

# 'Keeping our Highland Communities Safe' Avoiding Financial Harm At Home

Trading Standards  
Community Safety Enforcement Partnership

*Com-pàirteachas Cur an Gníomh Sàbhailteachd Coimhearsnachd  
nan Inbhean Malairt*

**WRSL Area Committee – January 2024**

## Doorstep Crime

when the bogus workman appears at your door

## Scams

when someone takes your money and they are not there

## Doorstep Crime – criminals at your home

'Flyers' offering exterior home maintenance works

Bogus workmen come uninvited

Low prices and guarantees are offered

Works are often 'expanded' to include works you don't need

The price increases

Poor quality workmanship

# Doorstep Crime – criminals at your home

Bogus workmen are often linked to –

- organised crime
- unauthorised encampments
- fly-tipping
- increased cost to you (of remedial works)
- damage to property

# What is being done

Enforcers share what we know

Enforcers work together

Awareness raising

Press & Social Media

Cold Call Control Zones

Banking Protocol

## Regular vehicle checks target criminals

### DETERRENCE

A little-known regular operation carried out by police and other agencies involves stopping and checking trailers' vehicles.

One of the aims of these multi-agency crackdowns is disrupting and deterring those who may be involved in doorstep crime.

The police, Highland Council trading standards, Scottish Environment Protection Agency, the Department for Work and Pensions and Yosa, are involved in the checks

trations, road tax and insurance are also checked, and inquiries made about what work the tradesmen are involved in.

One of the people checked during a recent operation in Inverness was Stuart McGregor, a landscaper for Red Moon Maintenance in Nairn, who said he had previously cleaned up after rogue traders who had done botched jobs in his area.

Darven Gilchrist, of Inverness stonemasons D.F. MacKenzie, said: "Something like this today is definitely a good



## Guard yourself and your home

As our series highlighting the fight against doorstep crime continues, Jamie McKenzie examines the pitfalls of letting cold-calling workers do jobs about the house and garden, and the difficulty of assessing just who you can trust

The summer is here and everything in the garden is growing, and the good weather encourages homeowners to think about some home maintenance.

Cutting back a tree or hedge, perhaps laying a new driveway, or clearing moss from a roof.

But the same good weather and potential for rich pickings from sunny residents also brings out a rash of bogus tradesmen.

At this time of year Highland Council trading standards are very aware that rogue traders will be out and about ready to take advantage.

It is usually exterior home maintenance work that they attempt, often with a very poor standard of workmanship, at an inflated price, and homeowners are left with no idea who they have done a deal with and so are left with no means of getting money back when things go wrong.

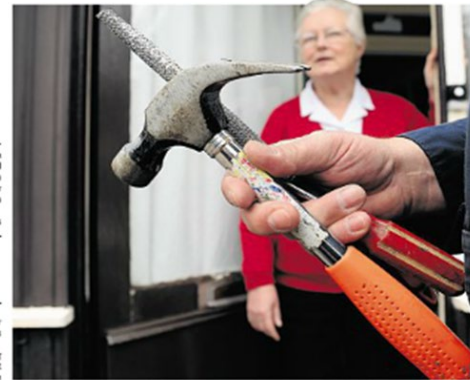
A common problem is

**"Do not be pressurised into accepting anything"**

trying to identify whether you are dealing with a legitimate tradesman.

Gordon Robb, trading standards manager at Highland Council, said it is vital that people know who it is they are dealing with before agreeing terms.

He said: "A big problem



TOOLED UP: Appearances can be deceptive, so always check out the trader's ID and firm they work for. Protect your home by always checking the trader's ID and firm they work for. If you are suspicious of those who are offering to do work for them, ask to see their ID and check out their credentials. If you are suspicious of those who are offering to do work for them, ask to see their ID and check out their credentials. If you are suspicious of those who are offering to do work for them, ask to see their ID and check out their credentials.



# TRADING STANDARDS

## Cold Call Control Zones

Dear Resident,

### CONSULTATION ON COLD CALL CONTROL ZONE (CCCZ)

An enquiry has been made by your local Community Council about the possibility of establishing a Cold Call Control Zone (CCCZ). If successful, this would mean that you would be part of this initiative. The first step towards setting up such a zone is consultation with residents in any proposed area. Your views are very important and you will be instrumental in deciding whether or not a zone is established. This is the reason for this letter.



The Highland Council  
Comhairle na Gàidhealtachd

### Buying on the doorstep

Protect yourself and the people you care about from rogue doorstep traders

### Dalneigh and Columba Community Council

**NOTICE**

This is a  
**COLD CALL  
CONTROL  
ZONE**

Uninvited Callers  
are NOT welcome here

**Feel threatened or in danger?  
Call 999 NOW**

TO REPORT CALLERS PHONE:  
Highland Council  
Trading Standards: 01463 228700

CALL YOUR LOCAL POLICE **101** IN AN EMERGENCY ALWAYS CALL 999



For further information on this initiative you can telephone 01463228700  
or email [trading\\_standards@highland.gov.uk](mailto:trading_standards@highland.gov.uk)

## Scams – criminals in your home

PREVENTION!

PREVENTION!

PREVENTION!

Protection of vulnerable adults from financial harm

Intelligence led victim identification

Partnership with:

- Police Scotland

- NHS Highland

- Third sector agencies

- Communities protecting themselves

- Financial Institutions

- Other Council services e.g. housing

## What are scams?

Cons, tricks... designed to make you believe, in order for you to give something, usually money, or information, to take money.

## What do they look like?

Scams take many forms, usually telephone, mail or email contact, usually unsolicited.

They target you in your home, getting there by normal means, usually because you have at some point given someone information about you, or your information has been given by someone else, which is then used to your disadvantage.

You will not see the person(s) behind the scam.



## Telephone scams

Nuisance Calls – legitimate trade calling you when you haven't asked trying to sell you something you don't want or need

Scam Calls – boiler rooms, overseas, not sales calls, single purpose – YOUR MONEY



## Mail scams

Delivered to you by a person you trust

Prizes, Lottery, Clairvoyants, Loans, Help me!, Diet Supplements, etc.....

## On-line scams

E-mail – the electronic version of the paper mail

Fake websites – what you see is not always what you get

# What is being done

## Telephone:

- TrueCall unit installation – if the phone doesn't ring...
- Nuisance callers being targeted by enforcement agencies
- Caller Id is free

## Paper Mail:

- Royal Mail interception – if the mail doesn't arrive...
- Scam mail victims referrals
- Enforcement agencies raiding Scammers premises

## Electronic Mail:

- Internet take downs

Trading Standards, Police, Banks, Royal Mail are working together

## Protecting Vulnerable Adults From Scam Phone Calls

Since 2017 Highland Trading Standards have installed 207 call blockers to protect older and vulnerable people from nuisance and scam phone calls. So far 89,751 calls have been blocked, and we estimate that 146 scams have been prevented.



# 17

average nuisance and scam calls received per unit per month



# 26%

of all calls received were nuisance or scam calls



# 99%

of nuisance and scam calls were blocked by trueCall call blocking technology

£2,364,021 benefits

Costs

# Benefits 28:1

### Cost-Benefit analysis

It is estimated that over the 4 year life of these units they will have blocked **164,217** nuisance calls (of which **45,152** will have been scam phone calls), prevented **266** scams, saved vulnerable households **£786,408**, led to a reduction of **£730,465** in NHS, social care & police costs, and an increase in wellbeing & quality of life valued at **£847,148** - total benefits of **£2,364,021**. The financial benefits of **£1,516,873** are **28** times the project costs of **£53,613**.

### Comments from those protected by the trueCall call blockers



This made a huge difference and enable my mother to live in her own home for longer



My mother no longer gets anxious and agitated. I cannot impress on you the positive impact this has made.



I thanks for making my phone my friend again!

## Difficulties in tackling the problem

- Victims do not wish to come forward
- It's often too late when victims do come forward
- Perpetrators are unknown
- Perpetrators whereabouts are unknown
- Enforcers have a very small window of opportunity

## It's difficult for the victims too....

- Fear
- Embarrassment
- Financial loss
- Distress and confusion
- Increased risk of repeat victimisation

# TRADING STANDARDS

## PREVENTION!

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## PREVENTION!

- Use caller Id
  - Only answer calls when you know who is calling
  - Request TrueCall installation
- Do not open unsolicited mail
  - Bin it!
  - Do not respond/send money
- Report it
  - Advice Direct Scotland - 0808 164 6000
  - Police Scotland – 101
  - Trading Standards – 01463 644570

## Remember

I've won the Canadian national lottery? How marvellous!



**If it is too good to be true.....it is a SCAM!**