

## **Advertising Scams Targeting South Gloucestershire's Businesses**

Each year South Gloucestershire Council's Trading Standards receives a high number of enquiries and complaints from traders within the district about advertising scams they have either fallen victim of or require advice on how to deal with.

Traders either receive a phone call or a letter implying that they have agreed to advertising in a booklet or wall planner some months beforehand and now the advertisers are seeking payment. They are relying on you not remembering whether you have or have not agreed to the contract and you taking their word for it! Many claim to be working in association with the emergency services or a good cause – this is not the case. Many also threatened court action if the trader refuses to settle the invoice and some traders may even receive letters from debt collection agencies.

If you have not nor have any recollection of agreeing to an advertising contract, question the caller and ask for proof or put these points in a letter. Without any proof that you agreed to the contract, the advertisers will not be able to claim the monies from you in court. If the advertisers state they have a telephone recording – ask for a copy and a transcript. Many traders find the quality is poor and they have been doctored – if this is the case, then the advertisers may find enforcing the claim difficult.

Some traders have found that the advertisers stop pursuing them when confronted. Others have found that they need to stand their ground after being sent further threatening letters. Remember that without any proof you agreed to the contract, the advertisers will not be able to enforce the claim!

PLEASE NOTE – if you have agreed to an advertising contract, you have no automatic cooling off period and may find yourself liable for the costs.

For further advice contact Trading Standards via Consumer Direct on 08454 04 05 06.