

# Not sure? Don't open the door!

Be on your guard against bogus callers



Always **call 999** if you think a crime is in progress

**Call 101** if it's not an emergency or visit:

[www.avonandsomerset.police.uk](http://www.avonandsomerset.police.uk)



# Doorstep criminals



There are criminals who target the homes of elderly people as they believe they are more trusting and less likely to challenge them.

**Rogue traders** call at the door without an appointment and offer to do work on your home or garden.

- This work will be over-priced and poor quality
- They will invent problems or quote high prices for small bits of work

**Bogus callers** make up stories to try to get into your home and distract your attention while they steal valuables or money. They may also keep you talking on your doorstep while an accomplice tries to gain access to your home via the back door.

- Bogus callers can be men, women or even children
- Their appearance can be smart, casual or they may even wear tabards and have fake identification
- They sometimes pose as officials from utility companies

## **Bogus callers may use phrases like:**

"I'm from the water board and there has been a leak." *There is no water board anymore!*

"I'm from the gas company. There has been a leak and I need to come in and check your supply. You should wait outside."

"I'm working at your neighbour's house and need to get into your garden."

"Our ball has gone into your garden. Can I come in and look for it?"

"I've broken down in my car / I'm locked out of my house / I don't feel well, can I have a glass of water / can I use your phone?"

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## What to do

- If you're not expecting visitors, don't answer the door. If they don't leave, call the police on 999.

## Callers offering to do work

- Never agree on the spot to work being done on your home.
- Always get three written quotes from reputable companies and discuss these with friends or family before agreeing to any work being done.
- Don't go to the bank or a cash point with anyone claiming to be a trader.
- Call a neighbour / family member if you feel you are being pressurised into having work done.

## All callers

- Check the caller's identification. Call their company to confirm they are genuine using a phone number from the phone book. Never call a number given by the visitor – it could be bogus.
- Make an appointment for a date when you can have someone with you. Genuine callers won't mind coming back at a later date.
- Many service providers offer password schemes and it can be helpful to sign up to these. Genuine callers will know the password.
- Call a neighbour, family member or friend to check out the caller before you open the door.
- Keep your chain on when you answer the door.
- If someone calls asking for help, such as to ask to make a call or retrieve a ball from your garden, don't invite them into your house. If you really want to offer help, make them wait outside and while you're away from your door, close and lock it.

## Please remember...

- Don't keep valuables at home, including cash. Use a bank or post office account.
- Keep doors locked at all times and windows secure.
- Call 999 straight away to report any suspicious people you see.

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## Did you know that by law...?

- A trader must offer a cancellation period for any work agreed. The cooling off period changed from 7 days to 14 days in June 2014. If you want the work to start sooner than this, you must provide written agreement to show this is what you want.
- A notice explaining your rights must be provided in writing, either at the time of the contract or immediately afterwards. This applies to the sale of goods or services which exceed £35.
- Traders break the law if they refuse to leave your home at your request.
- Claiming a product is available for a limited time to pressure a sale is illegal.
- Falsely claiming you are at risk if you don't buy goods is illegal.

If any of the above happens, or you are suspicious of a trader, call the police immediately.

If you have agreed to have work carried out on your home or garden by a doorstep trader you can contact your local policing team for advice. They can give you advice about your rights if the traders return and can also ensure the traders acted/ are acting lawfully.

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