

December 2012

Consumer Alerts

Bogus Property Repairers

A consumer was called on by two men who said there was water coming into his property through the damaged roof of the empty property next door. They asked for £1800 to make the necessary repairs. The consumer offered a cheque but the men demanded cash. When the consumer refused the men said they needed to look at his boiler to see if it was at fault. Fortunately, no money was taken as the consumer only allowed one of the men into his property and stayed with him. The other man was locked outside.

In another incident an 85year old man was called on by four men who said they needed to do repairs to his roof. The man left his front door unlocked whilst they were working. After they had gone he realised that £800 had been taken from his wallet.

Trading Standards Advice is

- NEVER agree to have any work done as a result of a cold call. Don't make snap decisions and don't be pressurised into having the job done.
- If you think work needs doing to your home, get quotes from 2 or 3 traders. Ask friends and relatives to recommend a reputable business or to find a trader on our Safe Trader Scheme visit www.safetrader.org.uk or contact Help Direct on 0303 333 1111
- Ask for the full name & address from a trader BEFORE considering dealing with them. Never rely solely on a mobile phone number.

- Ask for a written quotation detailing all the proposed work and a final price for the job.
- Only pay once the work is completed to your satisfaction. Don't pay cash. Don't pay money up front for trader's materials.

Doorstep Incidents

There have been reports of a man selling "Italian Leather" jackets door to door in the Chorley/South Ribble area. The man usually approaches people on the street and is very persistent. It is not clear whether the jackets are real leather but they are very poor quality.

Traders have also been reported to be selling mattresses out of the back of a van in the Wyre & Fylde area. It is unknown whether these mattresses comply with the relevant safety standards.

There has also been a report of men selling bags of compost door to door in the Wyre & Fylde area. In this particular incident the 90 year old consumer thought he had agreed to buy two bags but then suddenly found he was forced to buy twenty.

Trading Standards advice is

- Never deal with traders who cold call at your home
- Do not keep cash in your home no matter how well you think it is hidden. Never pay traders in cash as this is an indication that you may have more cash on the premises

Telephone Scams

There have been several reports of scam phone calls concerning PPI claims. In one particular incident the consumer was contacted by someone who said they were from the Justice Department. They claimed they would send the consumer a cheque for £4900 by courier for an outstanding PPI claim. The caller asked for £100 via a Moneygram voucher.

Computer scams also seem to be prevalent this month. Several consumers have reported receiving telephone calls from people trying to gain access to their computer. Several business names have been used including one caller who claimed to be from Microsoft. The callers use a number of stories to try to get the consumer to log onto their computer and give them access, such as claiming they have a computer virus or that there is some other kind of fault.

Trading Standards advice is never deal with these types of callers.

To report scams or doorstep crime incidents contact the Trading Standards Service via the Citizens Advice Consumer Helpline on 08454 04 05 06