

Consumer Alerts – July 2023

Beware cold callers offering to jet wash driveways in the Fylde area.

Cold callers have been delivering flyers and approaching residents in the Fylde area offering to pressure wash and seal drives. Concerns are that the price for the service is excessive, and that no sealant is being applied. Be very wary of responding to flyers, best advice is to find a known local trades person who can carry out the work for you.

Remember for most contracts agreed in your own home you should be given, in writing, details of your 14 day right to cancel.

Trading Standards advice is to never do business with 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

Beware 'click to call' online insurer advertisements

This scam occurs when you are looking up your vehicle insurer's details on your mobile phone after a collision. Misleading 'click to call' advertisement results paid for by dodgy claims management firms can show up and appear to represent the insurer, tricking the victim into tapping the ad and believing they are calling their insurance provider.

The scam claims management firm will work alongside unscrupulous companies that provide costly support services which you may be charged for, when all along you believed you were dealing with your insurance company under your fully comprehensive policy.

Use caution when using a search engine to contact your insurance company after a

collision, double check the web address. Carry the number independently in your vehicle in case of an accident. If you believe you have been part of this type of scam, contact your own vehicle insurance company as soon as possible to make them aware.

Copycat website for blue badge

Copycat websites look very like the official website but are offering to carry out the service for you for a fee, usually a much higher fee than you would have to pay using the official route. A resident of Preston recently fell foul of this scam, applying for a blue disability badge via a website they believed was their local council website, paying £49 for the service rather than the official charge of £10.

Always double check the address bar when applying for a government service to make sure you are on the genuine '.gov.uk' website. The address should begin 'https://' which ensures there is encryption in place to protect your personal details. Always check the home screen for the website – some copycat websites even say they are not the official site.

Parcel Delivery Fraud

This long-standing scam is still doing the rounds. Remember, if you receive a text or an email claiming to be your delivery company wanting to reschedule or charge extra fees, be on the alert. Are you expecting a parcel? Keep track of your online orders, the scammers send this email out whether you are expecting a parcel or not, just in case you respond. In some cases victims received an email relating to the

tracking of parcel supposedly on its way to you.

The scammers will try to charge an extra fee to reschedule delivery and could also be trying to obtain personal and banking details from you.

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

Report fraud to Action Fraud, www.actionfraud.police.uk, Tel 0300 123 2040

Details of phishing scams can be forwarded to the National Cyber Security Centre at report@phishing.gov.uk