

VACATION SCAMS

Staffordshire County Council is warning residents against not becoming the victims of vacation scams. If you receive an unexpected telephone call informing you that you have won a cottage overlooking a quiet lake; a beachfront condo; an apartment in the heart of the city etc. The problem is that it doesn't really exist. Consumers are being drawn in to what seems like an amazing opportunity, consumers are paying upfront and arriving to find that no such address exists.

Each year, many people fall victim to fraudsters using the cold calling technique. These people phone individuals with the intentions of stealing their personal details and financial information to enable them to con them out of their cash. The fraudsters gain victims trust by sound convincing, professional and they often claim to represent a business you know, for example your bank or an official organisation. They may pressure you to act quickly, either because they want to trick you into believing you will miss a golden opportunity to make money.

Top three tips to give cold callers

- Don't engage in conversation with cold callers.
- NEVER make a payment using a wire transfer service such as Western Union or Money Gram.
- Make sure the seller has a valid address and phone number
- Always verify that callers are genuine, it is advisable to phone them back on a number you have.
- Never give out any personal details if you are not sure who you are talking too.
- Always ask for a contract from them and never sign ANYTHING no matter how much you feel pressured, unless your sure its exactly what you want.

For further advice on your rights, or to report a suspicious cold caller or pressure sales person, call the Citizens Advice Consumer Helpline on 08454 04 05 06, text 18001 08454 14 05 06, or visit www.adviceguide.org.uk

The Telephone Preference Service also helps you to make sure your telephone number is not available to organisations who may telephone you with offers and information you do not wish to receive. To register for free call: 0845 0700707 or visit www.tpsonline.org.uk

Produced: June 11th 2013

All our alerts are available in a range of formats and languages, including large print. Please contact Community Development if this would be helpful to you, or to someone you know. 0300 111 8000. community.development@staffordshire.gov.uk

