

Beware bogus callers

Bogus callers pretend to be officials from the council, engineers from gas, electricity or water companies, police officers or salespeople in order to gain access to people's homes and steal money or property. They usually carry fake identity cards and can seem very convincing.

How do I protect myself from bogus callers?

If someone calls round at your home, it's best to take precautions:

- Put the chain on the door before answering it - if you rent your home and don't have a chain, ask your landlord to fit one for you.
- Ask to see identification.
- Check their identification isn't fake - ask which company they're from, then phone the company to check the caller is genuine. Look the company up in the phone book rather than using a number they give you.
- Ask a neighbour or friend to come round while the caller is there.

If you are disabled, have a chronic illness or are of retirement age, you can join the priority services register. As part of this service, you can give your gas and electricity suppliers a password to be used by anyone they send round to your home. To register for these free services, all you need to do is ask your electricity or gas supplier; their contact details can be found on your latest bill.

How can I help my neighbours?

Bogus callers tend to prey on elderly and vulnerable people who live alone. If you are concerned that any of your neighbours may become victims of bogus callers, let them know that they can ask you for help if they're not sure about the identity of callers.

How do I report bogus callers?

If bogus callers visit you or any of your neighbours, you should call the police straight away on 999, giving as much detail as possible, such as the bogus caller's description and any vehicle they were in.