

**DEALING  
WITH**

**DOOR STEP  
CRIME**

**GREATER MANCHESTER  
POLICE**

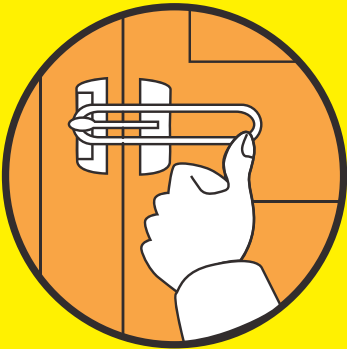


# HOME OR AWAY - KEEP ALL DOORS LOCKED



## STOP

Is anyone EXPECTED?  
Back door LOCKED?



## CHAIN

Put CHAIN ON before  
opening the door



## CHECK

Ask for caller's ID  
Check it by PHONE

Most people who call at your home will be genuine, sometimes, people turn up unannounced, with the intention of tricking their way into people's homes. They are known as '*distraction burglars*' or '*bogus callers*', whose only aim is to get into homes to distract people and steal their money or valuables. You should always be aware when someone you don't know calls at your door. By using the advice in this leaflet, you can protect yourself and vulnerable members of your family.

There's no such thing as an average bogus caller. Bogus callers may be smartly dressed and claim to be from the council, the police, health organisations or gas, water or electricity companies. They can be convincing and persuasive. They may be men, women or even children. They may ask for a drink of water or to wash their hands. Some may be looking for a lost pet. In fact, people may use any story. They often use '*props*' like an identity card or wear overalls with a company logo.

If you are expecting the caller, remember to check their identification very carefully against the letter you have been sent or the password you have agreed before you let them in.

***IF YOU ARE IN ANY  
DOUBT, KEEP THEM OUT!***

Official visitors should always arrange an appointment with you beforehand. If you are not expecting anyone and are alone, ask the visitor to call back when you can have someone with you.

***Do not keep large amounts  
of money in your home.***

# LOCK, STOP, CHAIN & CHECK

## WHEN SOMEONE CALLS AT THE DOOR...

If someone calls at your door and offers to do repairs to your home or asks to come in so they can show you the products they are selling **ALWAYS**:

- LOCK** Keep your front and back doors locked, even when at home.
- STOP** Before you answer, stop and think if you are expecting anyone. Check that you have locked any back door and taken the key out. Look through the spyhole or the window to see who it is.
- CHAIN** If you decide to open the door, ***put the door chain or bar on first***. Keep the bar or chain on while you are talking to the person on the doorstep. *(Normally, when the door is closed and locked, leave the bar or chain off in case you need to get out in an emergency.)*
- CHECK** Check their details before you let them into your house. Do not agree to any work being done or sign a contract until after you have talked to someone else.

Bogus callers can also turn up as builders or gardeners and try to trick you into paying for unnecessary work. You should never agree to having work done by someone who is just passing, or take their word that work needs to be done at all. Do not be pressured into paying them before they do any work. Do not accept an offer to drive you to the bank to withdraw the money. If you think work needs to be done, get quotes from other companies (*two or three should be enough*) and also ask a friend or relative for a recommendation.

# **LOCK, STOP, CHAIN & CHECK**

**WHEN SOMEONE OFFICIAL CALLS AT YOUR DOOR  
LEAVE THE CALLER ON THE DOORSTEP, WHILST YOU  
CHECK THEIR IDENTIFICATION.**

*You can do this in three ways.*

- 1** Look up the phone number in the phone book and check it against the card the caller has given you. Do not be tempted to just ring the number on the card as it may be a fake.
- 2** Phone directory enquiries. It will help to check whether the company is genuine.
- 3** Look at a recent bill to check the phone number. You should also think about keeping a list of useful phone numbers, like gas, electricity and water services, in a handy place. Many now have free phone numbers to help you check the identity of their workers.

**If you have any doubts, keep them out!**

If, after these checks, you have any doubts about the caller, especially if they turned up unannounced, tell them to call back later when someone can be with you. You can also tell them to contact you by letter to arrange a more convenient time.

**ONLY LET THEM IN WHEN YOU ARE ABSOLUTELY SURE THAT THEY ARE GENUINE.**

*Genuine callers will always be happy to make an appointment to call and should carry an identity card with a photograph. They won't mind waiting if you want to phone and confirm their identity or want to rearrange the appointment.*

# REPORT BOGUS CALLERS

Bogus callers sometimes work in pairs or even teams. They are often well organised. One will distract you, while the other searches the house for money or other valuables.

*Watch out for anyone who says they are in a hurry.*

*Don't let them pressure or confuse you.*

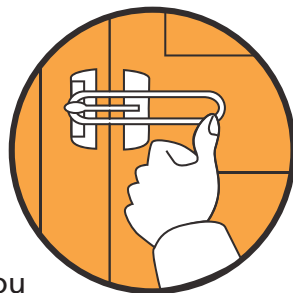
*If you think a bogus caller has called at your door, report it to the police immediately - dial 999 and tell them what has happened.*

*Try to give the police a description of the person.*



## DOOR BARS & CHAINS

If you haven't already got a door bar or chain fitted, you should think about getting one. A door bar only costs a few pounds and is easier to use than a chain.



If you have a PVC door, bars and chains can still be fitted. Check with the manufacturer before you buy a PVC door, and always ask for a bar to be fitted. A door bar or chain acts as a useful barrier when talking to unexpected callers. It is a worthwhile investment.

Only put your door bar or chain on when you answer the door.

## PASSWORDS

The gas, water and electricity companies, and some councils, now have a password system for older and vulnerable customers.



Customers give the company a word which is confidential to them and the company. When their representative calls, they will be expected to tell the customer the password to prove they are genuine. Many companies offer special services to help you even more.

Please contact your gas, water and electricity suppliers, or other utilities, to find out more.

# **GUIDANCE NOTES ON ROGUE TRADERS**

You may be tempted to have work done to the outside of your home, either the building itself, garden or driveway.

However you must be vigilant if you are to avoid becoming another casualty of the ever-increasing problem with *"Rogue Traders"*.

Legislation means that people who carry out work in or at a consumer's home or garden and the work costs more than £42 probably need to provide a written 14 day notice of cancellation to the customer prior to starting the work.

The regulations give consumers the right to cancel a contract for goods or services made during a visit by a trader, whether the visit is unsolicited or solicited. This includes contracts for the construction of extensions, patios, conservatories and driveways.

For information contact Citizens Advice on  
**03454 04 05 06** or **[www.citizensadvice.org.uk](http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk)**

**[www.friendsagainstscams.org.uk](http://www.friendsagainstscams.org.uk)**



## HOW TO AVOID PROBLEMS:

- If you are approached by someone who says that they have looked at your property and can see that your roof or chimney need attention don't take them at face value. Unscrupulous traders have even been known to tell people that unless they have the work done immediately an accident could happen and they would be responsible if anyone was hurt.
- If someone tells you this always get at least one other opinion from another contractor before agreeing to have any work done.
- Also if someone just calls at your house in a van, don't agree to have anything done right away. Ask them for a written quotation on proper headed paper showing an address and telephone number and check it out before any agreement is reached.
- If someone contacts you who you have not been in touch with, again follow these guidelines, and check out their credentials before allowing them to undertake work.
- Tell them you are going to get at least two other quotations for the work and you will be in touch with them if you want them to do the work. Don't be bullied into any agreement with them there and then.
- If you can, when you are thinking of having work done, choose a contractor who is a member of a professional trade association. Just because someone uses a trade association logo on their paperwork or vehicle does not mean that they are actually a member, some unscrupulous traders use these

logos when they shouldn't. Check with the particular trade association if the company you are thinking of using is a member and if so what benefits are there to you.

- Personal recommendations from people who you know are a good way of finding reputable builders.
- Ask the builder for a list of jobs he has done in this area, he may provide them as reference anyway. It is a good idea to contact at least one of the named persons on the list and ask them how they rated the work done.
- Once you have decided to have work done and have chosen the contractor you may wish to ensure the price you agreed with them is the price you pay. If they come to you part way through the work saying the price has gone up, don't agree to pay more than the agreed amount.
- Try to avoid paying money in advance of work being started. If you have no option pay only a small amount and don't pay the balance until you are satisfied that the work has been finished properly.
- Before they start any work try and get a date from them when the work will be finished.

**If you are being pestered or harassed by a contractor contact the police on 101 or in an emergency dial 999 or for information contact Citizens Advice on 03454 04 05 06**

# **GUIDANCE NOTES ON 'DOORSTEP SELLERS'**

Every year we receive complaints from people who have had problems with doorstep callers. Sometimes building trade workers visit unannounced offering to do jobs, sometimes salespeople turn up offering discounted goods or services and at other times people will try to con their way into your home to steal money.

Doorstep salespeople sometimes provide an invaluable service by bringing the goods or service straight to your door. This is convenient because you don't have to ring around making appointments or be at home for a specific time. Unfortunately not all callers are genuine, some use pressure tactics to sign you up for exclusive deals and on the odd occasion they are only after money and don't even bother with a sales pitch.

Not all doorstep callers are bogus; some will be genuine as long as you use common sense you should avoid having any problems.

## **HOW TO AVOID PROBLEMS**

- Ask the caller to make an appointment, this will give you time to check out If they are who they say they are.
- Never invite people straight into your home do not be afraid to ask for identification. Take the identification, close the door, leave the caller outside whilst you telephone to check the identity. Any genuine caller will be happy to wait.
- Do not ring the telephone number printed on the identity card, sometimes cards can be faked and so will the number. Ring directory enquiries to obtain the phone number.

- Always make sure you close the door.
- Make sure you know exactly what you are agreeing to have done or sign up to; try to have somebody else such as a neighbour present at the same time.
- Never sign a blank or partly filled in form especially if you are asked to give your bank details.
- If you do sign up for something and change your mind, don't worry. If the caller made the first approach you may be able to cancel the agreement.

***DO NOT BE AFRAID TO ASK  
THE CALLER TO LEAVE  
  
IF THEY REFUSE CALL  
THE POLICE***

Hopefully if you follow this guidance you should avoid problems relating to doorstep callers.

# WHAT CAN I DO ABOUT...?

## UNWANTED PHONE CALLS

Calls-sign up to the telephone preference service - Ring **0345 070 0707**

### **TPS - [www.tpsonline.org.uk](http://www.tpsonline.org.uk)**

It's a free service and it's easy to register. You'll need your phone number, postcode and an email address to sign up on the Telephone Preference Service website. You can also sign up from your mobile by texting 'TPS' and your email address to **85095**.

## JUNK MAIL

Sign up to the Mailing Preference Service - Ring **0345 703 4599**

## SILENT PHONE CALLS

Register for silentguard - Ring **0844 372 2325**

## SCAM TEXTS - REPLY TO THE MESSAGE WITH STOP ALL

### **CHECKING A PHONE NUMBER I DON'T RECOGNISE ON MY BILL?**

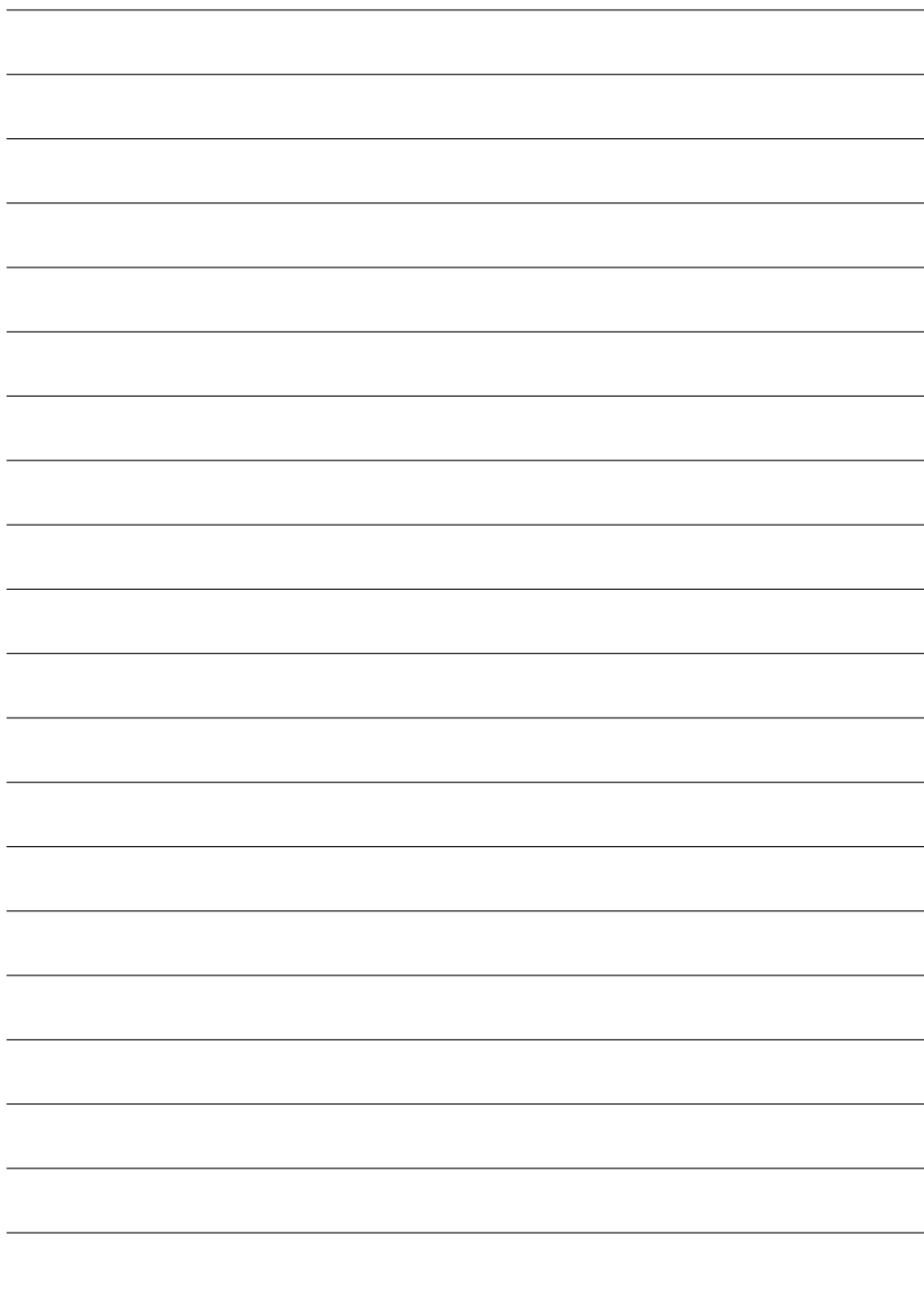
Visit the number checker at **[www.phonepayplus.org.uk](http://www.phonepayplus.org.uk)**

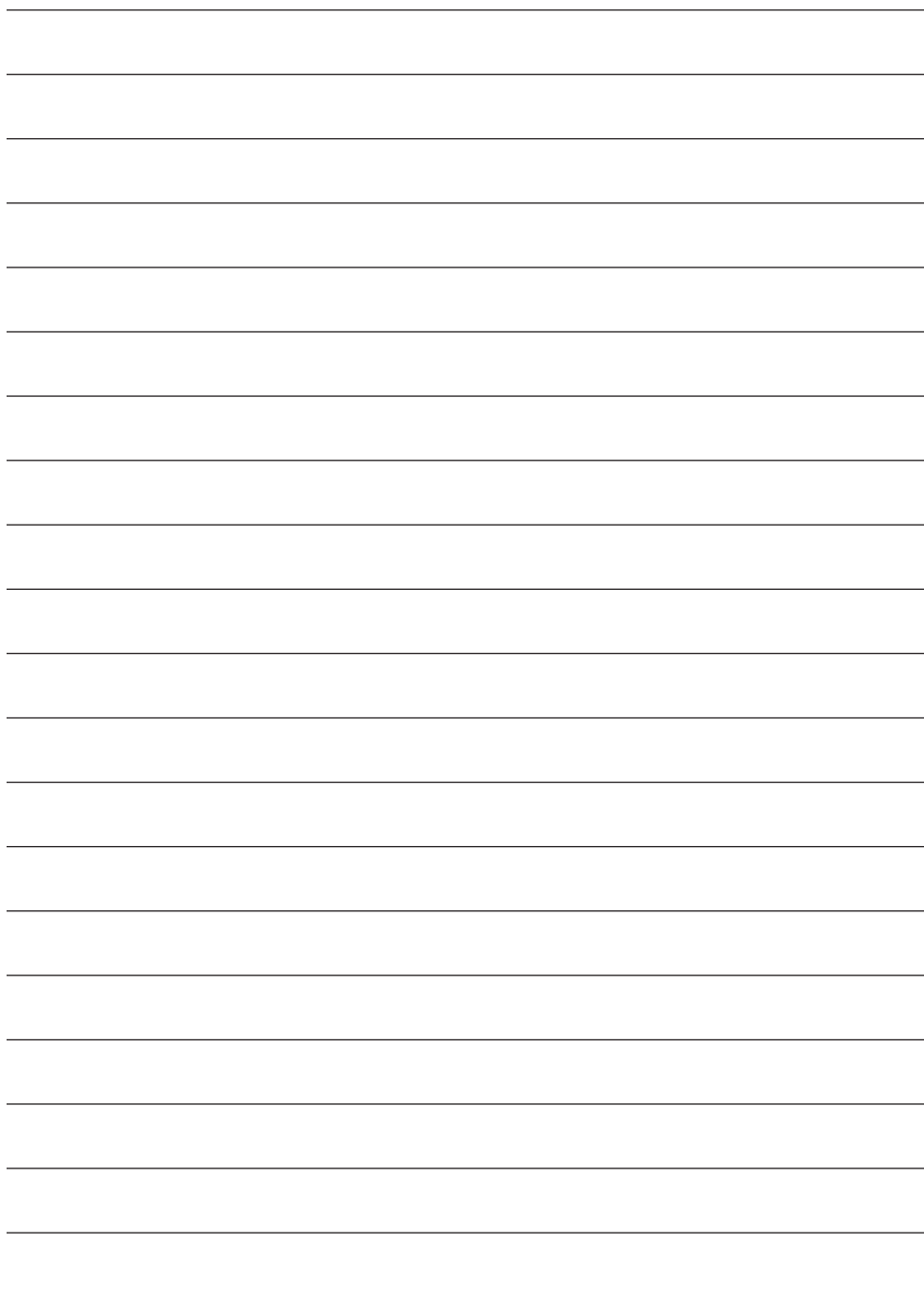
## UNADDRESSED MAIL FROM ROYAL MAIL

*Email your name and address to:*  
**[optout@royalmail.com](mailto:optout@royalmail.com)** or write to  
ROYAL Mail Door to Door  
Streamline House  
Sandy Lane West, Oxford OX4 5ZZ

## TO REPORT A FRAUD CALL ACTION FRAUD - Ring **0300 123 2040**

If you are being pestered or harassed by a contractor contact the police on 101 or in an emergency dial 999 or for information contact Citizens Advice on **03454 04 05 06**





If you have any information relating to crime  
in your area please contact police on **101** or  
in the event of an emergency call **999**

You can also contact Crimestoppers  
anonymously on **0800 555 111**

If you are being pestered or harassed by a contractor  
contact the police on 101 or in an emergency dial 999 or  
for information contact Citizens Advice on 03454 04 05 06

For more further crime prevention advice visit  
**[www.gmp.police.uk](http://www.gmp.police.uk)**

