

From mountain to sea

Trading Standards Scams Bulletin No. 115

The articles in these bulletins are based on real life complaints made to Aberdeenshire Council's Trading Standards department, unless otherwise stated, to make them as relevant as possible to readers. Names, exact addresses etc. have been withheld to avoid identifying complainants and to comply with GDPR so please feel free to share the contents with friends, family, neighbours or any community groups you are a part of. For details of scams reported in other parts of Scotland please click on the [Trading Standards Scotland Bulletin page](#).

Bogus Callers and Rogue Traders

One resident in the Oldmeldrum area recently had an unpleasant experience when a doorstep caller attended at her home in his car. This male claimed to be working for 'the Council' (implying Aberdeenshire Council) and advised her that he was going round farms in the area to advise residents that an (unspecified) energy provider would providing these resident with free solar panels.

The male, who was in his late 50's and had a very scruffy appearance, was very pushy and quite rude. He beckoned the resident over to his car rather than alighting from it. It was also noted that the male was wearing a lanyard with what may have been an ID card on it. The ID card looked to be years old and 'out of date'.

While in conversation with the male, it became quite clear that he had no real idea of what he was talking about. He told the resident that these solar panels would work because of 'daylight' and when the resident replied that they would work because of the Sun, the male contradicted her and restated that it would be because of daylight, clearly failing to understand the link between the two.

At this point the resident and her son, who had been nearby listening, told the male that they were not interested. Thankfully, he then left.

He is further described as being of stocky build and medium height, having longish greying hair, glasses, Glaswegian accent and a very rude and abrasive manner.

In truth, this is a scam. No such person works for Aberdeenshire Council.

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Some further points to consider:

- This man clearly falls into the category of an inept scammer. For any scam to work, the scammer has to get the potential victim onside and convinced that the scam may be real. To do that, in a very short time, the scammer has to have credibility. Being rude and abrasive to potential victims alienates them immediately and dooms the scam to failure, as in this case,
- Likewise, being a scruffy, unwashed individual does not inspire confidence or credibility, so this male (thankfully) does himself no favours in this area either,
- ‘Successful’ scams are successful because they are plausible. This was not one of those.
- As with any other cold caller, the best response is “Thanks, but no thanks”,
- As this man had a vehicle, it is likely that he will pop up again, like a bad penny, in other areas. We would encourage people who are contacted by this male to try to note the colour, make, model and registration number of his car. The most important factor is the registration number,
- Please then report these incidents to Trading Standards, so that we can try to tackle them,
- If you are considering solar panels or other form of ‘green’ energy, organisations such as [Scarf](#) and [Home Energy Scotland](#) would be good places to start, to seek reliable advice.

Scams etc.

A resident in the north Formartine area recently reported that she had received the following text message on her mobile phone. It is a scam and so, needless to say, is likely to have been sent out to thousands of people at the same time.

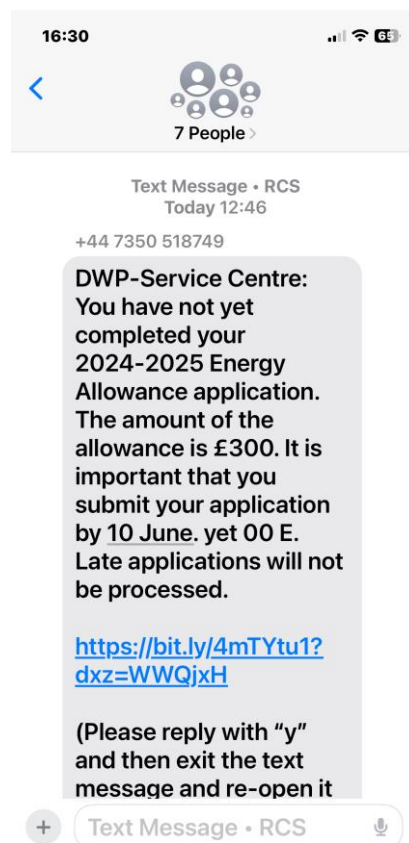
Although the message of this text states the date of 10 June 2025, more recent reports from the Kincardineshire area advise that the date of 18 June 2025 has been included in these messages. It would therefore seem reasonable to assume that as time goes on, new texts will appear with new dates in the future being included in those messages and that they could be received by anyone with a mobile phone.

Some points to consider:

- This scam is based on the withdrawal and subsequent re-instatement of the Winter Fuel Allowance and highlights the opportunistic nature of some scams. It also highlights how scammers are tuned into current events and how they exploit uncertainties in people’s minds,

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- As with any other text scam, please never click on a link in a suspicious text,
- The likely intent of this scam would be to try to obtain people's bank details, possibly to use in another type of scam or crime, or to redirect genuine WFA payments to the scammers' accounts,
- Winter Fuel Allowance payments, although altered, do not require anyone to make application for them. They will be paid automatically without the need to apply,
- The sum of £300 here, although accurate, will no doubt be touted by the scammers as an inducement for people to do what they want (the carrot),
- The cut-off date, which is entirely false whatever date the text might say, is the stick (act now or lose the chance!!!!). Both of the above should be seen for what they really are,
- If you can, forward the text to the National Cyber Security Centre on the Spam/Scam short code of 7726. Or screenshot the text and e-mail it in at report@phishing.gov.uk
- Then, please report the matter to your local Trading Standards office along with the screenshot.



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Misc.

In Bulletin 61 (February 2023) we highlighted the dangers of energy saving devices, often made up to look like wall plugs, and how a resident in north Aberdeenshire almost came to grief when she installed one in her home but was fortunate enough to come downstairs in the middle of the night just as the device was starting to catch fire.

The simple truth is that these devices do not work. What the makers are proposing is that they have re-written the laws of physics and embodied the new law in a tiny little wall plug. These plugs are a scam and a dangerous one at that. As someone famous once said “Ye canna change the laws o’ physics, Jim!”.

Our advice is simple – PLEASE DO NOT BUY THESE DEVICES. THEY ARE A WASTE OF YOUR MONEY AND POSSIBLY A DANGER TO YOU, YOUR FAMILY AND YOUR HOME.

Our colleagues at the Consumers Association (Which? magazine) recently produced an article about these plugs which makes worrying reading. These plugs appear to be still widely available and are as dangerous as ever. The article can be found on the [Which? website here](#). It is well worth a read.

Conclusion

Please note that the advice given in these bulletins has been deliberately kept simple, so that if you are faced with such a scenario where fear, alarm and panic are tools often used deliberately by scammers, you will know what to do at that time.

If you have been the victim of a Bogus Caller or other form of scam, please report the matter to Consumer Advice Scotland so that Trading Standards can maintain a detailed picture about scammers operating in 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 non-urgent Trading Standards enquiries in Aberdeenshire, please contact the [Consumer Advice Scotland](#) website or call them on 0808 164 6000. For urgent Trading Standards matters, contact Aberdeenshire Council's Trading Standards at 01467 537222.

Aberdeen City Council's Trading Standards department can be contacted by calling 0300 0200 292 or e-mailing tradingstandards@aberdeencity.gov.uk

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

For more information about scams please visit the [Friends Against Scams website](#) or [Take Five](#) at their website.

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

All previous Trading Standards bulletins can be found on the Aberdeenshire Council website on the [Trading Standards Scams Bulletin page](#).