



## Memorandum

**From:** Jon Fleetwood  
Sergeant – LALO East Lothian

**To:** CI M. Paden  
LAC – East Lothian

**Date:** 10<sup>th</sup> August 2016

**Ref:**

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### Doorstep Crime

Doorstep crime is the name given to crimes carried out by bogus callers and rogue traders who call uninvited at people's homes under the guise of legitimate business or trade.

Rogue trading concerns incidents where consumers have been 'cold called'. It refers to the practice of deliberately overcharging for unsatisfactory goods and/or services. This includes overcharging for unnecessary work, damaging property deliberately in order to obtain money, leaving work unfinished and intimidating behaviour in order to extort money.

Doorstep crime affects some of the most vulnerable within society and our local communities. Victims are targeted due to perceived vulnerability (Age / Gender / Disability), with many becoming repeat victims. An individual's quality of life deteriorates significantly after such incidents, impacting on subsequent investigations and their ability to access the criminal justice system.

The national Police campaign aimed at tackling the issue of doorstep crime is, **Operation Monarda** with activity including intelligence gathering and enforcement, with the primary focus aimed at prevention and engagement. It is evident that the victims of Doorstep Crime are vulnerable and elderly members of our community who rarely access modern technology and rely on face to face contact or advice through campaign material. With this in mind officers conducted the following activities along with partners:

### Engagement

1. Circulation of 'Nominated Neighbour Scheme' booklets and guidance on how to use the scheme.
2. Talks given, along with Trading Standard Reps, to vulnerable groups covering:
  - a. Scams
  - b. Bogus Workmen
  - c. Personal safety
  - d. ELC Safe Trader Scheme
3. Media engagement through local press and Community Council/CAPP meetings

### Prevention

1. **Letter drops, 'Banking – National Best Practice Guidelines'** to all banks, Building Societies and Post offices in East Lothian - best practice guidelines were drawn up in 2004 by the Trading Standards Institute (TSI) the Building Societies Association (BSA), and the British Banking Association (BBA). The guidelines set out procedures, which may be adopted by the banking institutions in the event of an older or vulnerable adult attempting to withdraw unusually large sums of money, which might be used as payment to a rogue trader or doorstep criminal. The guidelines are supported by bank/building society staff training pack and posters. (Appendix A).
2. Visits to all Builder Merchants in East Lothian – to raise awareness of the campaign.
3. Circulation of Posters to Libraries, Council Buildings, Dr Surgeries, Post Offices, Citizen Advice Bureaus.
4. Circulation of Police Scotland advice slips (Appendix B).
5. Introduction of - '**Nominated Neighbour Scheme**', which allows for the increase of intervention and overall prevention of doorstep crime activity, through key support networks such as family, friends and neighbours. By means of displaying a card any caller is sign posted to a nominated neighbour or family member before access is gained to a home. An information booklet is provided giving detailed instruction to the user, 'nominated neighbour' and caller.
6. Introduction of '**No Cold Call Zones**' - which are designated areas where local residents and communities have the confidence to say NO to uninvited salespeople. These areas also warn rogue traders and cold-callers they are being watched.

Certain criteria are required for the identification of a suitable zone. The establishment of the zones should be proportionate and commensurate to the issues of the locality in question.

Information packs are available to help local communities to set up a no cold calling zones/cold calling control zones. The information packs are in three sections to cover what it is and why it is needed, getting started and running the scheme.
7. Raising awareness of East Lothian Council TS '**Trusted Traders Scheme**' – a register of reputable traders.

**Enforcement**

1. Officers from Trading Standards (TS) teamed up with Police officers for joint proactive patrols to ID and check traders carrying out work in area. Information packs were distributed, providing bespoke legal advice on the contractual obligations/rights of the trader and customer (Appendix C).
2. Multiple Joint Agency Road Checks, including VOSA, DVLA, TS, Road Policing Units and local Community Ward Officers.

**Crime Statistics**

Between February and July 2016 there were 30 Doorstep Crime type incidents reported within East Lothian. Of those, 74% were carried out during daylight hours and can be broken down as follows:

Monday	3% of Incs
Tuesday	17% of Incs
Wednesday	17% of Incs
Thursday	30% of Incs
Friday	27% of Incs
Saturday	3% of Incs
Sunday	3% of Incs

Ward	No. of Incidents
Dunbar & East Linton	1
Fa'side	6
Haddington & lammermuir	1
Musselburgh East & Carberry	6
Musselburgh West	5
North Berwick Coastal	3
Preston, Seton & Gosford	8

Jon Fleetwood  
Sergeant – LALO East Lothian



**Appendix A**

DATE

Your Ref:

Our Ref:

TYPE ADDRESS



DIVISION/DEPT  
TYPE ADDRESS

TEL NO

e-mail

Dear TITLE

**Doorstep Crime - Best Practice Guidelines**

We believe that all communities in the ..... area deserve to live their lives free from crime, disorder and danger. With this in mind I would like to ask for your support in our drive against doorstep crime.

'Doorstep crime' has a devastating impact on the lives of older victims and has potentially serious consequences for their life chances. Older adults (over 60's) in particular are at risk from bogus callers and doorstep rogue traders. To address this situation in ..... we are embarking on a high profile campaign.

Older and vulnerable adults fall victim to bogus callers, rogue workers or plausible sales people who sometimes demand large amounts of money. Isolated and pressured into paying, these victims are often driven to the bank, building society or post office to withdraw cash on demand.

Financial institutions can play an invaluable role in protecting older and vulnerable adults from these criminals. With this in mind I would like to remind you of the National Best practice Guidelines and ask you to circulate them among your staff.

If you have any further questions or queries, please do not hesitate to get in contact with your local Police Station through our non-emergency number; 101.

Yours Faithfully

## NOT PROTECTIVELY MARKED

### NATIONAL BEST PRACTICE GUIDELINES

When an older, or vulnerable customer wishes to make a withdrawal, which is outside their normal routine (e.g. unusually large and/or especially when they are accompanied by an unknown person).

**The Cashier should**

- Tactfully enquire why the cash is needed
- Point out the dangers of carrying large cash amounts
- Discourage the customer from drawing out cash, especially by pointing out the other means of payment available

(Where possible such advice should be communicated to the customer in a private area.)

Where it is suspected that the customer may be a potential victim, the consent of the customer should be sought to inform the police or trading standards. Where this cannot be gained, but there is still a suspicion that a customer may be the victim of a crime, internal procedures should be followed and every effort to make Police aware at the earliest opportunity should be sought.

Where suspicious circumstances arise, every effort should be made to record the customer and any accompanying person(s) on the CCTV security system.

Where possible, an attempt should be made to identify any vehicle being used by the customer and any accompanying person(s).

The customer's wishes must always be paramount. However, the sensitive and tactful application of these procedures will prevent customers from becoming victims of doorstep crime.

#### Personal Descriptive Form

Please list as much detail as possible, of anyone you suspect to have accompanied a customer to your premises, where you believe him / her to be a potential victim of a crime (Fraud etc):

<u>Ethnic Appearance:</u>	Unknown / White North European / White South European Asian / Chinese, Japanese or other South East Asian / Arabic or North African / Black ( <i>Persons of mixed appearance will be recorded in the most appropriate category</i> )
<u>Height:</u>	
<u>Build:</u>	Fat / Medium / Slim / Stocky / Thin
<u>Facial Hair:</u>	Bushy / Clean Shaven / Curly / Dirty / Dyed / Full Beard / Goatee / Greasy / Greying / Hairy / Handlebar / Long Sideburns / Moustache / Plucked / Streaked / Stubble / Very Long / Waxed / Other .....
<u>Head Hair:</u>	Afro / Bald / Beehive / Bushy / Collar Length / Cropped / Curly / Curtains / Dirty / Dreadlocks / Dyed / Greasy / Greying / Mohican / Permed / Plaited / Pony Tail / Rasta / Receding / Shaven / Short / Shoulder length / Skinhead / Straight / Streaked / Teddy / Thinning / Untidy / Very Long / Wavy / Wig / Other. ....
<u>Head Hair Colour:</u>	Auburn / Black / Blonde / Blue / Brown / Dark Brown / Fair / Ginger / Green / Grey / Light Brown / Mousey / Multi / Orange / Pink / Purple / Red / Sandy / White / Yellow / Other.....
<u>Eyes:</u>	Blue / Brown / Green / Grey / Hazel / Pink / Cast / Deformed / Protruding / Squint / Staring / Other .....
<u>Glasses:</u>	Glasses / No Glasses / Contact lenses
<u>Complexion:</u>	Fair / Sallow / Freckled / Spotted / Fresh / Swarthy / Pale / Tanned / Ruddy / Wrinkled
<u>Distinguishing Features:</u>	Lacking..... / Mark..... / Peculiarity..... / Pierced..... / Scar..... / Tattoos..... / Other.....
<u>Accent (General):</u>	Cultured / English / Irish / Welsh / Scottish / Other.....
<u>Noticeable Jewellery:</u>	
<u>Clothing worn at material time:</u>	
<u>Vehicles:</u>	Registration Number..... / Make..... / Model..... Colour..... / Type..... / Seen?.....
<u>Vehicle Types:</u>	3 Wheeler / Articulated Cab / Motor Caravan / Motor Cycle Combi / Convertible / Estate / Rigid Lorry / Lorry – Trailer / Solo Motor Cycle / Moped / Pick-up / Van / Sports / Scooter / Saloon / Public Service / Other .....
<u>Any Additional Observations:</u>	

## Appendix B



Division: J

Doorstep Crime

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Police Scotland is committed to reducing the number of individuals affected by doorstep crime, ultimately keeping vulnerable groups safe and empowering local communities. With this in mind we would like to ask for your support in our drive against these crimes.

Doorstep crime affects some of the most vulnerable within society, mainly targeting victims due to perceived vulnerability (Age/Gender/Disability), with many becoming repeat victims.

### What can I do?

#### THINK! –

- Be on guard if someone turns up unexpectedly.
- Be aware of methods used by criminals to distract you such as being asked to make a telephone call, asking to retrieve a ball or being asked to check water or gas supplies.
- Don't keep large amounts of money at home
- Do your premises or garden really require work to be carried out.
- If it sounds too good to be true, it probably is.
- Keep an eye out for Be vigilant for vulnerable neighbours who may fall foul of these criminals
- About calling the police when you see anything suspicious

**Never let an unknown person into your home. If you're not sure, don't answer the door.**

#### SECURE!

- Use a door chain or bar. Always put the chain on before opening the door and keep it on while talking to callers.
- If you don't have a door chain, check who is at the door from the nearest window.
- If you have a security spy-hole; use it to check who is at your door
- Keep rear and side doors and windows secure. **It may be easier for someone to gain access while you are answering the front door to their accomplice.**
- Don't feel embarrassed - genuine callers expect you to be careful.

**Never let an unknown person into your home. If you're not sure, don't answer the door.**

#### QUESTION!

- If you answer the door, ask for ID, whether you expect anyone or not.
- Remember – IDs can be faked and shouldn't be relied upon.
- Don't assume a caller is genuine because they are wearing a uniform.
- Ask a friend or neighbour to be available to help if you need them.
- Obtain a written quote before agreeing to have any work completed
- If you have any doubts, tell the caller to come back when someone else is home. Genuine callers won't mind rearranging.

## **NOT PROTECTIVELY MARKED**

Remember, utility companies have the option of setting 'personal passwords', which are quoted when they need to attend at your home. Ask your utility company about this service.

**If in doubt, keep them out!**

### **Trading Standards Advice**

Don't feel pressurised into agreeing to immediate work.

Never listen to scare stories. Beware of traders who suddenly appear after storms or floods and also of claims that a low price is only available if you sign up right away.

Don't agree to buy from the first person who calls.

Ask yourself if you really want these goods or services.

Don't pay cash up front.

Never pay for work before it is completed and don't hand over large sums of money.

Do shop around if you decide you need work done.

Get a minimum of three quotes from reputable traders and get recommendations from people you trust.

Do ask what your cancellation rights are.

Remember for jobs costing over £42, traders are required to provide the consumer with a written notice informing them they have a fourteen-day cooling off period during which customers can change their mind and cancel the contract. Do report them! Don't ever feel embarrassed if you feel you have been the victim of doorstep crime.

### **Who should I call if I feel threatened, unsafe or suspicious of a caller?**

- Contact the police immediately on **999**.

### **if I see something suspicious in my area, or want more advice about doorstep crime?**

- Contact the police on **101**.
- Try and take a note of vehicle details or registration numbers and descriptions of anyone suspicious.

### **If I want to contact the police anonymously?**

- Contact the independent charity Crimestoppers on **0800 555 111**. You can also visit its website at [www.crimestoppers-uk.org](http://www.crimestoppers-uk.org)

### **To find out more about home safety services?**

- Contact your local police station on **101** to arrange a free security survey.

Contact your local Trading Standards: Some operate No Cold Calling Zones or have lists of approved traders.

**In the fight against crime, Police and partner agencies rely heavily on support and information from the general public.**

## **HELP TO MAKE OUR COMMUNITIES SAFER?"**

**If you have any information on this type of criminal activity within our communities, please contact us.**

- **Call Police Scotland on 101**
- **Contact Trading Standards on 01620 827365**
- **Citizens Advice Consumer Service's 01620 824471**

## Appendix C

Trading Standards advice for businesses Home contracts

Cancellation rights

### What it means

Do you agree contracts when you're with consumers in their homes, or on the street or at a temporary venue or immediately after such an introduction on your premises?

Well, you're required to give consumers written notice of their rights to cancel **unless**

- it's for at most £42 or
- it's only for urgent repairs or maintenance made at the consumer's request or
- the goods are made to the customer's specification, an example could be windows made to measure and not just stock items

This right to cancel has now been extended to 14 days **and** in a major change to the law, the 14 days start from the day after goods are delivered.

For service only contracts the 14 days start from the date of the contract.

So consumers can cancel contracts involving goods from when it's signed to 14 days after the day they're delivered.

### What it doesn't mean

This does not mean that work can only start 14 days after the goods have been delivered.

If installation is involved, get the consumer's written consent if they ask you to install within the cancellation period. If they then cancel they must pay for the service you've provided.

Consumers can still cancel the fitted goods within 14 days of their delivery but you can make it their responsibility to return the goods. Cancellation is impossible if the nature of the goods has meant they have become inseparably mixed with other items.

### What must I do?

The notice of cancellation rights must be provided in writing which, if the consumer agrees, may be sent by email. This should be provided before or at the time the contract is agreed.

Oral contracts are not permitted since a consumer is not bound by the contract until the following information is provided in writing. These are regarded as terms of contract.

This requirement is relaxed if you're responding to an emergency costing less than £170.



**What if I don't?**

It is an offence under The Consumer Contracts (Information, Cancellation & Additional Charges) Regulations 2013 not to give consumers notice of their cancellation rights.

Cancellation rights don't go away. They can be lengthened by a year.

Contact Trading Standards if you want to know more. This is only a brief outline.