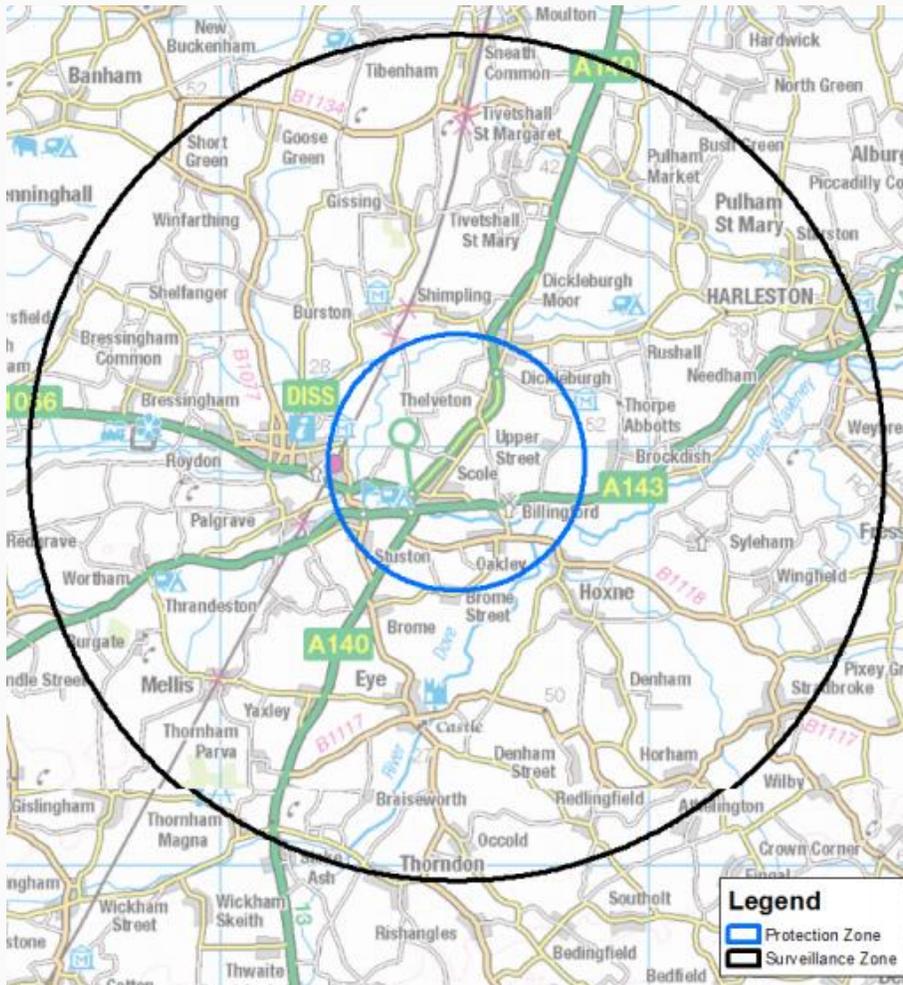


★ JOIN THE FIGHT ★

Suffolk Consumer Champion
Weekly Bulletin

09/06/2017

This week's top features



Bird Flu Outbreak

Sadly I am having to advise you of another outbreak of Avian Influenza.

This time the outbreak is on a small holding near Diss in Norfolk, but unfortunately the 3km Protection Zone (PZ) and 10km Surveillance Zone (SZ) controls that are currently in place cover areas in the north of Suffolk.

The flock contained approximately 30 birds. A number died and the remaining live birds were humanely culled. A full investigation is under way to determine the source of the infection.

Defra have published [full details of the controls in place](#). You can use their [interactive map](#) to check if you are affected by restrictions.

Suffolk Trading Standards are providing regular updates via their social media channels, [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#).

Once the outbreak was confirmed Suffolk Trading Standards and Norfolk Trading Standards visited every premise in the 3km zone.



Don't Get Burnt By Holiday Scams

Suffolk Trading Standards are reminding people not to fall foul of conmen as the summer holidays approach.

It comes after a number of complaints to the service as people increasingly start to carry out their pre-holiday arrangements.

Renewals for passports and European Health Insurance Cards top the list of reason for complaints, with some website charging fees for services that official sites offer for free.

Trading standards officers advise residents not to click on the first website a search engine offers but to

carry out some basic checks prior to using such services to avoid falling foul of companies who will charge for something that can be done without cost.

Anyone who discovers their passport is out of date in the run-up to the summer holiday season already has to pay a fee of £72.50 (or £46 for a child) to renew it. However, if you are taken in by a number of companies offering 'passport services' you could end up paying even more.

Some websites offer 'services' where in return for a fee they will help you complete your application, some companies will charge up to £40 for this information - on top of the passport fee itself.

If you need a new passport for the summer you can get a form from your local passport office, or call the official helpline on 0300 222 0000. There is also an [online form](#) for renewals.

If you're worried as to whether you have completed the form properly, and sent the right photo, you can use the [Check and Send service](#), which costs £8.75 for a Post Office staff member to check through it with you before you put it in the post.

The European Healthcare Insurance Card (EHIC), which provides reduced cost medical treatment in Europe, is free via the NHS. However, many unscrupulous websites charge unnecessarily for this service and often appear as paid adverts at the top of search engines. These sites will charge an administrative fee to check applications which can be up to £15 per person.

Applications for EHICs can be made free of charge from the [NHS website](#).

People purchasing visas to travel outside Europe can also face unnecessary charges. When travelling to the USA for example, it is now essential to apply for an ETSA visa, which normally costs \$14 from the US Department of Homeland Security. However, Trading Standards have found sites that offer the ETSA visa for \$39 per application, which is an extra \$100 for a family of four.

Apply for your ESTA [here](#)

We would like to urge people not to get caught out, to do their homework and to check the small print on these websites.

Further advice from our Community Safety Team on ensuring your [valuable are safe](#) during the holiday season.

**SUFFOLK BUSINESSES
BEWARE!
SCAM PUBLICATION
CALLS REPORTED.**

Publication Scammers

We've received a report from a business in Suffolk advising us of a call they have received from a company purporting to be a publication company. The scammers often pretend to be from various publications, charities and public services. These scammers are using deliberately misleading patter that is often carefully scripted to sell advertising space in various types of publications.

As such we are taking the opportunity to reinforce advice to businesses about how to avoid being a victim.

The techniques used by scammers claiming to provide advertising space in publications are:

- cold calling by phone, e-mail, or in person using a name the same as or similar to a genuine business;
- claiming a link with the police, health services or other public bodies including local authorities;
- claiming a link with charities;
- asking for immediate upfront payment;
- offering discounts for agreeing to buy on the day;
- using the direct debit system to take more than agreed;
- signing the business up to a long-term contract which may be extremely costly.

The advice from trading standards is never to agree with or pay money to an advertiser that you do not know or have not dealt with until:

- you have had a chance to do some simple background checks such as using an internet search engine to identify whether the business is genuine, or has scammed other businesses;
- the advertiser can provide proof of identity for its business and the salesperson that contacts you;
- the advertiser has provided proof of the existence of previous publications referred to and can provide proof of contractual dealings with any business, service, charity or public body that they claim to be working with or to have worked with previously.

If you receive a telephone call or an 'invoice' that comes from a publication you have never heard of, or that you don't remember putting an entry in, don't pay or give out your details until you have looked into the matter further.

What can I do?

If you do not wish to receive unsolicited sales and marketing calls, you should register with the [Corporate Telephone Preference Service \(CTPS\)](#), which operates a central opt-out register. It is a legal requirement that companies do not make such calls to numbers registered on the CTPS. This service is free of charge.

Circulate this information to members of staff who take external calls, and make copies of the questionnaire below available to such staff.

Audit your systems/procedures for invoicing and payment to satisfy yourself that you are adequately protected from practices of this nature.

If you wish to complain about what you suspect is a rogue publisher, or want further information, you can contact the police or your local trading standards service.

[Publishing Company Questionnaire](#)

[Product Recalls](#)

[Fraud and Scam Advice](#)

[Consumer Rights](#)

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