

Reducing the risk of doorstep crime

How to recognise rogue traders or bogus
callers and who can help



**citizens
advice**

**Consumer Education facilitator notes
for Doorstep Crime (Basic) Pack**

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Group session aims and objectives

The education pack is designed to assist advisers, facilitators, teachers and community workers by providing a number of activities that can be used to:

- generate discussions on the topic of doorstep crime
- test awareness of rogue traders, cold callers and distraction burglars
- raise awareness of the consumer service and how to get advice

The aims of the resources are to:

- build confidence when dealing doorstep traders
- be aware of how rogue traders operate
- know where to get advice and help

The objectives are that by the end of the session learners will be able to:

- understand the risk of engaging with doorstep traders/ callers
- recognise rogue traders/ distraction burglary tactics
- be able to know where to get help if a person is at potential risk
- know how to report potential rogue traders/ bogus callers

If you are limited with time you may wish to focus on one or two activities to cover the objectives you feel are the most important.

Materials

- 'Client handout' worksheets - not essential as activities can be conducted as discussions.
- Local and national newspaper articles – some links are provided but you may wish to provide your own (e.g local cases)
- Access to the internet if possible – video links (in reference section)

Introduction

The purpose of the training material is to equip local Citizens Advice, Trading Standards and community educators to raise awareness of rogue traders and doorstep crime. The aim is also to reduce the fear of this type of crime and be able to signpost participants to sources of further advice and information.

Key subject areas...

- How to identify rogue trader behaviour
- Who can help?
- How to deal with doorstep traders
- What you can do in your area – to help prevent doorstep crime.

The key focus on this section is to identify organisations and community schemes that can help. It is important to remind participants not to try to take on rogue traders by themselves.

This material aims to help prevent people getting into difficulties with rogue traders and raise awareness about potential bogus callers. However for advice about specific cases you should refer to the Citizens Advice consumer service – 03454 040506. If someone is being threatened call the Police 999.

The training materials have been designed to be used as a training course or activities that can be used singularly. **Each activity should provide participants with the key message of saying NO to doorstep traders and always provide them with the contact details of who can help in their local area.** This will require facilitators to research and supply local information.

Subject Specific information

Doorstep crime refers to rogue traders, bogus callers and distraction burglary. Whilst we do have genuine callers at our doors there are unfortunately those that exploit people in their homes.

This includes people that knock on your door, phone calls, leaflets the rogue traders put through the letterbox and false use of logos to appear genuine. Distraction burglary is when a person tries to gain access to your home by trying to trick you into believing they need help or are officials in the area.

The advice is not to let anyone into the home unless they are expected or known them. Even if you are expecting callers from a utility company or local authority,

set a password when you make the arrangements that the caller has to give on arrival. Use a door chain if possible whilst you establish the caller is genuine.

Consumer Protection – noted below are regulations that can assist consumers. This is provided as a general overview for the facilitator but it should be noted that specific advice should not be given during a session, other than to forward the person to the right point of assistance. Consumer Advice must only be offered by those qualified to do so.

The guidance from the training should be to never deal with doorstep traders or cold callers. Some consumer protection legislation may help a consumer that has agreed to have work done by a cold caller/ trader, but many rogue traders will not provide information about the company, prices or where they are located to be able to pursue them in the event of a problem. Again to reiterate consumers should not engage with these types of traders but these pieces of legislation may help in the event that a consumer has agreed to having work undertaken through someone cold calling (either at the door, over the phone or via leaflet posted through the door.)

Consumer Contracts (Information, Cancellation and Additional Charges) Regulations 2013 (CCRs)

The trader must provide the consumer with information before they buy goods or services. How much information businesses will have to provide will depend on where or how the contract was made:-

- in a shop, garage or business – this is called an ‘on-premises’ contract
- in your home, on the street or away from the business address – this is called an ‘off-premises’ contract
- over the telephone, online or by mail order – this is called a ‘distance’ contract

The regulations lay out what the consumers’ responsibilities are and what the traders’ responsibilities are. Consumers should be encouraged to check what is involved before entering into a purchase. Information can be found via the Citizens Advice website, local Citizens Advice and the Citizens Advice consumer service.

(These requirements only apply where businesses are dealing with customers who are consumers, not other traders.)

Under the CCRs you have the right to cancel an order for goods made at a distance starts when you receive the goods and lasts for 14 days.

Consumer Protection from Unfair Trading Regulations 2008 - Consumers should be able to make informed choices; if ads or offers are misleading or there are deliberate omissions of details within a contract the consumer may be able to undo the contract.

Reputable trader schemes

In a bid to combat rogues and poor practice various different reputable trader schemes operate locally, regionally and nationally.

Reputable trader schemes have required codes of practice that their members must adhere to or risk being removed from the scheme. Some of the trader schemes also offer Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) when things go wrong. There will be local schemes, brand schemes and other marketing schemes.

Some Trading Standards operate a Buy with Confidence scheme, where members have been vetted and approved in their business practices, to allow them onto the scheme. This is a national register but consumers can find local traders by using the Buy with confidence website or requesting a list from their local Trading Standards.



The trader scheme details provided in the reference section are not exclusive (nor endorsed by Citizens Advice), they are just examples of reputable schemes. Further information on consumer rights can be researched on the Citizens Advice website with relevant weblinks in the reference section.

Community watch schemes

Cold Calling Zones – These are areas set up in partnership with the local authority with clear acknowledgement that the residents in the area do not want to engage with doorstep traders (including charities and utility companies.)

Nominated neighbour schemes – this scheme allows the resident to choose a neighbour that will deal with any doorstep callers. A sign indicates to doorstep sellers or cold callers that they must contact a designated neighbour before they can speak to the resident.

For information on No Cold Calling Zones or Nominated Neighbour schemes contact your local authority. They will be able to advise as to what operates in your area or advise as to how set these up.

For information about the Neighbourhood Watch schemes visit the national website **Neighbourhood Watch Scheme**

<https://www.gov.uk/government/get-involved/take-part/help-make-your-neighbourhood-a-safer-place>

Note for facilitators

This can be a sensitive subject for people to talk about; they may have been a victim or doorstep crime or know someone that has. Try to set a tone of empowerment rather than worry. Make sure participants,

- feel able to join in
- feel free to ask questions
- listen to other people
- keep to time
- keep personal information confidential – avoid too much detail on personal experience
- Respect each other's' different views
- Have the Citizens Advice consumer service contact details

List any key words/ jargon that the group are not familiar with that will be used in the session translated into everyday language such as:

- TS – Trading Standards
- RAT – rapid action team
- CACS – Citizens Advice Consumer Service
- LCA – Local Citizens Advice
- CTSI – Chartered Trading Standards Institute
- DSC – Doorstep Crime

The facilitator and learners can identify other key words during the session.

It is essential to stress at the end of the activities and discussions that the guidance would be to never engage with builders/ traders at the door.

There is the danger that if someone engage with a rogue trader they will be targeted by others. Contact the local Trading Standards or the Citizens Advice Consumer Service to find out what schemes are available the local area. Call the police if someone feels threatened or in danger.

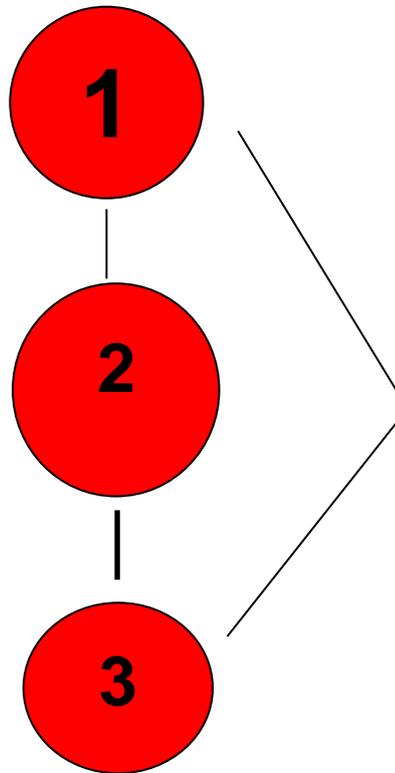
Session Plan

The session plan has been designed to show facilitators how they can use and manage the resources within the pack.

All activities can be delivered separately or as part of a longer session depending on the time resource available to the facilitator.

It is for the facilitator to determine which activities will be most relevant for their participants.

Activities will require some of the session specific guidance content.



Red activities – Are **essential** to any session on this topic

Amber activities – Are **highly recommended** but not essential

Green activities – Are **optional** activities, if time allows

In this topic all of the activities are equally important, so it is essential to try to cover as much of the content as possible. All participants should be given the consumer service contact details and well as reinforcing the message to contact the police if someone is at risk.

Activity 1 – What is doorstep crime?

List

Give some brief information to participants on what is meant by doorstep crime and ask participants to list different examples they can think of.

It is ok for participants to discuss their own experiences but try to avoid too much personal information being divulged and if anyone is talking about a current situation they should be signposted to the consumer service or the police if they are at risk.

List the different examples given and divide them between Rogue Trader and Distraction Burglary. Use a flipchart, notepad or whiteboard for this activity.

Identify

Following on from this then present newspaper stories and the video (links if possible) about these types of activities.

The purpose of this activity is to get the participant to identify key information that indicates rogue trading activity.

- How is the victim being conned?
- What methods are used?
- How do they pay?
- What help is available?

Give participants print outs of the example news stories and ask them to either write down or highlight key reoccurring information.

These are just examples from around the country, you may wish to research and use news stories in your local area.

<https://www.itv.com/news/meridian/2018-04-21/three-suspected-rogue-traders-arrested/>

<https://www.coventrytelegraph.net/news/coventry-news/beer-bellied-distraction-burglar-who-13579582>

<https://www.dunstabletoday.co.uk/news/man-jailed-over-distraction-burglary-at-dunstable-home-of-woman-in-her-90s-1-8648447>

<https://www.peterboroughtoday.co.uk/news/crime/peterborough-rogue-trader-sentenced-by-court-after-residents-lose-thousands-1-8819894>

<https://www.worthingherald.co.uk/news/crime/rogue-trader-sentenced-for-3-000-fraud-of-89-year-old-east-preston-woman-1-8813046>

Provide participants with the Citizens Advice consumer service contact details 03454 04 05 06, Welsh-speaking adviser on 03454 04 05 05

Activity 2 – Dealing with cold callers

In this activity participants should think about the types of people that call at their door. List these and also make a note of why they think they are calling. Ask participants to reflect on how they feel when someone call unannounced. Then ask them to discuss ways to respond to the callers. Record their thoughts and discussions or alternatively use the second worksheet that has examples provided.

Think about,

- Who is calling?
- What do they want?
- Are they worrying you?
- If they say there is a problem how can you respond without letting them in?
- How can you check they are genuine?
- How can you keep safe?
- Who can help?

Discuss the answers and agree on plans of action if they find themselves in this situation or how they can help someone they are concerned about. DON'T try to take on a dangerous situation on your own.

Use the handouts for participants to make their own notes and contact details – remind them not to write personal details down (their own or those of people they would contact, they can do this at home)

Provide participants with the Citizens Advice consumer service contact details 03454 04 05 06, Welsh-speaking adviser on 03454 04 05 05 and advise participants to call the police if someone is in danger.

	Example 1	Example 2
Who is calling?	A builder	An electric company
What do they want?	They've spotted a problem with your roof	To read the meter
Are they worrying you?	Yes because it could be costly	A bit pushy
How can you respond?	Take time, don't agree to any work	Ask for ID or arrange for them to come back another time
How can you check they are genuine?	Reputable traders don't tend to knock looking for work. Don't engage!	Ask for ID, close the door while you use the phone number from your bill to check they are in the area. Don't use a contact number on the ID.
How can you keep safe?	Don't engage with doorstep traders at all. Don't agree to any work or call backs.	Arrange times for meter readers to come and establish a password they must use.
Who can help?	Citizens Advice consumer service, the police. Trading Standards Set up no CCZ or neighbourhood watch scheme	The energy company Trading Standards The police

Provide participants with the Citizens Advice consumer service contact details 03454 04 05 06, Welsh-speaking adviser on 03454 04 05 05 and advise participants to call the police if someone is in danger.

Activity 3 – Who can help?

This activity aims to raise awareness among participants of what can be done in their area to combat the problem of doorstep crime and what agencies/ organisations are around to assist.

Ask participants to think who they would initially contact for help and then think about the wider issue of how to reduce the risk of doorstep crime.

- what schemes may help
- essential phone numbers

As the facilitator you should provide details of the local Trading Standards, local Citizens Advice, and local police contacts, but will then require participants to do research into their own neighbourhood schemes.

Use the worksheet to record the participants' findings and ensure they have listed the contact numbers relevant.

Provide participants with the Citizens Advice consumer service contact details
Telephone 03454 04 05 06, Welsh-speaking adviser on 03454 04 05 05

What types of rogue trader activity may go on? <i>Examples given below</i>	What could help? <i>Examples given below</i>	Who can help? List relevant contacts with contact details <i>Examples given below</i>	Find the contact numbers and add them here
Distraction burglary by pretending to be from a utility company	Raising awareness No Cold Calling Zone Set passwords	Trading Standards Local police Local CAB Neighbourhood watch, community groups Utility company	
Gardening, tree cutting,	Reputable Trader schemes	Trading Standards Local police Local CAB Neighbourhood watch, community groups	
Driveways and tarmacking	Neighbourhood Watch scheme	Trading Standards Local police Local CAB Neighbourhood watch, community groups	
Claims that roof tiles are loose	A reputable trader for second opinion	Trading Standards Local police Local CAB Neighbourhood watch, community groups	

Summary

Summarise the importance of being aware of how rogue traders and distraction burglary work and the importance of not engaging with them.

Ask participants to create a short list of things they have learnt from the session

Ensure that the participant can:

- Recognise the signs of rogue trader activity
- Know how important it is to never engage with doorstep traders
- Know who to contact in their local area for advice and help
- Think about how they can support their local community by getting this information out to neighbours, friends and family
- Explore the options of working with neighbourhood watch schemes, Cold Calling Zones or Nominated Neighbour schemes.
- Disseminate the message ... always say NO to doorstep traders. Never engage with them, if you are worried about work that needs doing to your home, contact a reputable source.

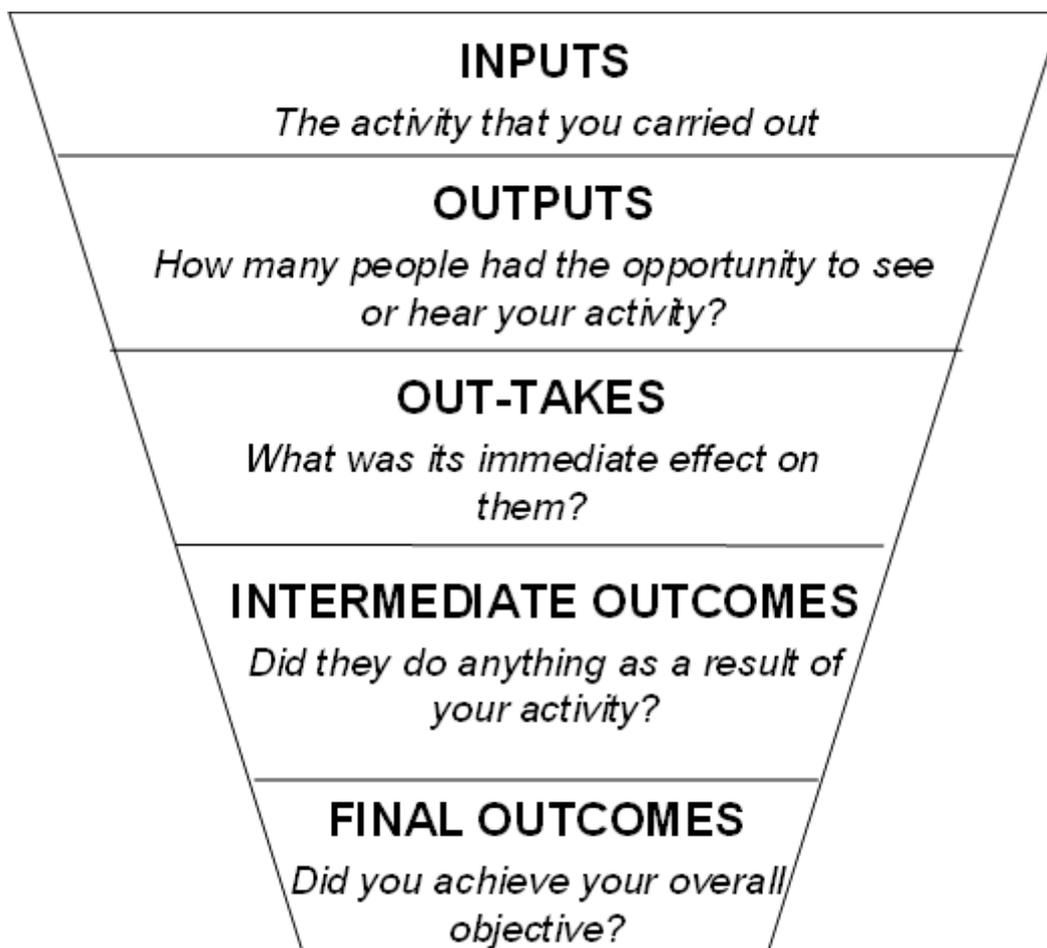
Ensure that the participants have the relevant contact numbers and understand the information that has been given out. If you have concerns about a participant strongly encourage them to visit their local Citizens Advice or contact the Citizens Advice consumer service.

Follow on work

Participants should find out where they can get useful resources such as door stickers and no cold calling signs for their property to deter doorstep traders,

A list of topics that participants are interested in should have evolved naturally out of the themes covered in the activities. The participant can decide what they would like to discuss next time. This provides very useful information for Citizens Advice, it also increases the likelihood that the participant will return for another group or advice.

The framework offers the facilitator questions that will enable a more in-depth analysis of the session. This can be done as a post-session analysis by the facilitator or can be discussed with the participants. This will be dependent on the timescale available and also the engagement of the participants.



The facilitator should feedback their experience of the resources with specific comments about:

- o the ease of use of the materials
- o the effectiveness of the activities
- o any recommended top tips
- o any other recommendations for the resource
- o any interest from participants for other resource topics

Reference section and useful links

Chartered Trading Standards Institute

<https://www.tradingstandards.uk/news-policy/news-room/2018/police-and-trading-standards-join-forces-to-tackle-rogues>

Misleading and Aggressive practices

<https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/wales/consumer/changed-your-mind/if-you-were-misled-or-pressured-into-buying-something-you-didnt-want/>

Citizens Advice consumer pages

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

Neighbourhood Watch Scheme

<https://www.gov.uk/government/get-involved/take-part/help-make-your-neighbourhood-a-safer-place>

Buy With Confidence – Trading Standards scheme

<https://www.buywithconfidence.gov.uk/>

Checkatrade

<https://www.checkatrade.com/>

Trusted traders

<https://trustedtraders.which.co.uk/>

Video Resources

London Trading Standards Doorstep Crime

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7plnAucy4BM>

London Trading Standards Safeguarding

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vHYbCXQNjsQ>