

Business Scams: Sign up for alerts

Unfortunately, in these tough economic times, some unscrupulous businesses are employing devious techniques to squeeze money out of businesses. Hampshire Trading Standards is urging small businesses to be on their guard and to sign up for alerts to the latest scam techniques.

One of the most common fraudulent methods is an advertising scam. A recent case involved a small B&B. After paying what they thought was a one-off payment for an advert in an online directory, the owners were harassed and threatened by the advertising company and a debt collection agency for 'missed payments' amounting to around £1500. The calls were so threatening that the B&B owners called the Police.

The B&B had never received any confirmation of the contract and were never provided with terms and conditions. Luckily in the circumstances, the alleged debt could reasonably be disputed.

The problem is widespread and in just three months Hampshire Trading Standards has received 24 similar complaints.

Hampshire Trading Standards is advising businesses to be on their guard, to check all invoices carefully, especially unexpected ones, and if targeted by unsolicited telesales calls, to just hang up.

Hampshire businesses are also able to sign up to receive electronic alerts of scams from Trading Standards by visiting their website at <http://www3.hants.gov.uk/tradingstandards/tradingstandards-businessadvice.htm>.

Should you be the target of a business scam, please let Trading Standards know by calling 01962 833620.