

Consumer Alerts - February 2024

Beware bogus roof repairers.

As with the previous month, bad weather has seen an increase in complaints throughout the County relating to roof repairs.

A resident in the Preston area hired a roofer to carry out repairs to the chimney flashing which was leaking. The roofer advised on further works required and as soon as the householder agreed to the contract and transferred a first instalment of several £1000's the workmen arrived and started work. After a couple of days, the work was allegedly finished, and more money was required which luckily was not paid.

Please double check claims made on trader websites such as membership of associations and how long companies claim to have been trading. Use caution if traders start straight away, you should never feel pressurised into agreeing to the work or paying money.

A resident in the Hyndburn area was recently cold called by a roofer claiming to be working nearby and had noticed the residents roof tiles had slipped. No paperwork was received, no trading name was provided to the householder who is unsure if any work has been completed or needed doing. Luckily only £300 was paid but the householder has concerns they have been scammed.

Beware bogus gardening services.

Reports of cold callers knocking on doors in the Preston area offering gardening services have been reported. In one case it is suspected a vulnerable resident handed over £100 for a very

small amount of work. The traders left no paperwork or details of who they were.

Remember, if you agree a contract in your own home, in most cases you will have cancellation rights of 14 days, even if work begins straight away, in this case you can still cancel but may have to pay the value of the work already completed.

Trading Standards advice is to always say no to cold callers. The Safetrader scheme can help you find a trader in your area, contact 0303 333 1111 or go to www.safetrader.org.uk

Blocked drain responsibilities.

The Trading Standards Service Is receiving a spate of calls in relation to drainage services including blocked drains. Please be aware some of the responsibility for your drainage and sewage will lie with the utility company, some will be with yourselves. If unsure it is always worth checking - further information can be found at www.unitedutilities.com or by contacting 0345 6723723.

It is also worth checking your home insurance policy, you may have cover for the external drainage that you are legally responsible for. If the problem is for you to sort out, shop around, best advice would be to always get more than one opinion as to the problem/ solution and more than one quote.

Beware spoofing bank calls.

Beware scammers can 'spooft' telephone numbers that show up on your caller ID, giving you a false sense of being able to



trust the caller. In one instance the caller, who showed up as being from the householder's bank, already knew details about their bank account and managed to trick them into giving their security code that gave the scammer access to their account.

If you suspect a scam call, do not trust the caller ID, don't give out personal information and don't transfer money – end the call and wait at least 5 minutes or use a different phone before contacting your actual bank.

Report it to Action Fraud on 0300 123 2040 or via www.actionfraud.police.uk.

Contact the Trading Standards Service via the Citizens Advice Consumer Helpline on 0808 223 1133

Further information about current scams can be found on our Facebook page, www.facebook.com/StanleyDards/