

## Trading Standards

**Used car deposit scam** - consumers are being warned to think twice before paying deposits to hold vehicles they wish to buy. There have been an increasing number of complaints from car buyers who paid 'holding deposits' for vehicles which were then either sold to someone else before they could view it, or the vehicle was markedly different to the advert. In both cases they should have received their deposit back, but did not.

**False vehicle registration warning to internet car buyers** - buyers of second hand cars advertised on websites are warned to beware of a new scam involving the use of false vehicle registration numbers. Consumers can now find a lot about the car they are interested in buying by putting the vehicle's registration number into a free Government website, including information on a vehicle's mileage and condition. Some unscrupulous sellers of dodgy vehicles are removing or obscuring the licence plate of the cars they are selling on photographs posted on the Internet. WTS advise consumers to be wary of purchasing vehicles without seeing them first and to be suspicious of any advert where the licence plate of the vehicle cannot be seen affixed to the vehicle.

**Door to door cavity wall warning** - residents are warned to beware of unexpected doorstep callers offering free 'Government funded' cavity wall insulation and other energy efficiency measures. WTS is concerned that some unscrupulous traders may be using the offer of 'free' insulation to convince homeowners to sign up to energy efficiency measures that may not be appropriate for their property and may end up costing them money. Funding for energy saving measures may be available to some residents if they are on certain benefits and own or privately rent their home, often via their energy supplier. For information on energy saving improvements and eligibility criteria, please call the Energy Saving Advice Service on 0300 123 1234 (Monday to Friday, 9am to 8pm). WTS urges homeowners not to be seduced by the offer of something free on the doorstep.

**Bogus 'summons' e-mails from the Crown Prosecution Service** - fraudsters are sending out a wave of scam e-mails purporting to be from the Crown Prosecution Service that claim you have to appear in court. Concerned members of the public have reported receiving the e-mail entitled "You've been witness summoned to court". The e-mail entices people to click on a link to view their start time/case details. This link is likely to lead to malware. This email has no connection to the CPS, and anyone receiving the e-mail should not download any attachments or click on any links.

**Bogus NHS cold callers selling mobility products warning** - older residents are warned to beware of high pressure cold calls from companies selling mobility equipment and furniture. The cold callers falsely claim they are carrying out a survey on behalf of the NHS before trying to organise visits to the consumer's home on the pretence of delivering a 'free gift' and measuring up for new products. They are reported to be very persistent and may phone several times.

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