

Rogue Trader Warning

Our friends over at Central Bedfordshire Council have informed us of a recent alleged doorstep crime incident in their area in which an elderly resident received an unsolicited visit to her home.

Whilst this specific incident was in Bedfordshire we want to remind you of the sort of tricks doorstep traders employ to con people out of their money and the fact that rogue traders travel across county borders, and indeed often travel a long distance from their place of residence to commit their crimes. **So please be alert and please warn others too - especially elderly and vulnerable people in your community.**

In this specific incident in Bedfordshire the caller claimed that he was working at a nearby building site and said that he had noticed that the resident's roof had some tiles missing and offered to help repair the problem. The caller asked if he could go into the resident's loft space to inspect the alleged damage more closely. The resident gave permission for this and after a short while the trader returned with photographs that he had apparently taken in the loft, showing daylight where a roof tile was missing. He also handed the resident a piece of torn roofing felt.

The visitor advised the resident that repairs would cost over £1000 with £350 required up-front to purchase the materials needed. The resident was concerned that the repairs were necessary and paid the requested £350 to the man who left, never to return again.

Unfortunately the resident lost £350 as a result of this experience but potentially could have lost even more had the caller returned.

It was later established that the caller himself had removed the missing tile and torn away a section of roofing felt to dupe the unsuspecting resident into thinking urgent remedial work was required.

General tips for Dealing with Uninvited Callers

- Remember, you do not have to answer the door to anyone you are not expecting. Your home should be a place where you can feel safe and undisturbed. It is not rude to not answer the door.
- We recommend you display a sticker on your door or somewhere nearby stating that you do not buy or sell at the door. Our Against Scams Partnership can provide one of these. Please send your request to against-scams@cambridgeshire.gov.uk. Whilst the stickers do not stop the most determined people from knocking on the door, they do give residents the confidence to not engage with the caller and to simply point to the sticker to stop the conversation in its tracks.
- Always ensure all other doors and windows are closed and locked when you go to answer your front door.
- Use a security chain every time you answer the door. These allow the visitor only a small window into your world. Remember not to leave it on all the

time though in case emergency services ever need access. Cambridgeshire Bobby Scheme can supply and fit door chains and other home security equipment for over 65s, disabled and vulnerable people for a small fee or for free if you are over 60 and have been a victim of crime in your home.

Contact **01480 413311** thebobbyscheme.org

- Always ask for and check ID for anyone claiming to be an official. This means taking the card in your hand and checking it hasn't been tampered with such as having any photographs or other information stuck onto it. Check the photograph bears a true likeness to the visitor. Contact their employer on a number you know to be correct, not a number on the card e.g. from a statement, the company's website or 101 if they claim to be police. A genuine caller will be pleased that you are exercising such caution.

Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Against Scams Partnership (CAPASP) have a library of free resources to help people stay safe from scams, including a section on doorstep scams.

Visit www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/against-scams

If you are looking for a trader to work on your home or garden then

visit www.buywithconfidence.gov.uk or www.safelocaltrades.com **0800 014 1832** for vetted and approved traders you can trust.

If you are aware of a rogue trading incident please **report it to the Police** on **999**, if it is a live incident, or **101** if you become aware after the event.

Thank you.