



RUNWAY

BOGUS CALLERS

Who are bogus callers?

Bogus callers are people who pretend to be genuine in order to try to steal from you, defraud you or overcharge you for 'work' they may do. They are often described as 'distraction burglars'.

How do they operate?

They pretend to be genuine callers, claiming to be council officials, water board employees, gas or electricity board officials, tree surgeons or other workmen. They will say they need to come in to check something, make urgent repairs or use your phone in an emergency. They may even be children asking for a drink or collecting a ball from your garden. They sometimes operate in pairs, with one engaging you in conversation at the front door while an accomplice gains entry at the rear. They will usually target the elderly and infirm, particularly women living alone. Bogus callers are convincing liars; plausibility and smooth talking are their greatest weapons. Often, they will travel quite large distances.

What you should do

- Be ready for such callers - fit a door viewer and door chain or bar.
- Think before you open the door. Are you expecting anyone?
- First lock the back door, then put the chain on the front door before opening the door.
- Examine the caller's appearance. Is he/she wearing a uniform or identity badge? Is there a vehicle outside displaying an organisation name or logo?
- Ask for proof of identity, but keep the chain on. Genuine callers will not object to you asking for proof of identity.
- Check the identity card carefully; don't accept that it's OK just because they have a card to show.
- If the caller hasn't made an appointment, ask him/her to wait outside while you phone the organisation to confirm the caller's identity and reason for visit.
- If not totally reassured, REFUSE ENTRY, and ask the caller to return by appointment when you will have arranged to have a friend or relative present in the house.
- Check where the caller(s) go next, especially if to the home of an elderly or vulnerable neighbour.
- If you have any suspicions at all, then call the Police – dial 999 and report the incident as precisely as possible.
- Also, if in a Neighbourhood Watch scheme, tell your co-ordinator as soon as possible.
- Remember that Rushcliffe Community Watch can send out an alert if necessary from West Bridgford Police Station via the Ringmaster system.

Protect vulnerable neighbours

If you have elderly, vulnerable neighbours, particularly those living alone, go round to see them. Remind them that the vast majority of callers will be genuine people from reputable organisations but, without alarming them, remind them of the risk of bogus callers. Check that they have a door chain and viewer, and that they always use them. Let them know that you will help to look out for strangers at their door and that they can ask you for help if they are in any doubt. The average profile target is an 81 year old woman living alone.