

Not all callers

are genuine

Be aware of rogue traders

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CAMBRIDGESHIRE AND PETERBOROUGH
AGAINST SCAMS PARTNERSHIP



Creating a safer
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Rogue trading ranges from poor quality work and high pressure sales to organised crime groups targeting the elderly and vulnerable, often demanding large amounts of money. These traders do not just cold-call at your door, they can have professional websites and place adverts in newspapers, magazines and other publications. They also operate leaflet dropping so be aware that not all leaflets are genuine.

How rogue traders operate

- Cold-call at the doorstep offering services such as gutter cleaning, gardening, house maintenance, jet washing, paving etc.
- Befriend the homeowner by various means such as claiming to have been before or they have worked on a neighbouring address. Many victims say “they were such a nice person”.
- Start with small jobs such as cleaning gutters for £20 then claim further work is needed, which they will not quote for, then demand hundreds or thousands of pounds, often for no or very little work.
- Make fraudulent claims such as moss on a roof causes damage and needs to be washed off, painting a roof is necessary to protect it or you have a tile missing and that will cause issues etc.
- Return again and again to vulnerable victims demanding further payment for bogus reasons such as claiming VAT has not been paid, claiming to be Trading Standards officers and offer to refund the victim with a cheque once the victim has given more cash.
- Use intimidation to extort money and often take the homeowner to a bank or cashpoint to withdraw money.

Tips to keep you safe from rogue traders

- Use your door chain when answering all calls. Be cautious; if a trader knocks at your door, do not agree to on the spot house repairs without taking advice. Say ‘no thank you’ and close the door.
- If you do decide to engage with the caller, check their identity by asking to see an ID card and check the telephone number in your own directory. Never call numbers given by the caller as they may be bogus.
- Consider if you really need the work done - shop around for the best deal, where possible use a trader from the Trading Standards Buy with Confidence scheme (www.buywithconfidence.gov.uk), Safe Local Trades (www.safelocaltrades.com, freephone 0800 014 1832 or 01733 530019), or a trader recommended to you, get three quotes to make sure you are being quoted a fair price.

- Sign up to your utility service provider's password scheme if they have one. This means any legitimate employee must know and use the agreed password before they enter your home.
- Insist you get the quote in writing, ask them to leave you with information to read at your leisure and ask to see their Public Liability Insurance
- Do not make snap decisions. If you feel work needs carrying out, take time to talk to family or neighbours before you make a decision.
- Don't be tempted by 'today only' offers - this is pressure selling.
- Do not deal with anyone who will only accept cash payments and get written receipts for any money you do pay.
- Remember, if you enter into a contract on your home for work costing £42 or more you have 14 days to cancel by writing to the trader, even if the work has started, unless you have asked the trader round specifically to carry out emergency repairs or maintenance. If you haven't been given information on your right to cancel, then you can cancel up to 4 weeks from the agreement date.

Common reports of rogue trading

Doorstep cold-calling is not illegal, however our advice is to NEVER employ traders who call at your door and certainly DO NOT let them into your home. Common reports include:

- Saying you owe them money for guttering work that was never actually undertaken.
- Advising they are from a water or gas company and because of a leak down the road they need access to your property to check your supply.
- Offering discounted loft installation or grants from the local council or government.
- Taking a deposit and never returning to do the work.
- Quoting a price and then increasing the cost as the job progresses.
- Produce poor quality work and refuse to resolve problems or finish the job.

If you have had an experience with a rogue trader, please report it by telephoning 101.

You can gain lots of great advice and support from your local Crime Reduction Officer so ask to be put through to one via 101.

You may also wish to report it online and can do so by visiting www.cambs.police.uk/report.

For live incidents where the rogue trader is still at the property, or is due to return, call the police emergency number, 999. The police have a protocol for dealing with these incidents and welcome your contact.

More information about rogue trading can be found on the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Against Scams Partnership website www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/against-scams.

Remember - if in doubt, keep them out! Simply say no.



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