

get

**SCAM
WISE**

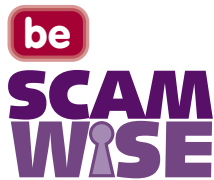
They're just out to get your money.
Don't fall for it!

Advice from Trading Standards about Telephone Scams



**SCAM
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Southwest

A campaign by Trading Standards in South West England to help stop people being conned by rogue traders.



When you take telephone calls...

There are a number of telephone based scams which are aimed at either trying to get you to call a premium rate number or to pass on personal information such as bank account or credit card details.

Avoid scam calls.

Don't call premium rate numbers to claim a prize.

Don't give any personal details

Say "no thank you" and hang up.

Telephone Holiday Offer

You are rung out of the blue by a company stating that you have won the opportunity to buy a holiday in Florida or some other exotic destination at a cut price rate. They ask for your bank account or credit card details. If you provide these details, the money is taken from your account. You are then sent the details of the holiday only to find out that you still have to pay for the flights with only the accommodation being free. In addition the "free" accommodation is often in a timeshare resort and dependant on you attending a compulsory timeshare presentation.

Trading Standards advise you not to agree to holiday contracts via unsolicited phone calls unless you have already seen in writing and understand the details of what the holiday includes.

"I have found a buyer for your car!"

You have recently put up an advert for your car. Someone rings you out of the blue claiming to have found a buyer for you. They will put the two of you in touch for a fee. After you part with the money, no buyer contacts you. Always consider in such circumstances why the mysterious buyer is not contacting you directly.

Salesmen may claim to guarantee sales verbally and then send through written terms and conditions in which almost nothing is guaranteed and it is entirely up to the “buyer” whether they contact you or not.

Telephone Share Sales

You are telephoned by a company that is very persistent in wanting you to purchase shares which they assure you will be an amazing investment. This scam is known as “the boiler room” and involves using high pressure sales tactics to persuade you to part with large amounts of money for shares of little or no value. The companies in question are based in another country. The company often disappears overnight and you won’t see your money or shares again

Trading Standards suggest that if you do wish to purchase shares you do it via a reputable broker who does not contact you through an unsolicited telephone call.

Be very wary of entering into any contract over the phone when there is nothing in writing about what exactly you are contracting for.

be
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WISE
say



**“No thank
you”**

...and hang up



About Overseas and other Lottery Phone Scams?

The Office of Fair Trading (OFT) is urging people not to respond to telephone calls asking them to send money to claim 'winnings' from overseas lottery programmes.

The scam starts when people respond to mailings, e-mails or telephone calls telling them they are being entered in a national lottery or some other prize draw, often from Canada, Australia or Spain. They then receive a phone call congratulating them on winning the 'big prize'. However, before they can claim the prize, victims are told they must send money to pay for taxes and processing fees. Often these calls are repeated and further sums are requested.

UK consumers have lost thousands of pounds through such schemes. The prize doesn't exist, and they never receive any winnings in return for their cash. Anybody can receive an unsolicited call but some people are more at risk, with over 80 per cent of those affected aged more than 65 years. In many cases the caller tries to befriend the victim showing an interest in their family and friends; they may also pose as a government official, customs officer or lawyer.

These scams usually ask for personal details - full name, date of birth, next of kin, bank account - and once you have given these they will ask for a substantial amount to "claim" your prize, to "register" and to pay "taxes". **DON'T REPLY!**

If you have lost money and become a victim of an overseas scam, the oft would like to hear from you. Contact them by calling

0845 722 4499

Or you can report the matter to Consumer Direct.

Prize Notifications via Mobile Phones - SMS Messages

You receive a text message which implies a cash prize has been won, but asks that a premium rate number (09) is called to claim it.

Calls usually cost £1.50 per minute and you will have to listen for several minutes.

The likely outcome of your call is a low value prize or cash amount far inferior to the one expected, vouchers for which more money must be paid in order to redeem them or simply nothing at all.

“Phishing”

You may receive a telephone call or an e-mail from “your bank”, asking you to confirm your account details either by a return e-mail or by directing you to an official looking website for you to enter your details.

Real banks do not contact people in this way.

If you did enter details this would be used by the scammers to drain money from your account.

This e-mail is sent out to hundreds of people in the hope that one will think it is their real bank and bite.

In a recent variation on this some e-Bay customers have been contacted with similar messages supposedly from e-Bay. e-Bay has confirmed that they do not send such e-mails.

Trading Standards advise you never to respond to an unsolicited telephone call or email asking for your bank account, passport or other details including family and personal information.

Phone Consumer Direct for help and advice on 08454 04 05 06



General sales and marketing calls

You can reduce the amount of unwanted phone calls by registering with the telephone preference service (TPS). You can do this by ringing them on **0845 0700707** or by using their website registration form found at **www.tpsonline.org.uk/tps**

By registering with the TPS it becomes a legal requirement that companies do not make unsolicited sales and marketing telephone calls to your number.

The service becomes active after 28 days. Any company which does not comply with the requirements should be reported to the Information Commissioners Office on **01625 545745**

You can also register your mobile telephone with the TPS.

If you receive any calls like this just say **“No Thank you”** and hang up the phone.

Register with the Telephone Preference Service. Companies who make sales or marketing calls to numbers registered with TPS are breaking the law.

Phone Consumer Direct for help and advice on 08454 04 05 06

Silent Calls

You may receive this type of call from time to time.

Most silent calls are generated by automated dialling systems and are used by call centres for telemarketing, market research, debt collection and other purposes.

Ofcom is the regulator for UK telecommunications. It is able to take action in the case of a network or service being misused and causing unnecessary annoyance, inconvenience or anxiety to another person.

Ofcom has set out a number of rules for organisations using automated calling systems, including the need to carry a recorded information message which identifies the source of the call and Calling Line Identification which allows people to dial 1471 and access the telephone number of the caller. By calling the number provided you should be able to remove your number from the automated system.

If you continue to receive silent or abandoned calls and your network or service provider is unable to assist, you can contact Ofcom's Contact Centre to register a complaint on

020 7981 3040

or go to

www.ofcom.org.uk

To further reduce the number of silent calls, get in touch with your network or service provider who may be able to assist you.

Phone Consumer Direct for help and advice on 08454 04 05 06

stay
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about
telephone
scams

Say 'no thank you' and hang up if:

- **The company phones you out of the blue.**
- **You're asked to part with money in advance.**
- **They use high pressure sales tactics to persuade you to enter into a contract.**

You can help reduce the number of telephone calls you receive by registering with the telephone preference service (TPS).

You can do this by calling them on

0845 0700 707

or filling in the online registration form at

www.tpsonline.org.uk/tps/

To contact Trading Standards and Consumer Direct
telephone 08454 04 05 06
or log onto www.consumerdirect.gov.uk



funded by government

Consumer Direct is delivered in partnership with the Office of Fair Trading and local authority Trading Standards across the South West of England.

