

March 8th 2017

Alert – phone scam

The public are being warned to stay on their guard against phone callers who ask them: "Can you hear me?"

If someone does call you and that is one of the first things they ask you, hang up immediately if you don't want to be landed with an expensive contract.

The major scam has already swept the United States and it is only a matter of time before conmen in Britain realise it could be an easy way to make money out of vulnerable people.

But police and call-blocking companies are warning the public about the dangerous phone call in the hope of preventing innocent people falling victim to the scammers.

This is how it works;

You receive a phone call from a local number and the voice on the end introduces themselves and the company they supposedly work for.

They then ask: "Can you hear me?" Your answer is recorded, and if you say "yes", your response will be edited to make it appear as if you've agreed to a huge purchase.

You're effectively being tricked into signing a verbal contract, much the same as clicking 'I agree' to terms and conditions online. Voice signatures like these are legitimately used by companies doing business over the phone, but this is being exploited by scammers who have conned many Americans already. CPR Call Blocker has seen the scam rise in frequency and the company believes it's only a matter of time before the UK start being targeted too.

The scammers may try and charge you for products or services you've never used, and if you try and argue with them, they'll play back their recording of you saying "yes" and threaten to take legal action if you don't pay up.

Another version of the scam sees the criminals using the person's voice recording to authorise a stolen credit card. The public is being advised either to hang up straight away upon being asked "Can you hear me?", or just not pick up at all if you don't recognise the number.

And if you do think you may have been caught out by the scammers, contact your bank or card provider as soon as you can.