

Door to Door Callers in Rural Locations

Rural areas of Worcestershire often have a very strong sense of community and this can help protect vulnerable neighbours and members of that community from criminals. Not all doorstep callers are bogus, some will be genuine sales people, but watch out for criminals acting as legitimate businesses.

Legal Rights

Consumers are given protection by law when agreeing contracts in their home. As a consumer you would have a right to a seven day cooling off period. This must be provided in writing.

Businesses, which would include small business, farms, Community Groups and religious groups (inc. Churches) do not have the same level of protection. If a contract is agreed it is **very unlikely** that there will be an opportunity to change your mind. Beware of verbal contracts as they are binding and hard to prove at a later date.

Rogue Traders

The tactics used often involve offering a quick and cheap service for cash. Any workmanship is often poor and demands for money increase and are often made in an aggressive manner.

Distraction burglary

Incidents are often linked to door to door sales and rogue tradesmen. Criminals often claim to be on official business to enter your property to commit theft.

The Importance of Reporting Incidents

Local residents and businesses should report any incidents where they believe rogue traders or suspicious door to door callers are operating in rural areas. Criminals often return to premises after assessing likely targets. This would include looking out for machinery and metal at farm buildings, which can be removed at a later date.

All information is treated in the **strictest confidence**.

Are there many Criminals in Worcestershire?

The number of recorded incidents involving doorstep crime in Worcestershire is low. This may be because the majority of victims are elderly or vulnerable people who are worried about reporting crime. Some people are also embarrassed that they have been conned or fear reprisals. The majority of calls that Regulatory Services receive in relation to doorstep crime are usually from concerned relatives or neighbours.

What Can You Do?

- Join a Rural watch Scheme
- Keep an eye on any elderly or vulnerable residents?
- Report any suspicious callers or vehicles to Regulatory Services or the Police. **Take a note of the registration numbers of any vehicles.**
- If you need tradesmen don't rely on door to door callers, always get further quotes and use the Worcestershire Trader Register, a register of local tradesmen.

Trader Register: 01905 765394

www.worcestershire.gov.uk/traderregister

A Few Tips About How To Avoid Being Conned!

Never invite an unknown caller into your home

Look out for some of the following types of phrases which may be used to try and frighten or entice you into agreeing to have work done on your property:

"You have a loose tile on your roof".

"You need to have some pointing on your chimney".

"You need some work doing on your driveway".

Never say yes on the spot.

Always get a second opinion about the work being suggested, it may not be as urgent as you think. A genuine trader will not pressure you into agreeing to have work done immediately.

Check any claims made by callers. They may state that they work for power providers, water companies or other professional bodies. They may claim:

"I am doing some work for the Council down the road".

"I am from the gas board".

There are no longer any such things as Water Boards, Electricity Boards or Gas Boards.

Always ask for identification. Never use the telephone numbers supplied by the caller to check if they are genuine. Always check the phone book.

Beware of Limited Offers

"We are only in your area this week".

"We are doing some work in the area and have a load of tarmac left over.

Always ask for time to think about it.

You may well get the same offer if you call back a few days later, or other businesses may offer the same goods/services at a better price.

Do not be rushed into a decision.

Rogue callers will try and cause panic so that you agree to buy goods or services. They often try to make you feel grateful because they have pointed out a missing tile or advised that your electrics may be dangerous. Always get a second opinion!!!

Display a No Cold Caller Card which advises callers that you do not buy from the door – available through Consumer Direct on 08454 04 05 06 or the Worcestershire HUB on 01905 765765.

FOR ADVICE OR TO REPORT SUSPICIOUS CALLERS :

Consumer Direct on **08454 040506**.

Police 0300 333 3000

Emergencies: 999

Businesses can contact the Business advice line on 0845 330 3313

Alternatively visit our website at www.worcestershire.gov.uk/tradingstandards

Worcestershire Regulatory Services has prepared this leaflet for the assistance of consumers and businesses. It is not an authoritative document on the law and is only intended for guidance. Legislation changes from time to time, please note the date that this leaflet was issued. To discuss your specific query please contact us.