

From mountain to sea

Trading Standards Bulletin

Bulletin No. 51

Doorstep Crime/ Cold Calling

Nothing to report

Scams etc.

Puppy and Animal Sales

Trading Standards continues to receive complaints about puppies which people have purchased and then had legitimate concerns with. One of the latest complaint was received from a resident of Kincardineshire who paid over £1000 for a puppy which within a week was showing signs of serious illnesses such as ear infections and dental problems and had to be taken to the vet. The resident suspects that the kennel which he bought the puppy from is in fact a rogue breeder as it appears that the puppy has not been microchipped, vaccinated or have the appropriate accompanying paperwork.

When you buy a dog, cat or any other type of pet or animal from a trader the Consumer Rights Act 2015 states that they should be:

- In good health and free from any illness, hereditary or otherwise
- Had all appropriate vaccinations with relevant paperwork to prove this
- Come with any required documents (such as a horse passport for equines)
- As described in any adverts and any information provided about breed or pedigree should be accurate
- Fit for purpose; for example, if you ask for a dog that's good with children or other animals but you find it to be aggressive around either, then you can argue it's not fit for purpose
- If shortly after buying a pet, you discover it has an illness or it dies you will have the same rights against the trader as you would for any other item bought

If it's been 30 days or less since you bought the animal and it has taken ill or died then you can ask the trader to refund you in full, this is called your 'short term right to reject'. However, you may have to prove that the animal was ill when it was sold to you, so an early check over by your vet may be advisable.

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You should be refunded within 14 days of returning the animal to the trader or informing them that it has died. Your refund should be by the same method that you used to pay for the animal, for example if you paid in cash then you should normally expect a cash refund.

In an unrelated but similar vein, another resident purchased a puppy for £600 from a breeder at a farmhouse which did not appear to be lived in. The mother and puppies were living in the kitchen which looked grubby and there were several other dogs who did not seem used to visitors living outside in runs.

This puppy quickly developed a skin complaint due to the conditions it had been living in. In addition, the vaccination record was incomplete and the name the seller gave the buyer bore no relation to the personal bank account name which payment was made to. These should have sounded alarm bells in the buyer's mind that all was not right.

Please remember when buying a puppy to do so from a reputable breeder. Ask questions and compare the answers to your own observations, check the puppy's home environment and paperwork thoroughly and if alarm bells start to ring, heed them and end the transaction, then report your concerns to Trading Standards and/or Police Scotland. Further information about puppy scams and farms can be found in TS Bulletin 44.

Phone Scams

One Marr residents recently received a call from a lady who claimed to work for the Amazon fraud team. This caller gave her name and Amazon ID and initially was pleasant enough, though it was noted that she had a thick Asian accent and was a poor communicator. She claimed that the resident's Amazon account had been hacked by someone in the US who had ordered an iPhone 13 on the account. The caller instructed the resident to download the AnyDesk app so that she could suspend the resident's Amazon account, apparently to stop the transaction.

When the resident refused to download this app, the caller became very irate and aggressive and began screaming at the resident. The resident did the right thing and, giving the caller short shrift, hung up.

The truth of the matter is that this caller was not an Amazon employee but a scammer. No Amazon employee would behave like this. In truth, the details she gave the resident were probably false and there had been no fraudulent transaction.

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AnyDesk is a genuine app which is used for gaining access to devices remotely, so in all likelihood the caller was looking for the resident to download the app, then log into her Amazon account and pass the log in information to the caller. Unknown to the resident, had the caller been successful, she would then have accessed the resident's Amazon account and made unauthorised purchases through it, sending these purchases to an address of the caller's choice. This misdirection to websites and apps is called pharming.

The resident did the right thing; she gave no personal details, used her own judgement and did not allow herself to be browbeaten even when under pressure, but hung up and reported the matter to Trading Standards.

This is a new variation on a theme and due to its nature could happen to anyone, so is worth bearing in mind.

Misc.

Nothing to report

Conclusion

Please note that the advice given in these bulletins has been deliberately kept simple, so that if you are faced with a scenario such as the ones discussed here where fear, panic and alarm are often tools used deliberately by scammers, you will know what to do at that time. Remember, after the initial panic is over, you may have rights which Trading Standards can help you with. We can also help you with advice about any article mentioned in these bulletins.

If you have been the victim of a Doorstep Crime or an attempted crime, whether Bogus Caller or Rogue Trader, please report the matter to Consumer Advice Scotland so that Trading Standards can build a detailed, ongoing picture of the activities of these scammers throughout the Shire. This would be a great help to us to tackle this sort of crime.

If you have any information to share about the unlawful sale of tobacco or disposable vapes, please use the [Contact Info](#) below to pass that information to Trading Standards. If you would prefer, you can report the information anonymously to Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111.

Contact Info



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For urgent Trading Standards matters, contact Aberdeenshire Council's Trading Standards at 01467 537222. For non-urgent enquiries, please contact Consumer Advice Scotland at <https://www.consumeradvice.scot/> or on 0808 164 6000.

Contact Police Scotland on 999 if you need urgent Police assistance or 101 for non-urgent matters.

For more information about scams please visit Friends Against Scams at <https://www.friendsagainstscams.org.uk/> or Take Five at <https://takefive-stopfraud.org.uk/>

Please direct any media queries to news@aberdeenshire.gov.uk or 01467 538222 during office hours.

All previous Trading Standards bulletins can be found at:
<http://publications.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/dataset/trading-standards-crime-and-scams-bulletin>