# Nearly half of Scots encounter banned sales tactics, Trading Standards warns



A recent poll conducted for Trading Standards Scotland (TSS) has revealed that nearly half of people in Scotland—46 per cent—have encountered banned sales practices, including aggressive or misleading tactics employed by rogue traders. The ScotPulse survey, which gathered responses from 1,063 individuals, highlights a widespread problem across the country involving unscrupulous sales methods.

Trading Standards Scotland has responded by launching a nationwide ‘Know Your Rights’ campaign aimed at helping consumers better understand their protections under the Consumer Protection from Unfair Trading Regulations 2008. These regulations prohibit high-pressure selling, misleading product information, fake discounts, and false claims of urgent or unnecessary work.

The survey found that a third of respondents had been misled into completing a sale, yet only one in five reported the incident to authorities. Fiona Richardson, chief officer of Trading Standards Scotland, expressed concern over the scale of the problem, saying, “It is shocking that so many people in Scotland are falling victim to misleading and aggressive sales tactics." She further noted, “Traders who offer fake discounts or falsely claim extra work is needed are not just being dishonest – they are breaking the law."

Several case examples illustrate the issue's severity. An elderly woman from Fife lost £3,000 after two women posing as NHS healthcare workers spent over two hours at her home pressuring her to purchase a mattress, even requiring immediate payment without allowing her to read the contract. When her son attempted to cancel the order, he was told the mattress was non-refundable as it was being custom-made.

In Glasgow, a man was persuaded to pay £3,000 for a ‘voltage optimiser’ device by a cold caller claiming to be from the local council and citing fire safety concerns linked to the Grenfell Tower disaster. After installation, a qualified electrician deemed the device unnecessary and valued it at under £300.

A couple in Motherwell faced an £8,000 roof repair bill after roofers offering a free inspection initially quoted a modest £200 for minor works. Feeling pressured, they paid a £4,000 deposit. Subsequently, a local authority-approved roofer assessed the completed work, finding it to be poorly done and valued at around £1,000.

Trading Standards Scotland has also uncovered instances where traders remained in customers’ homes late into the night, and one locksmith reportedly locked a customer out of their own property.

The survey additionally revealed that 31 per cent of people reported effects on their physical health or mental wellbeing due to such sales tactics. Despite this, only 28 per cent were aware they might reclaim money from financial institutions following being misled.

Richardson advised consumers to avoid cold callers and instead seek out vetted local businesses through approved trader schemes supported by Trading Standards. She added, “Always research a company before agreeing to any work. Online adverts can be misleading and reviews can be faked. Take your time. A pushy pitch is often a red flag."

The campaign also highlights legal consequences for rogue traders. For example, one individual who used false advertising and incomplete gardening work was sentenced to 32 months in prison after pleading guilty to fraud and consumer protection offences. Another roofer who overcharged elderly victims received an 18-month sentence for fraud, money laundering, and breaches of consumer protection law.

Consumers in need of support can access resources through Advice Direct Scotland or report fraud to Police Scotland. The SCOTSS approved trader portal provides a directory of vetted traders throughout Scotland for added consumer confidence.

The Consumer Protection from Unfair Trading Regulations safeguard people from aggressive behaviour, such as refusing to leave premises, using scare tactics, or bombardment with calls. Additionally, traders falsely representing themselves as members of trusted organisations or creating false urgency are violating these regulations. If a consumer is misled or pressured into a purchase, they have the right to a refund and may be entitled to compensation regardless of whether the sale occurred door-to-door, over the phone, online, or in-store.

Trading Standards Scotland continues to work with Police Scotland to investigate and prosecute offenders who breach these consumer protection laws.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.forres-gazette.co.uk/news/national/almost-half-of-scots-fall-victim-to-banned-sales-tactics-poll-suggests-132292/> - This URL supports the claim that nearly half of people in Scotland have encountered banned sales practices, as revealed in a poll conducted for Trading Standards Scotland.
2. <http://scotss.org> - This website provides information on the Society of Chief Officers of Trading Standards in Scotland, which is relevant to the campaign against unfair trading practices.
3. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/unfair-commercial-practices-cma207/unfair-commercial-practices> - This URL explains unfair commercial practices in detail, including those related to misleading product information and fake urgency claims, as highlighted in the article.
4. <https://www.sdi.co.uk/business-in-scotland/setting-up-your-business/business-laws-and-regulations> - This webpage discusses business laws and regulations in Scotland, including advertising and marketing rules that prohibit misleading practices.
5. <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2008/1277/made> - This URL refers to the Consumer Protection from Unfair Trading Regulations 2008, which form the legal basis for the protections mentioned in the article.
6. <https://www.advisescotland.com/organisation/advice-direct-scotland/> - This website provides information on Advice Direct Scotland, a resource mentioned in the article as a support for consumers who have been affected by unfair trading practices.
7. <https://news.google.com/rss/articles/CBMimwFBVV95cUxPSE1tbzJGeUpGa0ZUOTJvTVR1UUNZWFRjVkVIMzhkWHpSRlZ1TS1QRzZudEVnMHZxaDF6X3ZabkNkMnItTmtHRlFSUWh3akdtdzNUamJPWHVUQ3IwR1hsclVPd0p0Z2x0R29KU0tOaXhuRlpTWXhhUVVrN0xWZGd0T21zMHlJMnlHVV93cFp5Z2lMLVQ1X0dLVXdkRdIBoAFBVV95cUxQNUFsU1NzUFNYMDdmcGkzSW1JVzdYMHJuQmdOajZnaHMtVl82enBQYUljNzhUV0J3WlpTZmt5WkxMNURmMTNqWXJUd1NMN1FkYzNyb1FaS3NQbGJtLVVpZTl5c0RtdUJDQV9JUko0OHlZZEM5SHNJWDRzSUFoaXJMUjhRYm9mNTVDYlI3clZ0X3F0WjZNS0ZUNE9Rbzdzb1Bl?oc=5&hl=en-US&gl=US&ceid=US:en> - Please view link - unable to able to access data