

Trading Standards News

A summary of work and Facebook posts by the Trading Standards Service



Leicestershire
County Council

Scams and doorstep crime

Rogue traders



Trading Standards received a report of mattresses being sold on the doorstep from the back of a van. These mattresses were being offered as 'excess stock'.

When considering purchasing a mattress there are a few things you need to consider. New mattresses from reliable suppliers will have been tested to the UK standard for fire safety, BS 7177.

Although other mattresses may have the same label, there's a chance they contain foam that burns easily and gives off toxic fumes. Mattresses sold door to door may be 'recycled', with a new or cleaned cover but as well as possibly being worn out, they could harbour parasites such as bed bugs. If you buy a mattress at your door, you might get a free gift you don't want!

To report a matter please call 0808 223 1133.

Mobile Fish Seller

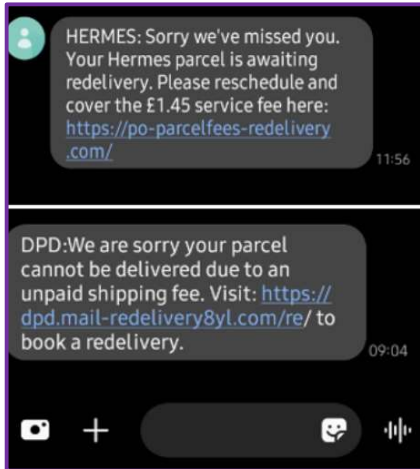
We received reports of a fish seller calling at properties in the Coalville area offering fresh fish from Grimsby.

These traders often travel nationally, cold calling to try and sell their fish. This is often mis-described, mislabelled or unlabelled, overpriced and sometimes underweight. They often use transit style vans which may not be refrigerated.

If you are approached at the door and not expecting a caller, our advice is not to answer and to only purchase fish from a reputable supplier. For further advice and guidance, or to make a report, please call 0808 223 1133.



Courier scam



Beware of texts claiming to be from a parcel company. They inform the recipient that a delivery attempt was made and ask them to follow a link to arrange redelivery.

The link takes you to a copycat website asking for personal details and a small fee for “redelivery”. Scammers will then use your details to contact you again and scam you further.

Suspicious texts should be forwarded to 7726 which spells “SPAM” on your phone keypad.

WhatsApp scam

A Leicestershire resident received this clever WhatsApp Scam. She was contacted by someone pretending to be her son who claimed to be having a financial emergency and asked for money.

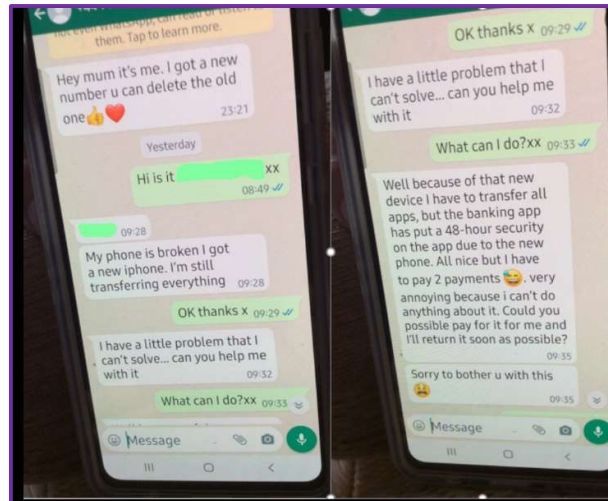
STOP: Take Five before you respond! Make sure your WhatsApp two-step verification is switched on to protect your account; that you're happy with your privacy settings, and your six-digit pin is secure

THINK: Does this request make sense? Are they asking you to share a PIN code which has been sent to you? Are they asking for money?

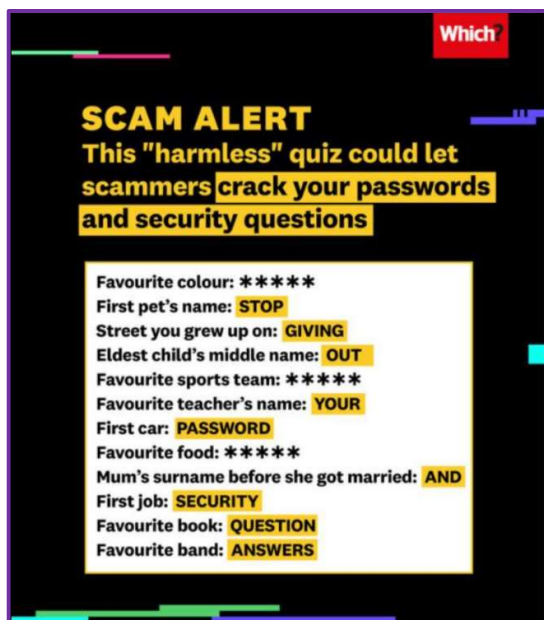
Remember that scammers prey on people’s kindness, trust, and willingness to help. Taking over your account could enable them to deceive others on your contact list.

CALL: Verify if that really is your family or friend by calling them directly or asking for a voice note. Only when you’re 100% sure the request is from someone you know and trust, should you consider it.

You can forward any scam texts to 7726.



Social Media quizzes



Have you seen quizzes on social media that seem like harmless fun?

This harmless quiz could let scammers crack your password and security questions and put you at risk of identity theft.

To find out how to further protect yourself go to <https://www.actionfraud.police.uk/a-z-of-fraud/identity-fraud-and-identity-theft>

Product & Food Safety

Trading Standards officers attend East Midlands Airport 4 days a week to check the safety of goods being imported into the UK. The type of goods examined are those that pose the most risk to consumers, including toys, electrical products, cosmetics, and jewellery.



Our team at East Midlands airport recently came across a consignment of laser pointers.

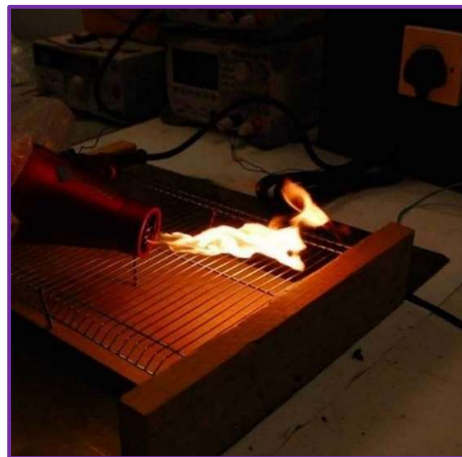
A laser pointer should not have a beam of higher than Class 2 due to risk of eye injury. The pointers were tested by an expert, who confirmed that their laser power was Class 3B. This means they are hazardous as accidental eye exposure to the laser beam is likely to result in severe and permanent damage to the eye.

The pointers should not go on general sale to the public and will now be destroyed.

We recently submitted a hairdryer for electrical testing that Officers had seen being imported through East Midlands Airport.

The test house examined the hairdryer and found that although it had overheating protection, it didn't work correctly, and the hairdryer set on fire. These goods were detained and will now be destroyed.

Our advice is always to buy from a reputable High Street supplier.



Food Safety



New Year, New You?

Be wary of offers of weight loss pills with dubious credentials and only buy from reputable sources.

The National Food Crime Unit (part of Food Standards Agency) recently prosecuted a seller of diet pills which contained DNP, a highly toxic industrial chemical. DNP is poisonous to humans and can cause serious physical side effects, even death.

If you suffer with an allergy, it is important that you tell the business who are providing your food so that they can ensure that the food they serve you is safe.

If you have any concerns about the allergen information provided by a food business, or they don't have any information at all, you can report your concerns to Trading Standards via Citizen's Advice on 0808 223 1133.



Illegal tobacco



Trading Standards officers carried out illegal tobacco visits on retailers in Leicestershire with the support of our colleagues at Leicestershire Police and Rico, the sniffer dog from Wagtail UK Limited.

The visits were carried out as part of Operation CeCe, which is a National Trading Standards and HMRC initiative to tackle illegal tobacco.

The sale of cheap, illegal tobacco brings criminals into our neighbourhoods, it is an obstacle to those wanting to give up smoking and it creates an unfair trading environment for our law-abiding businesses. It is also a part of serious and organised crime linked to people trafficking and drug smuggling.

Keep it out of our communities by reporting it on our website or via Citizens Advice Consumer Service on 0808 223 1133.

Animal health and welfare

An avian flu prevention zone is in force across the whole of the UK and if you keep birds commercially or as pets, it is now a legal requirement to follow strict biosecurity measures to help protect them.

You now need to:

- Keep domestic ducks and geese separate from other poultry
- Ensure the areas where birds are kept are unattractive to wild birds, for example, by netting ponds, and by removing wild bird food sources
- Feed and water your birds in enclosed areas to discourage wild birds
- Minimise movement in and out of bird enclosures
- Clean and disinfect footwear and keep areas where birds live clean and tidy
- Reduce any existing contamination by cleansing and disinfecting concrete areas, and fencing off wet or boggy areas
- Keep free range birds within fenced areas, and ponds, watercourses permanent standing water must be fenced off



If you find any dead or sick birds, please don't touch them, or pick them up. Please report any dead swans, geese, ducks, or other dead wild birds, such as gulls or birds of prey, to the Defra helpline on 03459 33 55 77.

Bird keepers should report suspicion of disease in captive birds to the Animal and Plant Health Agency on 03000 200 301. More information on avian flu and the restrictions currently in force is available at www.gov.uk/guidance/avian-influenza-bird-flu



Our Animal Health Team investigates reports of concerns relating to farmed animal welfare.

A recent case resulted in a lifelong ban for a Leicestershire livestock keeper. Our Animal Health officers visited following reports of animals regularly escaping onto a nearby road and found a small flock of sheep that were not being attended to and several decaying carcasses.

If you wish to report any concerns you may have about the welfare of farmed animals use our online form at <https://www.leicestershire.gov.uk/business-and-consumers/trading-standards>

Advice

Leicestershire Trading Standards are warning residents to be on their guard when receiving texts, emails, or phone calls about their NHS Covid pass.

Always be wary of emails, texts and phone calls asking for personal details upfront. Criminals are using the NHS Covid pass as a way to target the public by convincing them to hand over money, financial details, and personal details.

Remember, your vaccination status is obtained FREE through the NHS App or website.



Goods bought in a shop

What Are Your Consumer Rights?

The Consumer Rights Act 2015 says goods must be as described, fit for purpose and of satisfactory quality. During the expected lifespan of your product you're entitled to the following:

up to 30 days	If your goods are faulty, you can get an immediate refund.
up to 6 months	If it can't be repaired or replaced, then you're entitled to a full refund in most cases.
up to 6 years	If the goods do not last a reasonable length of time you may be entitled to some money back.

Having second thoughts about a recent purchase?

Remember that you have no legal rights to a refund if you simply change your mind about a shop bought product. Many shops have their own refund policy on unwanted items – always ask before you buy. Your legal rights on items bought in a shop are listed below.

If you need advice on any goods and services you have bought, call Citizens Advice Consumer Service on 0808 223 1133 or visit their website at

<https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/consumer/>

You can't always trust the marketing. Images of wildlife or a logo with a leaf, can convince you that you're making an environmentally friendly choice. But that might not be the whole truth.

Find out more at <https://greenclaims.campaign.gov.uk/>





It was great to be able to go out and meet the public again in a Covid secure way. Our Scams Liaison Officer attended the Safety 1st event on 18th October 2021, at the Salvation Army South Wigston.

With many organisations such as Public Health, Salvation Army, Voluntary Action South Leicestershire (VASL) and Oadby & Wigston Lions taking part, this was an opportunity for residents to pick up vital information about how to keep safe & well this winter.

It was great to be able to provide face to face support again and to provide no cold calling door stickers and scams advice cards. The advice cards would be predominantly useful for those who may live alone and be particularly vulnerable to cold callers.



Leicestershire Trading Standards provides information, support and intervention to residents to enable you to keep safe from scams and doorstep crime. We have produced an advice card on how to protect yourself from cold calling as a reminder of the Do's and Don'ts, so you don't get caught out.

Whether you receive a call purporting to be from your bank or telephone provider or a cold caller at the door, you can keep this handy card by the front door. The advice cards would be useful for those who may

live alone and be particularly vulnerable to cold callers.

If you, a family member, friend or neighbour could benefit from having one of these advice cards, you can get in touch to obtain one by calling 0116 305 8000 or email tradingstandards@leics.gov.uk

Leicestershire Trading Standards Service

Tel: 0116 305 8000

Email: tradingstandards@leics.gov.uk

 /LeicsTradingStandards