

**Cheshire Police Scam awareness week**

**Bogus trades people fraud**

Legitimate doorstep selling involves someone selling you goods or services in

your home or on your doorstep. Many honest businesses use this technique – but

so do fraudsters.

Buying on your doorstep can be convenient. However, a sales person who uses

clever tactics can pressurise you into buying something you actually don’t want or

something that’s poor value for money.

**Door-to-door frauds can take many forms, including:**

* pressure selling
* unfair contracts
* overpriced or substandard home maintenance or improvements
* phoney consumer surveys
* Bogus charity collections.

Such frauds involve promoting goods or services that are either never delivered to

you or are of a very poor quality. Fraudsters may also bill you for work that you

didn’t agree to. There are specific laws about door-to-door sales. Many are

required to give you a ‘cooling-off’ period (where you can change your mind or

request your money back). Bogus trades people will offer none of these, and even if

they do, you can be sure their ‘guarantee’ will not be honoured.

Bogus sales people will provide false identity or contact information, making it

impossible for you to identify or contact them. If you’ve paid them in advance you won’t get your money back.

Also known as distraction burglars, bogus callers trick their way into people's homes to steal money and valuables. They make themselves seem genuine and plausible while your attention is elsewhere.

Examples of this would include bogus officials, people claiming to come from the council, water-board or tradesmen/workmen claiming that the property or garden needs essential/urgent maintenance.

They often work in pairs; one to keep you talking at the front door while the other tries to access your house from a back door or window. Some might even plead for help, such as asking for a glass of water.

**Protect yourself against ‘Bogus Officials’**

**If you suspect a bogus caller is at your door call 999 immediately.**

* Look through your spy hole or window.
* Don't let any caller pressure you into making a quick decision.
* Don't feel you are being rude or uncaring by saying 'no' - your own safety is more important.
* Check the identity of the caller by calling the company they claim to be from eg. Council or gas, electricity, water.
* Use the telephone numbers listed in your local directory or sent to you by your service provider.
* Do not use any telephone numbers provided by the caller.
* 'Water Boards' no longer exist, it is an obsolete phrase used only by bogus callers.
* If a builder or tradesman offers to accompany you to the bank so you can withdraw cash to pay them don't accept. Arrange for someone you know well to take you and pay the tradesman later.
* Don't keep large quantities of cash at home; put it in the bank where it is safe.
* Keep doors locked and windows secure at all times.
* Ensure that if you do let somebody in to your home, you close the door behind them - distraction burglars often work in teams, where one will distract you whilst others sneak in through the insecure door.
* If somebody asks for your help (needs to make a telephone call, lost a ball in your garden, needs a drink or pen and paper) refer them to a younger neighbour or assist them through a closed door or call a friend or neighbour to come and help.
* If you are not sure, don't open the door!
* Place a no calling card by your front door.