

Safe and Sound (Bromsgrove, Redditch and Wyre Forest)
June 2015
North Worcestershire Community Safety Partnership
Chair – Sue Hanley

Scam awareness month - don't be rushed, don't be hushed

Citizens Advice and Trading Standards within Worcestershire Regulatory Services are encouraging residents to report suspicious scam activities, get advice and warn others to help stop scams from spreading.

Scams take many different forms. People may be targeted with “vishing” calls where a fraudster impersonates their bank to collect bank details, or by bogus companies offering computer services. Online scams include dodgy job adverts and offers for goods and services, while mail scams may ask victims to pay a fee in order to claim their winnings from a prize draw they haven't entered.

A Worcestershire Trading Standards officer recently spoke to the daughter of an elderly lady in Worcestershire who was receiving 5-10 prize draw letters each day, promising huge pay outs. She was sending several cheques, regularly spending about £200 per month, to claim the prizes but then started getting requests for further payments to be made to 'release' the prize money. Thankfully the lady told her daughter what was happening.

The campaign asks people to keep two things in mind when they receive an unsolicited approach or when looking for goods or services: don't be rushed into quick decisions and don't be hushed. Scammers thrive on silence; victims are often too ashamed to share what happened to them and scams spread unchecked. Less than 5% of victims report scams to the authorities. We're urging people to lift the lid on scams and start talking about suspicious email, junk mail, online ads or door-to-door sellers in their area.

Scams are run by professional con artists and can be hard to identify. Our advice is that if an offer sounds too good to be true, it probably is! Never give your bank details out unless you are certain you know who the person is and that you can trust them.

If you think you, or someone you know, has been scammed, contact Citizens Advice and Trading Standards on 03454 040506 for help and support.

Visit www.nwcsp.org for more information. Follow Safer Wyre Forest on Twitter #SaferWyreForest and like our Facebook page Safer Wyre Forest (Community Organisation).