



From mountain to sea

Trading Standards

Doorstep Crime, Scams & Safety

Bulletin 12

Doorstep Crime & Scams

- Reports have been received of doorstep callers in the Kintore area offering roofing and gardening work.

Residents are reminded that they are under no obligation to engage with doorstep callers and if a 'No Cold Calling' sign is displayed at a property the caller is committing an offence if they ignore it. Concerns should be reported to Trading Standards or Police Scotland.

Doorstep callers must also adhere to social distancing rules and if work is conducted at your property these and hygiene measures must be followed. If a doorstep caller is not adhering to these rules or does not have sufficient hygiene measures in place, then they should be reported to Trading Standards.

When reporting doorstep crime or concerns about doorstep callers, try to remember key details about the trader such as business names, addresses, names, age, accents, descriptions, vehicle type, registrations and signage. Keep all original paperwork, leaflets and brochures.

- Residents have reported receiving text and email messages purporting to be from the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA). The text/email advises that a recent payment has failed and to click on the web link in the message to make a new payment and avoid prosecution.

Our advice is never to click on links contained in unsolicited texts/emails as these will take you to fake websites where you will be prompted to enter personal and bank details that will later be used to obtain money from you. Texts should be deleted/blocked and unfamiliar emails left unopened and sent to the 'Junk/Spam' folder.

- Aberdeenshire Trading Standards has received a number of reports that website www.thegreyladydeli.co.uk is using the geographical address of a business in

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Fraserburgh and redirecting customer calls to them. The website has been identified as a scam website which offers 'high demand' goods that are difficult to obtain at this time of year. The goods are never delivered. The business in Fraserburgh has no links to this website and its details have been used without authorisation.

- Aberdeenshire Trading Standards ran weekly social media campaigns leading up to Christmas between 30th Nov and 18th Dec. The campaigns focused on scams, counterfeit goods, the illicit dog trade and product safety. Information and advice was posted along with examples, highlighting instances where residents have been directly affected by a scam or the purchase of counterfeit goods.

We post and share lots of information on our social media accounts and encourage you to follow us for the latest updates and alerts. Follow us at - <https://www.facebook.com/TradingStandardsAberdeenshire>
<https://twitter.com/AberdeenshireTS>

- At this time of year, it's not uncommon for families to buy a pet for Christmas. If you are considering buying a puppy or kitten you should be aware that there are scams in circulation and unscrupulous dealers operating. So -
 - only buy from a licensed breeder
 - ask lots of questions about the breeder, the puppy and its parents
 - view the puppy at its home, with its mother and check the condition of both and their accommodation
 - ensure you are provided with paperwork relating to breeding, vaccinations and microchipping and follow these up
 - treat the puppy's back story with caution, especially if the story is a sad one
 - avoid purchasing a puppy advertised on social media or small ad sites as these are often used by unlicensed breeders
 - do a Google reverse image/search on any photos and phone numbers displayed in adverts/ websites to see if they have been used before
 - don't pay with cash, but use a cheque, credit card or other traceable means

Most illegally bred puppies are sold online through social media or small ad sites, and 1 in 4 of those pups bought online die before their fifth birthday whilst 1 in 5 get sick or die in the first year - <https://www.buyapuppysafely.org/>



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If you have concerns that your puppy has originated from a puppy farm or are aware of someone who may be involved in an unlicensed puppy farm, contact Advice Direct Scotland on 0808 164 6000 or SSPCA 0300 099 9999.

Safety

- Social media platforms are increasingly being used to sell trademarked or counterfeit goods. Whilst the prices advertised are attractive and seem like bargains many will not arrive and any that do will be of a much lower quality than the genuine article. Counterfeit goods also pose a safety risk as they are unlikely to have went through the rigorous testing required by law. It is therefore not uncommon to hear of instances where consumers have received burns or eye damage from using counterfeit cosmetics, house fires or electric shock resulting from faulty counterfeit electrical goods and children choking on the small parts of counterfeit toys that have fallen apart. Should something go wrong with your purchase or it is not delivered it is unlikely you will be able to obtain a refund.

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 or 01467 538222 during office hours.