

Hampshire Trading Standards have previously sent out alerts about rogue drainage businesses, and would like to remind residents to be on the alert for this type of crime.

Usually, the resident will be contacted by a cold call on the telephone or at the door, and given an elaborate story as to the reason for the call. There may be exaggerated claims about the state of the drains made and false film footage of a blocked drain shown to the resident, followed by an offer to clear the drains. Prices may not be given before the work is started and are usually inflated. Sometimes money is demanded up front.

In a recent case, a vulnerable older resident was cold called on the telephone by a drainage business. The caller claimed they were aware of problems with the drains in the resident's road, and were working in the area. A visit was arranged and two days later the business arrived, put a camera down the drains and alleged that work was needed. The business wanted £4,000 for the work. £400 in cash was paid, with the remaining £3,600 to be withdrawn in cash from the bank. The bank spotted a problem and enacted the Police's banking protocol, thereby preventing further loss to the resident. Subsequent examination of the drain by another company proved that no work had been required.

Trading Standards advise residents not to agree to work that is instigated as a result of a cold call. Residents should obtain at least 3 written quotes from reputable businesses or traders who are either members of the Hampshire County Council Trading Standards **Buy With Confidence** scheme or a recognised trade association.

Members of the Buy With Confidence scheme are fully audited to ensure their trading practices are legal, honest and fair. All members have been checked for trustworthiness and compliance with consumer protection laws. Details can be obtained by telephoning 0808 223 1133, emailing buy.with.confidence@hants.gov.uk or via the [Buy With Confidence website](#).

Traders who agree work at the home of an individual or at a place other than their usual business premises are required by law to provide consumers with a Notice of Right to Cancel, which gives a 14 day cooling off period from the date the work starts. Even if work has started, there is still a legal right to cancel, although some payment may be required for materials.

To inform Trading Standards about traders offering drainage services where false claims are suspected, please report the matter to our partners at the Citizens Advice Consumer Helpline on 0808 223 1133. Please also try to obtain a name and address for the company.

Doorstep Crime can be reported to Hampshire Police on their non-urgent number 101 or dial 999 if you feel threatened or intimidated.