



From mountain to sea

Trading Standards Scams Bulletin No. 118

The articles in these bulletins are based on real life complaints made to Aberdeenshire Council's Trading Standards department, unless otherwise stated, to make them as relevant as possible to readers. Names, exact addresses etc. have been withheld to avoid identifying complainants and to comply with GDPR so please feel free to share the contents with friends, family, neighbours or any community groups you are a part of. For details of scams reported in other parts of Scotland please click on the [Trading Standards Scotland Bulletin page](#).

Bogus Callers and Rogue Traders

Trading Standards have received a small number of reports recently from residents in the Garioch and Formartine areas about a roofing company who have had representatives going round people's houses in these areas, distributing flyers and trying to generate new business.

Unfortunately, this company is well-known to Trading Standards for all of the wrong reasons. Their history is peppered with incidents of pushy salesmen, untrue claims that neighbours were also getting work done, people feeling overcharged, shoddy workmanship and disappointment.

Our advice on cold callers at the door remains the same. You really don't know who you're dealing with and usually only have their word as to how good or bad they are. It stands to reason that they will only claim to be reputable, but the truth can be far different.

Please remember, if you have a cold caller come to your door:

- NEVER let them into your home. They may get quite comfy and be very difficult to shift. Better to keep them on the doorstep,
- Whatever they want, the right answer is "Thanks, but no thanks". Remain firm but polite so as to not aggravate the situation,
- Don't discuss money with the caller. If they raise the subject, immediately change it to something else like the weather or something in the news,
- If they persist, tell them your brother, son, nephew (etc.) is in that trade and you'll get them to look at the problem,
- If they're not a 'tradesman' but are trying to sell a service, tell them that you don't handle the money side of things, that it's your husband, wife,



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son, daughter (etc.) who does this and they're not at home or live at a different address. Scammers are unlikely to come back to speak to the person holding the purse strings but if they do, simply don't answer the door,

- Whilst dealing with the cold caller at the doorstep, make an excuse to the caller that you need to go back inside immediately. Tell the caller that you have another visitor inside or that you have a pot on the stove which will boil over imminently. Don't wait for their consent, simply apologise profusely (if you feel a bit guilty about fibbing) and do it, then lock the door,
- If you think that there may be some merit in what the caller has said, arrange for your own tradesman to look at it. Remember our advice about sourcing a proper tradesman or use the [Aberdeenshire Trusted Trader](#) website,
- If the caller won't leave or becomes pushy or intimidating, tell them you'll call the Police (so have a mobile phone handy, if possible) and be prepared to do so,
- If you're particularly concerned with your own personal safety, consider installing an app such as [Panic Guard](#) on your mobile phone,
- Please also remember to report these types of incidents to Trading Standards so that we can respond to them.

Scams etc.

Recruitment/Text Scam

We have recently received numerous reports about recruitment apps, and it appears we are seeing a bit of a surge in these types of scams.

One resident of the lower Deeside area recently received a text message purporting to be from a woman called Josie who worked in the HR department of a well-known pan-European advertising agency.

This text advised the resident that their resume had been recommended to that agency and they would like to offer the resident a job. The main body of the text is reproduced below, although details of the agency and how to contact 'Josie' have been removed.

As this resident has been retired for a number of years he immediately recognised the text for what it was, a scam. However, many people will have circulated their resumes or CV's for the very purpose of obtaining a different or better job and to them it may not be quite so obvious.

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Some points to consider about this text in particular and texts like these in general:

- As can be seen from the first two bullet points below, the opening lines are very complimentary, no doubt using flattery to try to lower the recipient's defenses,
- The next two bullet points are intended to show how desirable the job would be; flexible working from anywhere with only 1 hour per day required. No doubt, these are further attempts at manipulating the recipient,
- The next bullet point offers between \$150 and \$1200 potential earnings per day, with salary also being paid on a daily basis. Note that salary figures are quoted in US dollars and, even at the lower end, are very large sums for one hour's work each day,
- The benefits quoted; free training, no minimum education standards or experience required, health insurance (again, more relevant to the US market and perhaps indicative of where the scam has originated from) and between 15 and 30 days of paid annual leave all make this sound like the perfect job.

- Your resume has been recommended by multiple online recruitment agencies
- We recognize your career potential and would like to offer you a remote part-time job opportunity
- Work location: Flexible, work from anywhere
- Work hours: Approximately 1 hour per day
- Salary: \$150 to \$1200 per day, paid on a daily basis
- Requirements: Must be 25 years old or older
- Benefits: Free training, no education or experience required; upon joining, you will receive health insurance and 15 to 30 days of paid annual leave

If you would like to know more, please contact me via WhatsApp!

The truth of the matter of course is that this is simply too good to be true. It is a scam designed to tempt the unwary or those looking for a better job. Like many other text scams, it will have been sent out to thousands of people all at once,

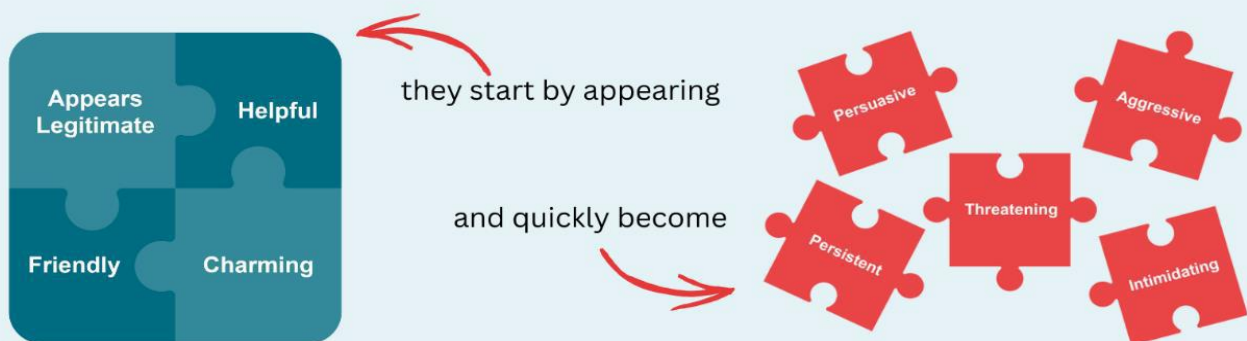
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with scammers relying on only a small percentage of those people replying for it to be worth their while. Once a recipient replies, they will no doubt be asked to part with money or bank details for fees of one sort or another and some time later they will realise that they have been scammed and are out of pocket for a fairly large sum of money and no new job to show for it. Unfortunately, many people do fall for this type of scam as [this BBC news article](#) shows.

Should you receive a text similar to this one, the action to take is straightforward:

- Never reply to these messages, even to tell the scammer that you know it's a scam. Knowing your phone number is live, they may then target you with even more scams,
- If you can, forward the text to the spam short code of 7726. This sends the text to the National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC) for them to investigate and possibly block the sender's number,
- Alternatively, if you can, take a screenshot of the text and e-mail it to the NCSC at report@phishing.gov.uk,
- Then, forward the same screenshot to Trading Standards at the e-mail addresses given below with a short explanation so that we can investigate, if possible, or warn other people via these Scam Bulletins.

Criminals are experts at using befriending and grooming techniques to lure their victims



#NoBlameNoShame

**NATIONAL
TRADING
STANDARDS**
Scams Team



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Misc.

On occasion, in these Bulletins, we cover scams which have been perpetrated using messaging services such as WhatsApp. As we already know, WhatsApp does not take part in these scams, it is simply their service being misused by the scammers.

We have also discussed how scamming is a worldwide industry worth billions of pounds each year.

Well, WhatsApp recently announced that they will be taking action against almost 7 million accounts which they believe have been involved in scamming people from across the whole world.

A recent BBC article providing more information on this development can be accessed [here](#).

Conclusion

Please note that the advice given in these bulletins has been deliberately kept simple, so that if you are faced with such a scenario where fear, alarm and panic are tools often used deliberately by scammers, you will know what to do at that time.

If you have been the victim of a Bogus Caller or other form of scam, please report the matter to Consumer Advice Scotland so that Trading Standards can maintain a detailed picture about scammers operating in the Shire. This would be a great help to us to tackle this sort of crime.

If you have any information to share about the unlawful sale of tobacco or disposable vapes, please use the Contact Info below to pass that information to Trading Standards. If you would prefer, you can report the information anonymously to Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111.

Contact Info

For non-urgent Trading Standards enquiries in Aberdeenshire, please contact Consumer Advice Scotland at <https://consumeradvice.scot/contact/> or call them on 0808 164 6000.



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For urgent Trading Standards matters or doorstep crime matters, contact Aberdeenshire Council's Trading Standards at 01467 537222 or via tradingstandards@aberdeenshire.gov.uk

Aberdeen City Council's Trading Standards department can be contacted by calling 0300 0200 292 or e-mailing tradingstandards@aberdeencity.gov.uk

Contact Police Scotland on 999 if you need urgent Police assistance or 101 for non-urgent matters.

For more information about scams please visit the [Friends Against Scams website](#) or [Take Five](#) at their website.

Please direct any media queries to news@aberdeenshire.gov.uk or 01467 538222 during office hours.

All previous Trading Standards bulletins can be found on the Aberdeenshire Council website on the [Trading Standards Scams Bulletin page](#).