

★ JOIN THE FIGHT ★

Suffolk Consumer Champion

Weekly Bulletin

05/01/2018

This week's top features



Take a Stand Against Scams

Scams affect the lives of millions of people across the UK. It's estimated that every year around 3 million UK consumers lose a total of £5-10 billion to scams.

All scams are a form of fraud and a criminal offence under the Fraud Act.

People who are scammed often experience loneliness, shame and social isolation. This

often leads to them not reporting the crime, making it more difficult for the authorities and industry to identify and take action against fraudsters, and restricts their ability to understand who is most likely to fall victim to a scam and target awareness campaigns accordingly.

This week we have launched Friends Against Scams to help us "Take a Stand Against Scams".

The aim of Friends Against Scams (a National Trading Standards Scams Team initiative) is to:

- inspire action
- highlight the scale of the problem
- change the perceptions of why people fall victim to scams
- make scams a local, regional and national topic

By completing the online learning (takes approximately 20 minutes), anyone can learn about the different types of scams and how to spot and support a victim. With increased knowledge and awareness, people can make scams part of everyday conversation with their family, friends and neighbours, which will enable them to protect themselves and others from scams.

Suffolk Trading Standards are asking Suffolk residents to Join The Fight against scams by becoming a Friend Against Scams. They aim to have 500 Friends by the end of 2018 and are calling on individuals and businesses to make the pledge.

To become a Friend Against Scams please go to www.suffolk.gov.uk/Friends



Storm Eleanor

Please check on elderly and vulnerable neighbours. Check for damage to their property and remind them to be cautious of traders going door-to-door offering to undertake garden and building maintenance, following Storm Eleanor.

We are asking the residents of Suffolk to be cautious of traders going door-to-door offering to undertake garden and building maintenance, following the storm. Rogue traders trick people into paying very high prices for unnecessary or shoddy work primarily on homes or garden maintenance. Reports of rogue traders, cowboy builders and doorstep callers are unfortunately still a concern for Suffolk Trading Standards. Each year, we receive many complaints from residents who have been conned on their own doorsteps by rogue traders. These cons can involve many thousands of pounds and often target vulnerable residents.

To avoid becoming a victim of rogue traders, follow these simple steps:

- Never agree to have work done by somebody who is just passing or take their word that it needs to be done at all
- Never pay for work before it is completed
- Do not accept any offer from them to drive you to the bank to withdraw money

- If you need work done, then visit <http://www.checkatrade.com> or call by phone on 0845 408 4866.

To combat rogue traders, Suffolk Trading Standards is working in partnership with Checkatrade.com to provide a free directory of reliable traders to consumers. Member businesses are carefully vetted to ensure that known rogues are not admitted. The scheme is based on customers commenting indirectly upon a trader's performance and reliability, allowing other consumers to view feedback before choosing the trader. This allows consumers to empower other consumers so they avoid falling into the hands of rogue traders. Not only can consumers search online but they can call Checkatrade.com to receive details of "Suffolk Trading Standards Accredited Traders." The service is completely free to consumers, allowing Suffolk residents to find a trader they can rely on.

Trading Standards is urging everyone who knows or cares for a vulnerable or elderly person to make sure they are aware of their rights when it comes to suspect door step approaches, and to carefully research salespeople before inviting them into their home.

No one should feel pressured into making a rash buying decision. If in doubt always think twice and get a second opinion. Suffolk residents concerned about doorstep callers operating in their area or worried about elderly or vulnerable neighbours being targeted can contact Citizens Advice consumer helpline on 03454 040506.

[10 tips on Dealing with Doorstep Traders](#)



New Years Honours

We are delighted to be able announce that our very own Carol Garrett has been awarded an OBE for services to business in the New Year's Honours.

Carol Garrett is team leader for ports and borders at National Trading Standards, hosted by Suffolk Trading Standards. Carol has helped detect unsafe products at the border, including thousands of dangerous hoverboards. It led to worldwide recognition, with Mrs Garrett giving hoverboard safety advice to the Danish and Jamaican governments.



Top Tip

If you own poultry you can [register your flock here](#), so we can contact you with advice in a disease outbreak.

[Product Recalls](#)

[Fraud and Scam Advice](#)

[Consumer Rights](#)

[Friends Against Scams](#)

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