



Think first before you donate money

ESSEX Police has issued a six point plan of action for residents to prevent them becoming unwitting victims of potential charity doorstep scammers.

They say that collectors often call door-to-door but some are not always representing the charity they claim.

Follow these steps to avoid losing money

1. Never give cash donations. You may be offered anything from a fabric flower, sticker or badge but these do not necessarily belong to the charity or may be stolen.
2. Do not let anyone into your house. If you do, ensure that someone remains with them all of the time.
3. Fraudsters pick on the vulnerable and elderly. If you are a carer who looks after someone, please explain the risks. Consider having door chains fitted and encourage them to fit it before answering the door to anyone.
4. Always ask for identification. A bonafide charity collector will always be happy to provide you with this. They will have a number you can call or a website you can visit, however be cautious of mobile numbers and web sites. Some of these have been known to be fraudulent. Satisfy yourself that these are legitimate collectors before you continue.



Be alert to bogus charity collectors on your doorstep

5. Never give your personal details without verifying the charity. Protect your bank details by asking for a form to complete in your own time. Do not be pressurised.
6. Organised charities issue their collectors with mobile devices that allow you to enter your bank details on the doorstep - ask questions about it's level of security, be satisfied that what you are being told is true. Often the collectors work for a third party company contracted by the charity to canvass your area, bonafide agencies will be happy to provide

you with all the information you need.

Remember it is your choice whether you donate to charity or not. Do not feel bullied or intimidated into donating, ask them to come back another day when you have had a chance to think about it or when you have a family member or friend with you.

Organised charities understand this and will not undertake bullying tactics. Should you have any concerns please contact Essex Police on 101. If you feel at risk and the suspects are on scene please call 999.

How you can help keep your community safe

WOULD you like to be part of a unique new team in Essex making sure that your community stays safe and, in some cases, supporting the police?

There are many ways to help and contribute to your community;

Neighbourhood Watch - set up a 'Watch' in your road/street, it's not difficult, does not have to take up a lot of your time. Neighbourhood Watch has never been more relevant or more necessary than it is today with the continuing budget constraints on the police.

Active Citizens - carry out a key role in making

the area they live, work or visit safer and less vulnerable to crime or anti-social behaviour. This could involve helping neighbours to mark their property or distribute crime reduction advice. If this sounds like something you could do please contact us or log on to

active.citizen@essex.pnn.police.uk

Essex Community Messaging

By signing up to Essex Community Messaging (ECM) you can find out what is happening in your local area and how to keep crime down. You can select what information you get and how you receive it. Sign up at www.essex.police.uk/ecm

Community Speed Watch

This could involve monitoring vehicle speeds within your community, identifying offending vehicles and notifying Essex Police who will look to communicate with the registered keeper. Community Speed Watch plays a major role in changing road user behaviour. Email community.speedwatch@essex-fire.gov.uk if you're interested.

Please get in touch if you are interested and we can advise you what it involves. If you are really keen and have the time you could get involved in all of them.



NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE

Rayleigh Police Station, High Street, Rayleigh, Essex SS6 7QB
NHW Direct Dial: 01268 770519 Email: nhwrayleigh@gmail.com.



Theft of and from vehicles

DESPITE regular advice vehicles continue to be left unlocked or windows open. Take that extra five seconds to ensure your vehicle is secure and that there are no valuables on show inside the vehicle. It might just save you hours talking to your insurance company.

Fake parking scam

A BOGUS parking scam is hitting residents across the country and several people have already paid the price for being a victim.

Legitimate Parking Charge Notices (PCNs) are not sent by email and anyone who has received one should delete it at once and report it to the National Fraud and Cyber Crime Reporting Service.

This is the message from the British Parking Association (BPA) who say they are aware of the fake email ticket scam, purporting to be from some of its approved operators, UK Parking Control Ltd, and CPS Enforcement (Northern) Ltd.

The fake email tickets contain links to photos, payment options and how to appeal. These links may contain malware and should not be opened.

Crime statistics

ESSEX Police figures - calculated between January 2016 and January 2017 - specifically show the overall number of offences committed per 1,000 residents.

Basildon had 15,340 offences ie. 84.4 crimes per 1,000 residents, the highest figure in the county; Southend had 14,948 offences ie. 83.6 crimes per 1,000 residents, the second highest in Essex.

Despite fears over Canvey crime over the past 12 months, Castle Point fared better with 4,270 offences ie. 47.9 crimes per 1,000 residents. Rochford saw the fewest number of offences, committed in South Essex, 3,294 ie. 38.7 per 1,000 residents.

Rogue traders

With warmer weather hopefully on the way the chances are that there will be an increase in rogue traders knocking at your door.

Essex Trading Standards are warning residents not to allow supposedly 'official' agents from public companies gaining entry to their property or agreeing for work to be carried out to meet 'current standards'.

Residents are advised never to engage with traders who knock at your door. These are the sales tactics of a chancer, not a reputable trader.

Do not make decisions on the spot, ask for time to think about it and consult with friends, neighbours or family. If you are concerned for yourself or someone else call the Trading Standards Helpline on 0345 404050

Your local coordinator is

Can You Hear Me? Be on your guard

RESIDENTS are warned to stay on their guard against phone callers who ask them: "Can you hear me?" If someone does call you and that is one of the first things they ask you, hang up immediately if you don't want to be landed with an expensive contract.

This scam has already swept the United States and may soon be in the UK. Police and call-blocking companies are warning the public about this dangerous phone call in the hope of preventing innocent people falling victim to the scammers.

This is how it works

You receive a phone call from a local number and the voice on the end introduces themselves and the company they supposedly work for. They then ask: "Can you hear me?" Your answer is recorded, and if you say "yes", your response will be edited to make it appear as if you've agreed to a huge purchase.

You're effectively being tricked into signing a verbal contract, much the same as clicking 'I agree' to terms and conditions online. Voice signatures like these are legitimately used by companies doing business over the phone, but this is being exploited by scammers.

CPR Call Blocker has seen the scam rise in frequency and the company believes it's only a matter of time before Britain is targeted too. Another version of the scam sees the criminals using the person's voice recording to authorise a stolen credit card.

The public is being advised either to hang up straight away upon being asked "Can you hear me?", or just not pick up at all if you don't recognise the number. And if you do think you may have been caught out by the scammers, contact your bank or card provider as soon as you can.



How to protect my property

- Consider an alarm. If installed always use one by an NSI or SSAIB approved company
- Fit external "dusk till dawn lighting" lighting with economy bulbs
- Use 'defensive planting' ie. Hawthorn or Pyracantha to supplement fencing
- Secure gates and sheds
- Ensure doors and windows are secured correctly and keys kept out of sight
- Suggest neighbours do the same in case your property is vulnerable via a neighbour's garden/pathway etc. The power of people organising together to combat crime can be very effective and if you look out for your neighbours they look out for you.

If despite all your best attempts to secure your house you do suffer the horrible experience of being burgled and losing valuable/sentimental items, make sure you have 'evidence' of your treasured possessions. Insurance companies can insist on seeing evidence of a loss ie. Invoice/photo/valuation.

Reporting crime

DO YOU know somebody who is carrying out criminal activity but fear the consequences of being identified as the person who reported them? Tell Crimestoppers WHAT you know about any crime or criminal - not WHO you are and you could be eligible for a reward (paid anonymously). Crimestoppers never ask for your name or trace your call, and you won't need to provide a statement or go to Court.

www.crimestoppers-uk.org / 0800 555 111