

From mountain to sea

# Trading Standards Scams Bulletin No. 136

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**

Nothing to report

## **Protecting Our Community**

Aberdeenshire Trading Standards continues to receive complaints from across the Shire relating to individuals operating under the name(s) "Kingdom Coatings".

There are several businesses and rogue traders operating under similar or varied names using "Kingdom Coatings". Trading Standards spoke with the Director of one of the companies and they confirmed that there are many impersonators and rogue traders going door-to-door pretending to be affiliated with their businesses, and that impersonation of known companies is taking place. This makes it difficult for residents to be confident that anyone calling at their door is genuine and can also make it more challenging for Trading Standards to take enforcement action when issues arise.

In one instance in south Aberdeenshire, a resident was charged a high four-figure sum by someone operating under the "Kingdom Coatings" name to have their roof cleaned and coated, with the end result described as 'a mess'. In the Garioch area, one resident reported repeated visits despite displaying a No Cold Callers notice. This reflects a wider pattern of concerns associated with individuals using the "Kingdom Coatings" name. In the Formartine area, a similar incident occurred, where the caller attempted to justify ignoring the notice by claiming he "wasn't selling anything" (which was untrue, as he was attempting to sell roof coating services). He also stated that neighbours were having their



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roofs coated. Claims that neighbours are having, or have had, work carried out are a common misleading tactic used by rogue traders to pressure residents into agreeing to work.

In another case, an elderly couple felt pressurised into paying a deposit following a doorstep approach.

Aberdeenshire Trading Standards' enquiries into these matters are ongoing, and we would encourage residents to report any instances where callers ignore No Cold Calling signs, carry out poor quality work, or attempt to pressure residents into agreeing to services.

Cold callers are individuals who contact residents without any prior relationship, warning or expressed interest. At the doorstep, this can include people offering services, carrying out surveys, or placing flyers through letterboxes.

Remember, when it comes to cold callers, whether at the door or on the phone, you cannot be certain who they are or what their true intentions are. You are under no obligation to answer the door or engage with them. If you have any concerns, keep the door closed (and locked) and either speak through the door or ignore the caller until they leave.

Be cautious: legitimate businesses should not need to rely on unsolicited doorstep approaches to secure work. Be wary of common pressure tactics such as claims they are "working nearby" or have "materials left over" available at a reduced price.

Our advice is simple: never agree to work or make payments to unsolicited doorstep callers.

If you are concerned or feel suspicious, report it to Aberdeenshire Council Trading Standards immediately.

### **Scams etc.**

#### Car Sale scam

One resident in the Formartine area recently advertised his car for sale on Facebook. A short time later the resident received a Facebook Messenger message from a female called Lise Frei who claimed to be interested in the car. However, 'Lise' insisted that before she bought the car that the resident should provide her with a report on the car and that the only company she trusted for these reports was a company called Roadscope.

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The resident agreed to this report and Lise sent him a hyperlink to the company's website to start the process of obtaining a report. The resident did so using his bank card to pay the £25 fee for the report. He then duly received the report and shared it with Lise. Unfortunately, Lise then started to provide excuses for why she could not come and view the car (apparently, her daughter had sustained an injury which was more serious than initially thought).

As the situation dragged on, the resident became suspicious of Lise's Facebook profile so contacted Trading Standards for advice.

This is the first such report from Aberdeenshire about this type of situation but it is a well-documented scam in other parts of the country. The nub of the matter is that the hyperlink that the potential buyer sends the seller is not the real link to Roadscope (or any other, similar company the potential buyer specifies) but a spoofed one which instead leads to a fake website, possibly even a copy of the genuine website, where the seller is asked to input their personal details and payment details for a report. These details are then captured by the fake website creator/potential buyer, who is actually a scammer, then used in financial crimes in the future. The potential buyer may even order a report from the genuine website for the seller to deflect suspicions about their own website.

Some points to note:

- There is actually a genuine company called Roadscope, but it took no part in this matter. It's name was simply misused by the scammer to deceive the resident,
- Scammers may use the names of other companies which also offer similar reports,
- Similarly, Facebook took no active part in this scam. It was simply the platform used by the resident and which the scammer clearly scans, looking for victims,
- In this scam, the scammer specifies which company they want a report from and sends a link to the seller. However, this link is false; it leads to a spoofed website, not the real one. Please don't click on the link,
- Once the report has been paid for, the scammer/potential buyer withdraws from the transaction for some spurious reason,
- Likely, the identity of Lise Frei is completely false, assumed only for the purpose of the scam,
- In normal circumstances, it is the potential buyer who obtains and pays for these reports,
- Should anyone who is trying to sell a vehicle over Facebook receive a response similar to this one, it is probably a scam, so all contact with the 'potential buyer' from that point should be ceased,



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- If you think that you may have fallen victim to a similar scam, please contact your local Trading Standards office for advice. Likewise, please contact your card provider using the Stop Scams short code of 159 to report your concerns about your card being misused.

### **Misc.**

#### CTSI News Article

As regular readers will already be aware, many of the scams we feature in these bulletins relate to ones which have been perpetrated via Facebook or other social media platforms.

The Chartered Trading Standards Institute recently featured an article about the extent of the problem on social media. It is reproduced in full below.

#### Government must take action on Meta's 'epidemic of fraud', says Trading Standards

Posted 09/06/26

Facebook owner Meta must do more to prevent scams on its platform - and the UK Government must do more to hold the company to account, according to the Chartered Trading Standards Institute (CTSI).

Leaked internal documents from Meta indicate that the US-based tech giant, which also owns Instagram and WhatsApp, raked in \$16bn in revenue from scam adverts proliferating on its platforms worldwide in 2024, which equates to roughly 10% of its global revenue.

During the same period, UK consumers lost an estimated £28m to scam adverts posted on Facebook and £11m to scam adverts on Instagram, according to Action Fraud.

Criminal gangs, including Organised Crime Groups, are capitalising on public trust in many of Meta's brands, including Facebook, and using this to exploit consumers. In exchange, Meta and Facebook are being complicit by raking in revenue through convincing adverts from third-parties that are used to rip off UK consumers and lining the pockets of criminals.

The UK's Online Safety Act requires that tech companies such as Meta take steps to prevent users from encountering fraudulent adverts on their platforms, and act swiftly to take down content when they are alerted that it is fraudulent. However, according to company documents revealed by a Reuters investigation,

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Meta knowingly hosts adverts that present a high likelihood of being fraudulent, and charges advertisers a premium for hosting such content. According to that investigation, in 2024 Meta forecast that 10% of its profits would come from scam adverts.

The Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) also found that during a single week in November 2025, more than a thousand adverts for currency trading and high-risk financial products were posted on Meta's platforms by advertisers not authorised to promote them. Despite making a commitment not to run unauthorised adverts for high-risk financial products in the UK, the company repeatedly failed to do so, with 56% of adverts being posted by advertisers the FCA had already flagged to Meta.

According to Meta's own estimates, its social media sites display 15 billion scam adverts every day globally. A recent lawsuit brought by Santa Clara County in California alleges that Meta has contributed to a worldwide 'epidemic of fraud' by knowingly hosting scam adverts, allowing middlemen to sell accounts to place scam ads, and targeting such ads at users who had clicked on similar content in the past. There has as yet been no similar action taken against the company in the UK.

CTSI is calling for:

- Meaningful penalties for social media platforms which enable scams and fraudulent advertising,
- Social media platforms which enable scams and fraudulent advertising to be held accountable financially,
- Social media platforms to allocate more resources to removing fraudulent, illegal and misleading advertising and other content from their sites, and to do more to prevent such content being posted in the first place,
- Social media platforms to immediately remove content that has been flagged as fraudulent by Trading Standards and other enforcers and regulators.

John Herriman, Chief Executive of CTSI, commented: "Meta and its platforms, including Facebook, sit at the top of a pyramid of fraudulent adverts which impact the lives of people in the UK and across the world every day. The profits they make from criminal activities is eye-watering.

"The Government is taking action against Serious and Organised Crime on the high street, so must now do more to ensure that Meta and other social media companies are held accountable for the misery caused by the illegal activities

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enabled by their platforms, and that meaningful financial penalties are applied to discourage them from enabling this epidemic of fraud.

“Every day Trading Standards teams across the UK see the effects of social media scams on people’s quality of life, from investment fraud to romance scams. The fact that Meta capitalises on this by charging a premium for adverts it knows are highly likely to be fraudulent speaks volumes about its priorities and the attitude it has towards its users.

“The Online Safety Act presents an opportunity for Government and regulators to level the playing field for legitimate businesses by taking social media companies to task for their failings to protect their users and to start reversing the record levels of consumer detriment UK consumers are facing. It is time that the Government picks a side and decides who they are acting on behalf of and put legislation in place to end this menace.”

Katherine Hart, CTSI Lead Officer for Doorstep Crime, Scams and Consumer Vulnerability, said: “I have seen an array of complaints that originate from social media platforms such as Meta. Consumers are misled by adverts for shops or items that don’t exist, products that are unsafe and illegal, and also duped into passing on financial details which makes them vulnerable to fraud.

“It is frustrating that despite reporting these to Meta the adverts keep appearing time and time again. Meta has a duty to ensure that the sites it hosts are accurate and do not mislead customers. High street shops could never advertise products like that without legal consequences and there should be no difference for an online enabler.

“There needs to be better protection for consumers and consequences for online platforms which host these adverts, and who appear to be profiting from consumers’ misery.”

Louise Baxter MBE, CTSI Lead Officer for Scams and Consumer Education, said: “Fraud has become a volume crime at an industrial scale, and far too often the burden is being placed on victims to spot increasingly sophisticated scams rather than on the platforms enabling them. We cannot continue with a system where consumers are blamed for being deceived when they are facing a relentless stream of highly targeted, sophisticated fraud.

“What we are seeing is cognitive overwhelm, people are bombarded with adverts, messages and content every day, making it incredibly difficult to distinguish what is genuine and what is not. Criminals exploit this, alongside

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personal circumstances such as financial pressure, which can significantly increase susceptibility to scams.

If we are serious about protecting people, we must shift upstream and stop fraud at source. That means preventing scam adverts and content from reaching consumers in the first place, rather than relying on individuals to defend themselves after harm has already occurred. By reducing exposure, we not only protect the public but also ease the emotional and financial toll that scams inflict on individuals, families and communities.

“Blame must sit where responsibility lies, those who enable and profit from the spread of fraudulent content and it is time we matched that with decisive action to better safeguard consumers.”

### **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**

For non-urgent Trading Standards enquiries in Aberdeenshire, please contact Consumer Advice Scotland at <https://consumeradvice.scot/contact/> or call them on 0808 164 6000.

For urgent Trading Standards matters or doorstep crime matters, contact Aberdeenshire Council's Trading Standards at 01467 537222 or via [trading\\_standards@aberdeenshire.gov.uk](mailto:trading_standards@aberdeenshire.gov.uk)



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Aberdeen City Council's Trading Standards department can be contacted by calling 0300 0200 292 or e-mailing [tradingstandards@aberdeencity.gov.uk](mailto: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](mailto: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](#).

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