

★ JOIN THE FIGHT ★

Suffolk Consumer Champion
Weekly Bulletin

16/06/2017

This week's top features



The Sniffer Dogs are Back!

Suffolk Trading Standards and the Illegal Tobacco Unit will be travelling across the county in the first week of July to raise awareness of the dangers of illegal tobacco, while providing advice and information on how to spot illegal tobacco.

We would be very grateful if you could let all your friends, family and contacts know where and when we will be, so that they can come and see us.

Members of the public will have the opportunity to see the Illegal Tobacco Units sniffer dogs in action during the roadshow, demonstrating the skills used to help Trading Standards detect hidden illicit tobacco.

Trading Standards officers will also be on hand to encourage and explain ways of how to spot and report illegal tobacco.

We will be visiting the following locations:

- Wednesday 5th July - Market Place, Ipswich, 8:30am - 4pm.
- Thursday 6th July - London Road North, Lowestoft, 8:30am - 4pm.
- Friday 7th July - Market Square, Sudbury, 8:30am - 4pm

If you are on Facebook, [you can help share the details with your friends here.](#)



Rogue Art Sellers

We have received a report of individuals going door to door in the Halesworth area attempting to sell framed photocopies of artwork, claiming to be deaf and dumb.

It is believed to be a scam which has been reported around the country.

The caller will hand over a note to you stating they are deaf and that they would like to sell you a hand drawn picture. Victims will pay in the region of £10-£15 for one and later discover it to be a photocopy.

The "artists" prey on people's compassion to get them to part with their money, mainly targeting older or vulnerable people.

Residents should take basic crime prevention measures and be on their guard against cold callers of any nature:

- Ensure you keep your front and back doors locked - even while you are at home.
- Please also be vigilant when answering your door - always use a door chain and don't let any strangers into your house.
- If you feel threatened by a caller, always call the police on 999.
- If you have any doubt about who is at your door, don't answer it.

If you believe you have been targeted by this scam and you have purchased one of these pictures, please call Suffolk Police on 101 and pass information to the Force Control Room.



Subscription Traps

A Suffolk resident has contacted us to advise us of a scam that they lost money to, and who is keen for others to be made aware.

The Suffolk gentleman filled in an online survey that appeared to be from BT, that offered a free gift for completion. The website stated that a delivery charge was applicable and that £4.95 should be paid.

The free gift duly arrived. A short time later the gentleman's bank statement was delivered and he noticed that he had been charged the delivery fee, as well as a sum of £79.99. Upon further investigation he soon discovered that the £79.99 was to be a recurring transaction.

After contacting his bank he was able to stop all future transactions, but unfortunately the bank advised that it was unable to retrieve the sum already paid.

This type of scam is known as a subscription trap.

Subscription traps take place when you sign up online or on the phone for free or low-cost trials of products, only to find that you have been unwittingly locked into costly repeat payments. Typically, these products are slimming pills, health foods, pharmaceuticals and anti-aging products but, increasingly, attractive consumer durable products such as the latest mobile phone are being featured.

The perpetrators of subscription traps exploit a 'continuous payment authority', normally by requesting your payment card details as proof of identity and age, then retaining those details to draw monthly payments from your account. Details of this ongoing commitment are generally buried in the terms & conditions and are missed by many people, eager instead to take advantage of the 'fantastic offer' being advertised.

Avoiding subscription traps

- Read the small print (terms & conditions) carefully before entering into any agreement or making a purchase, however long this may take.
- Make sure the terms & conditions box has not been pre-ticked.
- If you make a purchase of this kind that gives you a limited timescale to cancel the agreement, make sure you do so before the due date if you want to cancel it.
- Never provide bank details to companies without doing some prior research beforehand.
- Keep a copy of any advertisement (print it or take a screenshot) that you reply to, and to keep a note of the webpage.
- Remember that you will have more chance of cancelling agreements or obtaining a refund if the company is UK-based. Even those with UK addresses are often just fulfilment companies who are contracted to send out the goods. The companies themselves often have no physical presence in the UK.
- Check your bank/payment card statements regularly for unexpected payments.

If you are the victim of a subscription trap

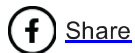
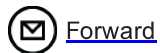
- Make every effort to contact the company concerned to cancel the agreement.
- Contact your bank to cancel future payments.
- Ascertain with your bank whether a new card is needed.
- Request reimbursement from the supplier if the advertisement did not explain the charges, but be aware that without a copy, your claim may fail. If the website has changed in the meantime, try accessing your internet [browser's](#) cache or the internet archive.
- Refer a complaint about the bank to the Financial Ombudsman Service if the bank refuses to stop the charges or reimburse charges that have been made, consider referring the issue to the Financial Ombudsman
- Report it to Action Fraud, the UK's national fraud reporting centre by calling **0300 123 20 40** or by visiting www.actionfraud.police.uk

[Product Recalls](#)

[Fraud and Scam Advice](#)

[Consumer Rights](#)

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