

## **Thornton Dale Update December 2015 Trading Standards – Safeguarding Team**

This month I would like to make you aware of North Yorkshire Trading Standards who have recently formed a new multi-agency safeguarding team with the primary role of protect vulnerable adults from financial abuse. The team investigates Doorstep crime, Distraction burglary, Scam mail, including prize draw & lottery scams and clairvoyant scams. Telephone scams, Investment frauds, Romance frauds, Land banking frauds, Internet frauds targeted at older adults & the vulnerable, Fraud against vulnerable adults by family and carers.

To think that there is such a group of people targeting our vulnerable adults is a very unpalatable thought, but they are there and the Trading Standards team along with two police officers have joined up to address this problem. The team are currently investigating a number of doorstep traders who have been operating throughout the North Yorkshire area, often targeting the elderly and the vulnerable. In addition, there are a number of officers assigned to tackle the problem of scam mail. This is mail informing you have won a prize to a competition you have never entered or there is a cheque 'with your name on it'. All these scam letters have one thing in common, they all ask for a small 'admin fee' in order for the prize to be released. Anyone answering this type of letter will have their name put on a 'suckers list' (their name not mine) which scammers trade with each other, resulting in the person being inundated with scam mail.

Most of us know to put these types of letters in the recycle, but unfortunately there are people who believe these letters and often end up losing thousands of pounds. There are simple steps residents can take to protect themselves: Do not engage with cold callers, politely tell them you are not interested and close the door. NEVER give your bank details to anyone calling you on the phone. Your bank or the police will never ask you for account or PIN numbers. Ensure your computer has some form of Internet security installed (for example Norton or McAfee) to reduce the likelihood of you falling for an internet scam. If you are cold called on the telephone, do not engage with the caller, just put the phone down. Never answer scam mail. The prizes are fictitious and do not exist.  
**If in doubt contact the police on 101**

Remember North Yorkshire is a very safe place to live and was recently classed as the safest place to live in England. By taking a few careful steps and by looking out for the less able in our community, we can make it safer still.

Take care this Christmas.

Janet Sanderson