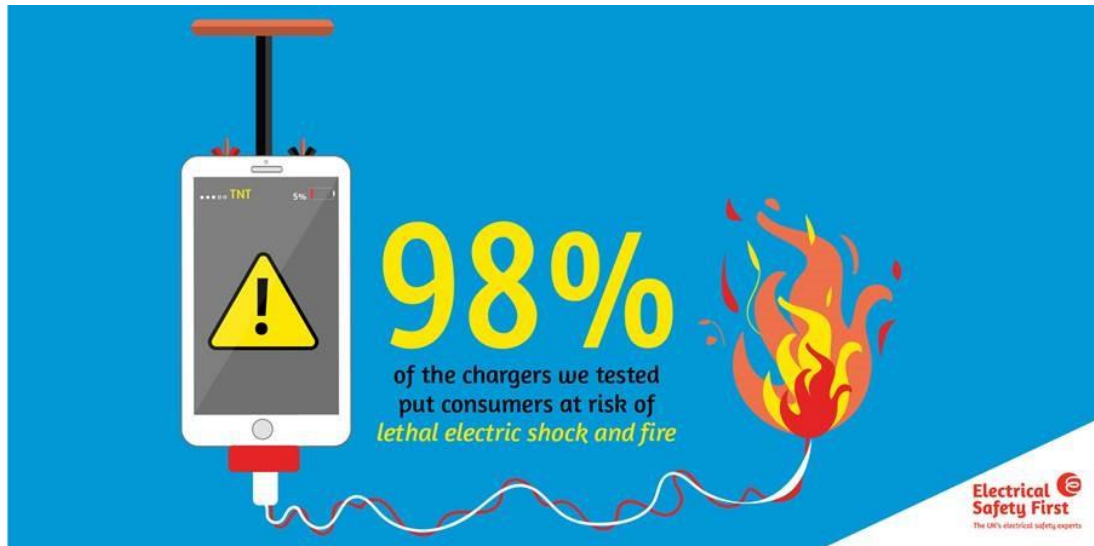


## This week's top features



## Unsafe Chargers

In the first study of its kind in the UK; Electrical Safety First, with the support of Apple, conducted a series of safety tests on counterfeit and lookalike iPhone chargers, including 50 purchased in the UK. The findings, published in a new report, reveal that almost all (98%) of the chargers tested had the potential to deliver lethal electric shock and/or cause a fire.

The chargers were sourced from a variety of online marketplaces and independent discount stores and stalls across the UK. Of those tested, all but one failed one or more of the tests and more than one in three chargers failed every part of the safety screening.

After subjecting the chargers to a number of mechanical and safety tests:

- Almost half (23) failed an electric strength test; meaning that there is a severe risk of electric shock when using these chargers.
- Internal examination showed almost half failed basic safety requirements; these chargers contained sub-standard internal components or inadequate spacing, also presenting a serious risk of electrocution or fire for consumers.

- Overall, two in three (68%) of the chargers tested carried a *severe* risk of electric shock due to lack of insulation and poor quality internal components.
- 15 chargers that passed the electrical tests failed the plug pin strength test. If a pin is not sufficiently strong, there is danger that it could break off inside a mains socket, resulting in a risk of electric shock from an exposed live pin.

These results show that in the overwhelming majority of cases, counterfeit or lookalike chargers could overheat, catch fire and deliver a potentially lethal electric shock to any one at any point during their use.

A common thread between the 50 chargers was that they all had incorrect or fraudulent safety markings. In a few cases, attempts to copy markings from genuine iPhone chargers resulted in errors, such as simple spelling mistakes. Although this does not pose a direct risk of injury to the user, in Electrical Safety First's experience this is indicative of other failings that may compromise safety.

For advice and tips on spotting a fake charger, visit [electricalsafetyfirst.org.uk/fakechargers](http://electricalsafetyfirst.org.uk/fakechargers) or search #spotthefake on social media.

---



# Buying Safe Presents for Christmas

As families begin to get into the Christmas spirit, Suffolk's Trading Standards teams are raising awareness of the dangers of purchasing unsafe gifts.

The festive season is a particularly risky time for shoppers, with the possibility consumers could fall foul of unscrupulous traders offering dangerous goods at prices that are too good to be true.

The increase in the popularity of online shopping makes it even easier for dodgy goods to slip through the net.

Although illegal, unsafe toys can still be found on sale so it is vital to shop with care.

- Look for the mandatory European Community (CE) symbol. This is a claim by the manufacturer that his toy meets the requirements of the EC Toy Safety Directive.
- Buy from suppliers with a good reputation for safe and reliable toys.
- Make sure the toys are suitable. Some children, particularly those under three, are more vulnerable, particularly to choking, and less able to cope with particular toys than older children.

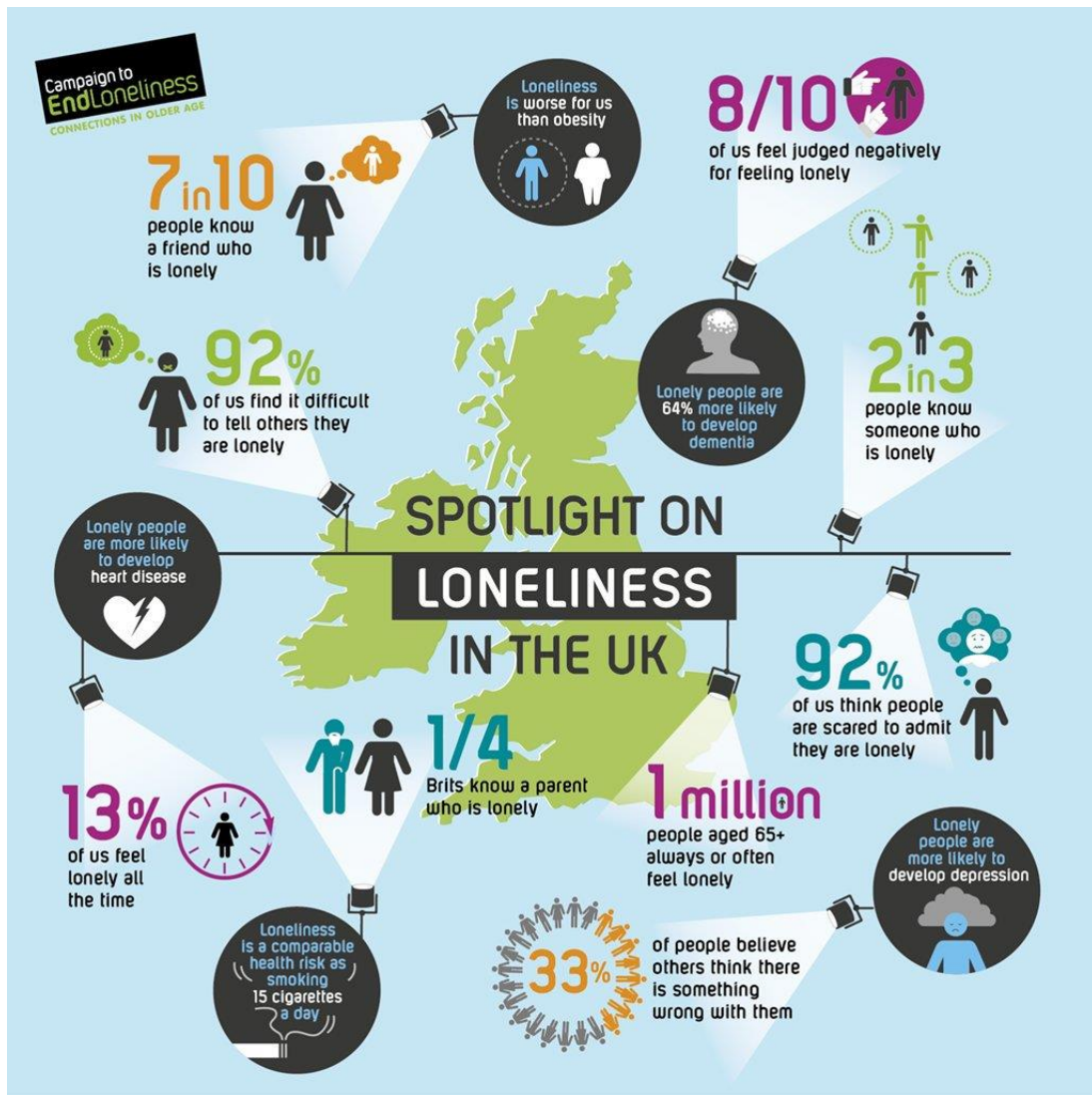
Make sure you buy safe electrical products this Christmas by following these simple tips:

- Check the voltage of products is 230V, 50Hz (the UK's usual domestic voltage)
- Check the product is fitted with a three-pin UK plug or charger
- Make sure you have the seller's contact details. The full address and not just a PO Box number.

With all purchases you buy, do a price check. If a bargain looks too good to be true, the chances are it probably is.

Lastly, make sure you check [the list of recalled products](#) on a regular basis to make sure you are not giving a loved one a present that has been found to be unsafe.

If you think a product that you've bought is dangerous, **stop using it immediately** and contact Suffolk Trading Standards via 03454 040506.



## Do You Know Someone Who Is Lonely?

**Lonely people are four times more likely to fall victim to scams.**

It is estimated that £5-10 billion is lost annually by victims of scams, with the average age of a victim being 75. In an ageing society, the number of people over 65 living on their own in England is projected to increase from 3.5m in 2015 to 4.97m in 2030. This means that unless society makes a

concerted effort to tackle loneliness, significantly more people could be at increased risk of being scammed – it is detrimental to their health and the well-being and the economy.

The loneliness of some scam victims can be exacerbated by feelings of shame and embarrassment, reinforced by language sometimes associated with scam victims such as “stupid”, “gullible” or “greedy”. Such words suggest they are culpable, rather than a victim in need of support. This can influence victims’ willingness and ability to report their experience, and may be part of the reason why scamming is an under-reported crime.

Empowering people to safeguard themselves against scams through increased awareness is vitally important.

We are calling on the residents of Suffolk to show some Christmas spirit and for them to think of ways that they could help someone who might be lonely. Small acts of kindness might just help prevent someone they know from being scammed, or may encourage that individual to open up to them about how they are being scammed. They and Suffolk Trading Standards can step in and help.

Trading Standards are sharing tips on their social media channels, as well as promoting details of local initiatives that can help support the lonely. If you know of a scheme or organisation that we should promote, please contact trading standards on their [Facebook](#) or [Twitter](#) accounts, or via email on [tradingstandards@suffolk.gov.uk](mailto:tradingstandards@suffolk.gov.uk)



## Top Tip

