

From mountain to sea

# Trading Standards

## Doorstep Crime, Scams & Safety

### Bulletin 15

#### Doorstep Crime & Scams

- The Scottish Government's 'stay-at-home' order remains in place, meaning that leaving home is only permissible for essential reasons. The order applies to everyone in Scotland, so if someone has cold called at your home they may be in breach of the order and should be reported to Police Scotland for their consideration.

Unsolicited doorstep callers, along with other trades/works people, must adhere to social distancing, hygiene measures and comply with the Scottish Governments Covid-19 requirements for 'working at people's homes'. Restrictions placed on the number of people allowed inside or outside of a property must also be adhered to.

Further information can be found at –

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance/>

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-general-guidance-for-safer-workplaces/pages/work-in-other-peoples-homes-faq/>

- Aberdeenshire Trading Standards have 'No Cold Calling' stickers that can be displayed at homes to discourage cold callers and inform them that they should not be calling at the property and if they continue to do so they commit a criminal offence. If you would like one of these stickers, please contact the service using our details below.
- A resident reported receiving a message via Facebook messenger from a friend who advised that if they made an application to the Department of Human and Health Services (DHSS) they could be awarded a substantial sum of money. The resident was asked to purchase £1000 worth of Amazon vouchers and provide a note of the serial numbers to release the £150 000. A further £2500 was requested in Steam vouchers at which point the resident realised it was a scam. The DHSS do not run a scheme like this and no government department will ask for any form of payment by gift voucher.

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- Residents continue to report HMRC tax scams. One resident reported receiving a phone call informing them that there was a 'tax fraud attached to their name' and another resident received one alleging they were the subject of a tax evasion enquiry and that a warrant has been issued in their name.

More information can be found here –

<https://www.scamdetector.com/hmrcscamcall/#:~:text=It%20is%20also%20known%20as%20the%20Tax%20Evasion,and%20013%2032199360.%20This%20scheme%20has%20two%20variations>

- A resident was contacted via Instagram with an opportunity to trade in forex using crypto currency. A small amount was traded with this rising exponentially to £12000. When the resident requested to withdraw their money, they were told a fee of £3000 in bitcoin had to be paid.

Social media platforms are increasingly being used by scammers to target individuals who are looking to invest in crypto currency, shares and other investments. None of these will be regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) and losing your money is highly likely. A reputable trading or investment company will be regulated by the FCA and will not ask for payment to release funds and certainly not by bitcoin, any that do are most likely scams.

More info can be found here –

[https://www.fca.org.uk/scamsmart/how-avoid-investment-scams?qclid=EAlaIQobChMllvH0oJDd7gIViu3tCh0O4QfPEAYASA AEgLY\\_vD\\_BwE](https://www.fca.org.uk/scamsmart/how-avoid-investment-scams?qclid=EAlaIQobChMllvH0oJDd7gIViu3tCh0O4QfPEAYASA AEgLY_vD_BwE)

- A local business received an email purporting to be from a senior manager requesting a sum of money and bank details. The email address was very similar to the genuine email but there were subtle differences and it was these that alerted the business to the scam.

## Safety

Nothing to report.

## Contact



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

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

For more information about scams please visit Friends Against Scams at <https://www.friendsagainstscams.org.uk/>

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