Enfield Trading Standards

Doorstep Crime & Safeguarding Residents

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What do Trading Standards do?

Trading Standards investigate over 250 pieces of legislation which aim to protect consumers and businesses

- Weights & Measures
- Fair Trading
- Product Safety
- Under-age Sales
- Tobacco and Alcohol
- Intellectual Property
- Doorstep Crime
- Letting/Estate Agents

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What is Doorstep Crime?

- Doorstep crime is the name given to crimes carried out by bogus callers and rogue traders who call uninvited at homes under the guise of legitimate businesses or trade persons
- Doorstep crime includes distraction burglary, bogus callers, rogue traders and unscrupulous salespeople
- Doorstep crime can take many forms, including; pressure selling, unfair contracts, overpriced or substandard home maintenance or improvements, phoney consumer surveys and bogus charity collections

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What is Doorstep Crime?

- We are working around the corner and noticed a loose tile on your roof
- We are in your area, and it is a special price if you agree today
- I have just done a job for your neighbour
- We have material left over from another job

Statistics

The National Fraud Intelligence Bureau cyber crime dashboard reports 5,728 door to door sales and bogus callers (across the UK) for this financial year, with reported losses of £34.5 million. This is an increase of 29.2% from the previous year.

There are 6,199 Trading Standards doorstep crime intelligence logs for this year. This is an increase of 263 (4.43%) from the previous year.

5,728
reported cases of door-to-door sales and bogus callers (across the UK).

£34.5 million
total loss from these cases.

70-79 80-89
are the two most common age groups reported to be victims.

Above figures from the NFIB Fraud and Cyber Crime Dashboard reports (1 April 2023 – 30 March 2024)

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Offenders of Doorstep Crime

- Many organised criminal gangs are family gangs who offend together. Often the youngest members of the gang have been involved in the offending from a very early age. When offenders reach adulthood, they are well practiced in this type of crime and in avoiding detection
- Offenders use various tactics to remain anonymous, such as failing to provide the consumer their genuine details, use of accommodation agency addresses, use of ‘pay as you go’ phones, failing to provide any paperwork, leaving vehicles parked away from victim’s home,insisting on cash payments etc

Offenders of Doorstep Crime

- Offenders use a variety of bank accounts, including those in the names of third parties to avoid detection
- Offenders usually dissolve their company after a year of being incorporated
- Offenders do not file tax returns

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Low Reporting Rate of Doorstep Crime

Only around 5-20% of doorstep crime gets reported, and the following factors are possible reasons why:

- Fear of repercussions from offenders
- Fear of getting involved in the criminal justice system
- Fear of loss of their independence
- Reduced mental capacity
- Embarrassment / self-blame
- Not knowing who to report to
- Wanting to ignore the incident and move on

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Doorstep Crime Offences

- Consumer Protection from Unfair Trading Regulations 2008 – misleading action, misleading omission and professional diligence
- Fraud Act 2006 – fraud by false representation
- Consumer Contracts (Information, Cancellation and Additional Charges) Regulations 2013 – cooling-off period of 14 days
- Companies Act 2006 – fraudulent trading
- Protection from Harassment Act 1997
- Proceeds of Crime Act 2002 – criminal property gained from criminal conduct. Money laundering
- Modern Slavery Act 2015

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Rogue Trader – Modus Operandi

- Target elderly/vulnerable residents
- Deliver leaflets or advertise in the local paper for gutter clearing service or roof repairs
- Business is usually set up as a limited company registered with Companies House
- Professional looking website
- Trade association membership
- Offer 10-year guarantee

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Rogue Trader – Modus Operandi

- Cold call residents claiming to be working nearby
- Appear legitimate, helpful, friendly and charming
- Claim that roof tiles are cracked/missing and that they could check for free
- Usually show photos or videos of another roof which is in a poor state or come down holding a cracked tile
- Suggest that roof is in a dangerous condition and offer a relatively low price for repairs
- Scaffolding is usually erected the same day and work begins

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Rogue Trader – Modus Operandi

- Resident is then informed that the roof is in a worse condition than initially thought and that the supporting timber is rotten
- Price then increases significantly
- Pressure selling
- Threatening/coercive behaviour
- Bank transfer payments
- Fear/intimidation

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Multi-agency Approach

- Civil or Criminal breach
- Direct links between fraud and other serious and organised crime
- Crosses geographical and regulatory borders
- Co-ordinated multi-agency approach required not only in terms of investigating, but also in supporting those who have been a victim of fraud
- Trading Standards, Police, Community Safety, Social Services, HMRC, Age UK, Victim Support, Banks and Financial Institutions

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Impact on Doorstep Crime Victims

- Research indicates that 45% of victims felt that their experience had an impact on their emotional wellbeing
- 37% reported a significant psychological or emotional impact
- Victims are 2.5 times more likely to require residential care or can pass away within 2 years of the offence
- There is clearly a huge impact on them, their family and on the health and care system

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Trading Standards Advice

- Do not deal at the doorstep
- Ask a trusted friend or family member for advice on reputable traders
- Use accredited Trading Standards approved contractors
- Display a sticker visible to caller saying ‘No Cold Calling’
- Report suspicious activity to Police or Trading Standards

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How Can You help?

- Vulnerable/Elderly residents can be digitally disadvantaged therefore messaging on crime prevention can be difficult
- Currently working with Adult Social Services and Comms
- Those in regular contact with elderly/vulnerable residents are better placed to make referrals to enforcement authorities
- If you notice any unusual works at a resident’s property, contact Trading Standards

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Our Aim

- Provide target hardening advice
- Share intelligence
- Take robust enforcement action
- Prevent repeat victimisation and build community resilience

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Reporting Doorstep Crime and Scams

- **Citizens Advice**
- https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/consumer/get-more-help/if-you-need-more-help-about-a-consumer-issue/
- **Call Consumer Helpline**
- Citizens Advice consumer helpline: **0808 223 1133**

➢ **Find a trusted trader**

- https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/consumer/get-more-help/find-a-trader-and-check-you-can-trust-them/

➢ **Reporting fraud and cyber-crime – Action Fraud**

- https://www.actionfraud.police.uk/reporting-fraud-and-cyber-crime
- **You can also report by calling 0300 123 2040**

➢ **Trading Standards Service**

- https://www.tradingstandards.uk/consumer-help/

➢ **London Trading Standards – Reporting Consumer Crime**

- https://www.londontradingstandards.org.uk/report-consumer-crime/

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