

From mountain to sea

# Trading Standards

## Doorstep Crime, Scams & Safety

### Bulletin No. 23

Whilst neither a scam nor doorstep crime, we have had a report from one resident who was trying to renew their Driving Licence, so started the process with an internet search for the correct gov.uk site to do so. Unknown to them, they chose a commercial site which had a high listing on the search engine's results and followed through the process to its conclusion. The resident did get their Driving Licence in the end but it cost them £94 instead of the usual £14 (or for free if you're over 70). The official web address for renewing a Driving Licence is <https://www.gov.uk/renew-driving-licence> but if you must use a search engine to do so, when the results of the search are returned and the top results on the first page say 'Ad' next to the web address, then these are commercial sites which have paid to be there. Look for the official web address, ending in gov.uk, as above.

#### **Doorstep Crime**

Nothing to report

#### **Scams**

As you may be aware, this week and next (14<sup>th</sup> – 27<sup>th</sup> June) is the Citizens Advice Scams Awareness Fortnight campaign. Although CAB have not produced their own materials this year, they will still be very active in supporting the campaign on social media and hope that you will be too. You can find the Citizens Advice resources to support the campaign by clicking on the link below: [Scams Awareness Fortnight - Citizens Advice](#)

One resident was recently contacted by scammers pretending to be from Santander bank (He is a Santander customer). The caller display on the resident's phone even showed the Santander Fraud Line number. When the resident answered the call, the caller advised him that there has been a couple of suspicious transactions on his account, that they would raise an incident, transfer the enquiry to a fraud investigator and that the resident would have to open new accounts and transfer his savings into these. Immediately smelling a rat, the resident said that he would not do this and hung up. He then contacted Santander who confirmed that there had been no suspicious transactions on his account. Clearly, this is the old 'safe account' scam with a new twist. Please remember that if you get such a call, it is a scam; no bank will ask you to do



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such a thing. As this resident did, simply hang up and contact your bank – but check for a dial tone on your phone first, in case the scammer has left the line open, as your outgoing call will simply go back to them. Or use a different phone. Also, the caller display was obviously showing a genuine Santander number which had been spoofed to mask the caller's real phone number, so if you recognise such a number on your caller ID during one of these calls, please do not simply assume that it's genuine.

Another resident was called at home by a woman purporting to work for an investment house in New York who wanted to buy the resident's shares in a UK company as part of a takeover deal by her client. The woman offered to buy the shares at between £12 and £22 each, but the offer was time limited. Peculiarly, the company concerned had gone defunct 10 years ago and had only traded at share prices at below 3 pence for most of its history. Rightly sensing that something was amiss, the resident refused the 'offer', despite the woman's persistence. This is, in essence, is a classic case of something being too good to be true. Often, a non-disclosure agreement (NDA) is part of the deal (to keep things secret, so family and friends don't persuade the victim to jettison the whole thing). Also, as we've discussed before, the element of urgency is a common aspect of scams, in this case a share buying scam. What often follows is that the victim gives over their personal details and agree to buy an insurance bond costing several thousand pounds. When the money has been paid, the scammer will disappear, along with the victim's money.

[www.scotland.police.uk](http://www.scotland.police.uk)



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## Received a **suspicious** text message?

Suspicious text messages should be forwarded to 7726. This enables your provider to investigate the origin of the text and take action, if found to be malicious.

 **7726**





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Please note that the advice given in these bulletins has been deliberately kept simple, so that if you are faced with a scenario such as the ones discussed here where fear, panic and alarm are often tools used deliberately by scammers, you will know what to do at that time. Remember, after the initial panic is over, you may have rights which Trading Standards can help you with.

If you have been the victim of a Doorstep Crime or an attempted crime, whether Bogus Caller or Rogue Trader, please report the matter to Consumer Advice Scotland so that Trading Standards can build a detailed, ongoing picture of the activities of these scammers throughout the Shire. This would be a great help to us to tackle this sort of crime.

### **Contact**

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.