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Neighbourhood Watch

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Watch out for Nottingham Knockers

By Julia Pack

Police in South East Essex are warning residents to be mindful of who they open their front doors to.

Door-to-door salespeople have a habit of turning up in the middle of your favourite TV programme and can be very difficult to get rid of once you've opened the door to them. But local police have recently become aware that a group of young salesmen, dubbed the 'Nottingham Knockers', have been targeting our part of the county.

Named after a scam originating in Nottingham, young people travel across the UK targeting a town at a time. They knock at doors and claim to be ex-convicts attempting to mend their ways, before trying to sell the householder everyday household products at very high prices.

Police always advise residents to refrain from buying at the doorstep and not to buckle to pressure from salespeople offering supposedly one-off, 'buy it now', low prices. However, often kind-hearted residents feel they are helping the Nottingham Knockers to turn their lives around so agree to buy their wares.

Sgt Andy Clarkson of Southend's burglary squad commented: "These Nottingham Knockers work in groups across the country but they are not involved in any officially recognised offender rehabilitation programme and many do not possess pedlar's certificates, which are issued by police and are necessary for salespeople to be legally allowed to sell door-to-door. Sympathetic members of the public are being duped into buying cheap products at highly-inflated prices and, indeed, on analysis of crime data, some UK regions have discovered a notable rise in crime during the times their local areas were being visited by this group.

"If a salesperson comes to your door, we'd suggest you ask to see their pedlar's certificate - these are only issued to individuals under very strict conditions. You can contact the police station it was issued by in order to prove if it's genuine. If a Nottingham Knocker visits you, please inform police in order for us to keep track of where they are."

If you have any information which you think might be of help, please call Essex Police on 0300 333 4444.

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