

Warwickshire Trading Standards issues warning about puppy scams

Good Morning,

Please help us to spread this warning about puppy scams by forwarding this message on, featuring the information on a website or in a newsletter, or posting a link on social media. The press release below can also be found here: <https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/news/article/1795/don-t-pay-criminals-for-stolen-puppies-sick-puppies-and-puppies-that-don-t-even-exist->

Don't pay criminals for stolen puppies, sick puppies and puppies that don't even exist!

Consumers are paying thousands to criminals for stolen and sick puppies and in some case puppies that don't even exist, **Warwickshire County Council's Trading Standards Service** is warning.

Warwickshire County Councillor Andy Crump, Portfolio Holder for Community Safety said:

"The popularity of owning a dog has increased since the pandemic began, such that demand for puppies has gone through the roof and prices for many breeds have more than doubled."

"Unfortunately, this has encouraged criminals to get involved, leading to more puppy thefts and prospective owners paying huge sums for stolen or sick puppies or large deposits for puppies that don't even exist."

"We've published some top tips to assist would be dog owners to avoid these scam puppy sales."

Trading Standards Animal Health Officers have received reports of criminal gangs illegally smuggling puppies in to the UK to sell, puppies being stolen and sold on and consumers paying huge deposits to online sellers for puppies that don't exist.

Illegally imported puppies may carry diseases that are a threat to human health such as rabies. Criminal gangs have also been involved in puppy farming, where dogs are often bred in appalling conditions, increasing the risk of disease and ill health.

In April 2020 'Lucy's Law' was introduced, meaning that anyone wanting to get a new puppy (or kitten) in England must now buy direct from a breeder, or consider adopting from a rescue centre instead. Licensed dog breeders are required to show puppies interacting with their mothers in their place of birth. If a business sells puppies (or kittens) without a licence, they could receive an unlimited fine or be sent to prison for up to six months. The new law seeks to tackle the low-welfare, high volume supply of puppies (and kittens), by banning their commercial third-party sale in England.

Beginning on Monday 8th March, Warwickshire Trading Standards is launching a new campaign to promote their top tips, search 'buypuppysafe' or follow us on

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/warwickshiretradingstandards> and

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/WarksTSS>

Top Tips to Buy a Puppy Safely

1. Buy from a reputable and recommended dealer. Consider the Kennel Club Assured breeder scheme
2. Always view the puppy with its mother and siblings, where it has been bred
3. Ask to see the health test certificates for the puppy's parents and the puppy's vaccination documentation
4. Be prepared to wait for the puppy you want. Be very wary of anyone claiming they can provide the puppy you want quickly
5. Many bogus breeders 'sell' puppies on social media where money is taken for large deposits, but no puppy is ever delivered. If you're asked to pay a deposit, check to ensure the seller is genuine first.
6. Never agree to meet the seller anywhere other than where the puppy is kept, for example car parks, motorway service stations etc. Do not allow the seller to deliver the puppy to your home
7. Beware of anyone offering a puppy at a 'too good to be true' price
8. To report puppy scams, the illegal sale of puppies and obtain advice on your consumer rights, contact the Citizens Advice Consumer Service on 0808 223 1133
9. For more information and advice about buying a puppy, visit:
 - <https://www.rspca.org.uk/adviceandwelfare/pets/dogs/puppy>.
 - <https://www.dogstrust.org.uk/help-advice/buyer-advice/>
 - <https://www.thekennelclub.org.uk/getting-a-dog/>
 - Lucy's Law <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/lucys-law-spells-the-beginning-of-the-end-for-puppy-farming> Dog breeders can contact their local authority for more advice.

To make a consumer complaint or for consumer help and advice, please contact the Citizens Advice Consumer Service on 0808 223 1133.

For more consumer help and advice, including details of our approved trader scheme, please visit our website: <https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/tradingstandards>

Sign up for regular scam alerts to your email

inbox: <https://mailchi.mp/warwickshire/scamawareness>

Follow us on Facebook and

twitter: <https://www.facebook.com/warwickshiretradingstandards> <https://twitter.com/WarksTSS>

If you no longer wish to receive these alerts, please email simoncripwell@warwickshire.gov.uk

Best Wishes

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