can talk to us. Our Scams Awareness and Aftercare Team can offer free support, advice and guidance. Contact our team today on:



01625 612958 (OPTION 5)



scams@ageukcheshire.org.uk