

Trading Standards News

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



Welcome to our Autumn 2022 Newsletter

From counterfeit vodka to advice on the latest energy scams, it's all here folks.

Remember to stay up to date with our latest news by following us on [Facebook](#).

Contact Citizen's Advice Consumer helpline on 0808 223 1133 or [online](#) for advice on all Trading Standards matters.

Scams in the news

WhatsApp "hi Mum" scam moves to text



The notorious 'Hi Mum and Dad' scam has spread from WhatsApp to text message.

Scammers continue to prey on parents as the heartless "friend in need" scam begins to appear on text messages.

This message is sent by a scammer pretending to be a family member having a financial emergency. The scammer relies on the person receiving it not checking its source.

Don't fall for the scam. Find out more from [Action fraud](#).

Find out how to report a text you think is a scam from [National Cyber Security Centre](#).

Make sure you're pension Scam-Smart

Pension scams can be hard to spot as scammers can contact you out of the blue.

They may use an offer of a free pension review, high pressure tactics such as time-limited deals and high returns to gain access to your pension savings.

Find out more from the [Financial Conduct Authority](#).



Fake emails and texts claim to offer discounts on energy bills

As usual, scammers are quick to capitalise on whatever is in the news, in this instance our concerns about rising energy bills.

Energy scams are on the increase. A fake email or text message may invite you to click on a link leading to a fake Ofgem website to then provide your personal and financial details. The message is a scam.

The government's £400 energy bill discount will be automatic through your energy bills and is not something you have to apply for.



- If you have any doubts about a message, contact the organisation directly
- Don't use the numbers or address in the message, use the details from their official website
- Your bank or any other official source will never ask you to supply personal information via email

Find information on the Energy bills support Scheme here: [Government guidance on energy bills support](#).

Learn how to avoid and report energy scams at [Ofgem](#).

Don't forget, extra payments for those on benefits to help with the cost of living are automatic. You don't need to apply. Find out more here: [Government guidance on cost of living payments](#).

Trading standards in the news

Coalville store selling counterfeit vodka "unfit for human consumption" fined

Trading Standards Officers always take reports of dangerous or illegal drink and foodstuffs very seriously and will carry out inspections and take samples or seize items accordingly.

A company director whose business sold counterfeit vodka deemed "unfit for human consumption" has been disqualified from his role and fined thousands by the courts. The director and his company were each handed fines by Loughborough Magistrates' Court after an investigation from Trading Standards uncovered a batch of counterfeit vodka bottles being sold at Metro Stores in Coalville's Marlborough Square.

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The bottles were falsely trademarked to be genuine Glen's Vodka, but the 'vodka' itself was found to be a danger to the public. Customers who bought the vodka reported that it did not smell right, with one even falling ill after drinking it.

The director was fined £5,477.60 in costs and disqualified from being a company director for two years. The company was also fined £6,000 by the courts. Read more here: [Leicester Mercury](#).

To report counterfeit products including alcohol to Trading Standards, visit [our report it page](#).



“Rogue Trader Week 2022”

Rogue traders repeatedly pose as legitimate tradespeople, often targeting vulnerable people within our communities. These unscrupulous offenders are extremely believable and can come across as very charming and trustworthy, but they can also use strategies such as aggressive behaviour and scare tactics, advising work needs doing which often doesn't. The work can be substandard, and consumers may find themselves paying more than they originally agreed.



On Wednesday 21st September 2022, Leicestershire County Council Trading Standards Service, Leicestershire Police, Blaby Police, Market Bosworth Police, Hinckley Police, HMRC and Environment Agency carried out a joint operation during which numerous vehicles were stopped and provided with relevant business advice and guidance across 2 designated areas of the county.

Rogue trading can have such a detrimental effect on a person, not just financially, but emotionally and physically.

Don't fall for the urgency that traders will often imply – a tile is missing from your roof, it might fall and hurt someone, or it might cause internal damage to your home and collapse. Always get a second and third opinion and never feel pressured into agreeing to work immediately.

Do not agree to any work on your doorstep, obtain full details of the company, the work and price in writing and never pay in cash.

If the trader is legitimate, they won't mind waiting for you to come back to them once you have made an informed decision. Be wary of those that say they can start straight away, whatever reason they give you. The message is simple: 'If you're not sure, don't open the door'.

To report an incident please call 0808 223 1133 or visit [Citizen's Advice](#) for more advice.

International Product Safety week 2022

Consumer product safety and things to consider when buying and using products (14-17 November 2022)

Do your research

Who and where are you buying from? If you buy a product from a seller based outside the UK it may not be manufactured or labelled to comply with our safety laws.

Look at the product you have bought. Does it have clear instructions and safety markings? Do you have the name and address of the manufacturer? If not be cautious about using the product.



Marking

Some products must display appropriate marking to be sold in the UK, these include toys, electrical goods, gas appliances and fireworks as well as some personal protective equipment. This marking is a statement from the manufacturer that the product meets specific safety, health, and environmental requirements.

Until 1 January 2023, products sold in Great Britain may display CE or UKCA marking.

Register your products

Many household products, especially electrical goods, come with the option to register them with the manufacturer. This may activate an extended guarantee or warranty, but it's also very important for safety reasons.

Registering your product means that you can be directly informed if there is a safety issue with it and get any repairs done as soon as possible. If it is recalled, a refund or replacement will be arranged.

Find out more at registermyappliance.org.uk.





What to do if a product you own has a potential safety risk

Take the action recommended if you receive an email or letter from a manufacturer stating, "important safety warning" or "product recall".

You can check if the product you own is subject to action such as issuing new instructions, modifications or even advice to return for a refund via a manufacturer's website.

When there are potential safety issues with goods and food, there will be a "recall" of the product. Keep an eye on UK product recalls on the www.gov.uk portal. You can also find details of [EU](#) and [International](#) product recalls online. For more consumer product safety advice UK government [Consumer product safety advice](#).

Report your concerns and get advice

If you need to report a dangerous product or seek advice on your consumer rights, contact [Citizen's Advice](#) online or on 0808 223 1133. They will pass on product safety complaints that may need to be investigated to trading standards.

Don't get (subscription) trapped...

Trading standards continue to receive reports from consumers who have taken advantage of "free" or low cost offers which end up costing them hundreds even thousands of pounds.

Avoid a subscription trap headache

Subscription traps are often linked with offers for slimming pills, health foods, pharmaceuticals, and anti-aging products. But the latest mobile phones are increasingly being featured.

The perpetrators of subscription traps exploit a 'continuous payment authority', normally by requesting your payment card details as proof of identity and age, then retaining those details to draw monthly payments from your account. Details of this ongoing commitment are generally buried in the terms & conditions and are missed by many people, eager instead to take advantage of the 'fantastic offer' being advertised.



- Always read the small print or terms and conditions carefully before entering into any agreement or making a purchase.
- Make sure the terms and conditions box has not been pre-ticked
- Keep a copy of the advertisement you reply to, print it, or take a screen shot of the webpage

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- Check your bank/payment card statements regularly for unexpected payments

[Get Safe Online](#) offers great advice on how to avoid subscription traps and what to do if you are caught in one.

Cost of living crisis....?

Some businesses are sadly struggling in this economic climate and may cease trading.



If a company or trader stops trading or goes out of business, you could end up without the item you paid for or with unfinished work.

There's no guarantee you'll get what you paid for but there are several ways to try to get your money back or get the work done. Remember, if the item is over £100 and you pay part of this on a Credit Card, you will have automatic protection with the credit card Company.

Get further advice from [Citizen's Advice: when a company stops trading.](#)

If you are feeling the pinch on your spending, you are not alone. Leicestershire trading standards are planning a series of advice posts in the coming months to help you navigate the rising cost crisis.

Don't miss our up-to-date advice and practical by following us at [f /LeicsTradingStandards.](#)



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