

Consumer Alerts – January 2021

Cold Caller Selling Homewares

Residents in the Ecclestone area are asked to be on the alert to cold callers knocking on doors selling household items such as tea towels and gardening gloves. A report has been received that an elderly householder paid nearly £40 to a doorstep seller for items whose actual value would have been a lot less than this. The payment was made via a debit card. When checking the account later, it was noticed that a further amount of money had been taken from the account, 3 minutes after the initial transaction, not authorised by the householder.

Never feel under any obligation or pressure to buy goods from sellers at your door. The goods can be of poor quality and may be overpriced and you may not have details of who you have traded with should the items be faulty. Remember, you have cancellation rights of 14 days to return any goods bought away from business premises for transactions over £42.

Trading Standards advice is to always say no to cold callers.

Scam Mobile Phone Delivery

Residents are warned of a scam where a mobile phone contract is set up by fraudsters on behalf of an unsuspecting innocent resident, who then has an expensive phone delivered that they did not order. Deliveries are by a genuine courier.

The consumer signs for the package on the doorstep, not knowing what it is. Minutes later the scammer arrives at the door, wearing a fake courier/ delivery service jacket, advises them that the phone has

been delivered to the wrong address, and takes the package away. Alternatively, having obtained shipping information from an email address set up for the purpose, the scammer may be waiting nearby to intercept the delivery before it's even delivered.

The consumer then starts getting monthly bills from the phone provider. Residents are warned not to hand over items to a second courier in this way, and to report any such incidents to the phone company and to Action Fraud straight away.

Courier Fraud

Reports of Courier Fraud have been received by the Police from the Thornton Cleveleys and Fleetwood area, targeting elderly and vulnerable residents.

Suspects are phoning victims impersonating Police Officers, stating a fraud is being investigated and the victim is required to withdraw large amounts of money, usually around £6000, so that numbers on the back of the notes can be checked in line with the apparent investigation.

The victims have withdrawn funds from their accounts, returned home and spoken on the phone to the suspect again. The numbers on the back of the notes are read out and the victims are then told the bank notes are part of their investigation and will need to be collected. In the next hour, a courier attends the address. The money is handed over for "inspection" and is taken away.

The bank, or police **will never** phone you and ask you to withdraw funds for

inspection, they will **never** ask you to transfer funds to a safe account. They will **never** send someone to collect cash, pins, cards or cheque books either. If you do receive such a call, report the matter to the police immediately

Scam DPD Email

Shoppers are being warned about a fake DPD email that is circulating which attempts to trick recipients into handing over their bank details. The email urges people to pay to reschedule a delivery of their parcel. Be suspicious if you are not expecting a delivery. Customers receiving an email from DPD are asked to check the message has come from a valid email address before taking any action. The delivery company only emails from one of three email addresses:

- dpd.co.uk
- dpdlocal.co.uk
- dpdgroup.co.uk

If the email has not come from one of these addresses, it is likely to be a phishing scam and should be reported to report@phising.gov.uk.

Covid Survey Scam

Information has been received about a survey scam being promoted and conducted via Social Media. On this occasion Twitter was used.

The survey asks residents to provide details of how they have coped with the COVID-19 Pandemic. Participants are requested to provide their personal details. It was alleged the survey was authorised and sanctioned by a local authority, lending it an air of authenticity. The council concerned had no knowledge of the survey.

In one case the resident was advised they would be paid £25 for taking part in the

survey. Fortunately, in this instance they declined the offer of payment, otherwise it is likely the fraudsters would have obtained their personal bank details.

As the fraudster has used Twitter there is a real concern this could be a nationwide issue. Residents are reminded to take great care when providing their personal details to any third party

Bogus TV Streaming Provider Phone Call

An Ormskirk householder reported receiving a phone call alleging to be from a well-known TV streaming service claiming someone was misusing the householders broadband, suggesting perhaps someone was using the Wi-Fi from outside the household. Initially a woman spoke and asked a few questions about how many devices were connected to the Wi-Fi and then confirmed that the householder had access to a currently connected device.

The householder was then handed to someone else to 'talk through a solution'. This person asked the householder to download what looked like screen sharing software. The bogus caller eventually hung up after the householder challenged him.

The Safetrader scheme can help you find a trader in your area, contact 0303 333 1111 or go to www.safetrader.org.uk

Scams can be reported to Action Fraud, contact 0300 123 2040 or go to www.actionfraud.police.uk.

Contact the Trading Standards Service via the Citizens Advice Consumer Helpline on 0808 223 1133