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Digital TV scam warning for residents

Solihull residents are being warned to be vigilant against digital switchover 'rogue traders' as the borough prepares for the biggest change to TV for a generation.

Over the next few months, the traditional analogue signal will be switched off in the Central region and replaced with a digital TV signal instead, which in some cases will require the installation of approved digital equipment such as set boxes and new aerials.

Rogue traders have been exploiting vulnerable people during the switchover in other parts of the country where the switchover has already happened, and Safer Solihull Partnership is encouraging people to use approved digital switchover companies such as the Switchover Help Scheme – a government-led initiative to help people get set for digital TV.

The warning from trading standards and police comes after 12 Sky HD+ boxes were stolen from a satellite engineer's van in Mill Lane, Dorridge, earlier this month. A drill and TV and satellite meters were taken along with digital boxes, which could be a good starter kit for a potential bogus digital TV installer.

Solihull Council's trading standards team is working together with West Midlands Police by carrying out community patrols to help clamp down on rogue traders, by assessing vehicles which may be trading as unauthorised digital switchover TV companies.

Cabinet Member for Safer Communities, Councillor Len Cresswell, says: "Our biggest concern is reaching elderly and vulnerable people during this process and making sure they understand what needs to be done ahead of switchover. We will be working hard on helping approved companies communicate the message wherever

possible and providing elderly people with the right advice and help where it is needed most. For some, it will be complex and maybe more difficult to switch and so we need to support these viewers over the next year.”

In addition the police would like to reassure people by providing the following advice:

- The Help Scheme doesn't do cold calling, and strongly advises residents not to respond to cold callers.
- Residents will never see anyone from the Help Scheme unless an appointment has been made in advance.
- All Help Scheme staff carry ID cards and are CRB checked. Always ask to check their identity in any instance.

Solihull Police Sergeant Helen Braithwaite, said: "Residents are reminded to only use approved companies who cold call. People should look out for the official 'Switchover Help Scheme' information packs explaining the options for switchover during the next few months.”

For more information about the digital switchover, visit www.helpscheme.co.uk or call 0800 40 85 900.

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