

DEALING WITH UNWANTED TELEPHONE CALLS

With thanks to Surrey County Councillor Jeff Harris

1. HMRC/Police/Courts/TV Licensing, etc do not use phone calls to contact people. They only use e-mails if you ask them to, and give your e-mail address, and under current legislation give permission for them to use it.
2. Most unwanted calls begin with a computer dialling thousands of lines at a time in the hope one or more pick up and it's a real person (not an answering machine or intercept). Most of these scams operate internationally so even when you think you are dealing with someone with a British telephone number, it could actually be in Africa or India.....
3. **Never answer the phone with your name**, if you don't have 'Caller Display'* do not confirm your name. If you want to be polite just say the last three digits of your phone number. Anything else confirms that the number has a person attached to it.
4. You will immediately know if it's a fraud/scam as there will be a delay in anyone answering- so just put the phone down.
5. If you do by accident answer with your name and the person starts talking to you -and you don't want to continue, just say goodbye and hang up. Remember these are criminals and have no feelings to hurt.
6. If you do end up engaging in discussion, tell them this conversation is being recorded for the Trading Standards (we know it isn't-they don't) and just ask them where they got your number from and tell them you are registered with the Telephone Preference Service, and they could be committing a criminal offence under the new data protection laws.....that's usually enough to put the scammers off, and even legitimate companies are not allowed to do cold-calling.
7. If think you have given details away, or the caller seems to know a lot about you and you do want to confirm anything with your bank-**wait 15 minutes** before making a call or use a different phone from a different line (mobile). Remember these criminal are very clever at getting information from you, so be very wary of saying anything or confirming anything at all.
8. I suggest to elderly people that they say 'my son/daughter deals with that so give me a number and I'll get them to call back in when they come home...'

All that said...

- If you can get 'Caller Display' - BT do a system called 'Call Guardian' which costs a small amount each month, and I think they operate a free service as well, but I would suggest you register with **Think Jessica** which is a charity set up to protect the elderly and vulnerable from Scams and frauds.....lots of good advice on their website www.thinkjessica.com This charity does literature and films about avoiding scams, etc.