

Consumer Alerts - January 2024

Beware rogue roofers

Given the recent wet and windy weather experienced by Lancashire residents it has been a busy month for reports of rogue and scam roofers. Reports have been received from residents of Preston, Lancaster, and Burnley areas.

Trading Standards advice is to always use known local traders, shop around and get 3 quotes. Always ask for a quote in writing before making any decisions. Never feel pressurised into agreeing to work. Look out for warning signs of a small repair job escalating within the first hour or so of any repair work beginning. Remember, if you agree a contract in your own home, in most cases you will have cancellation rights of 14 days.

Use caution if looking online. Does the trader provide a legitimate, full name and address? If claiming to be a Ltd company, searching 'Companies House'; via www.gov.uk will tell you how long they have been incorporated and may indicate if they are local. Check independently for online reviews. Having a landline telephone number may not be an indication of location, landlines can be transferred to mobile numbers.

Use caution if looking on an online platform for a trader or posting your job on such a platform. Be wary if a trader contacts you almost instantly and can come straight away.

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

Beware homeware doorstep sellers

The Trading Standards Service is warning householders about doorstep sellers being dropped off by minibus in the Fylde area. They are selling items such as dishcloths and tea towels for excessive amounts of money, and sometimes enter thresholds and hallways.

We have reports of these sellers sometimes being pushy, and at times becoming frustrated when customers refuse their goods. Whilst it is not illegal to sell goods at the door, we would always advise householders not to deal with doorstep sellers, and never hand over money at the door.

Scam broadband telephone call

A telephone call received by a Lancashire household claimed to be from their broadband company, checking the speed of the households WiFi. The caller then directed the support worker who answered the call to go to the App Store and download 'any desk'. Luckily the support worker refused to download the App saying this was because the caller would then be able to mirror and have access to the iPad that was being used. The caller then proceeded to swear before the support worker put the phone down.

Telesales calls offering insulation services

A Preston resident reported receiving a telephone call offering a free, no



obligation, loft insulation inspection, suspecting it was a scam. This call may have been a scam or may have been a way for the business to secure an initial home visit. Trading Standards advice would be to always do your own research before agreeing to any company offering such services into your home.

Please remember that Cosy Homes in Lancashire (CHIL) is a scheme partnered with 13 local authorities that may be able to help Lancashire residents, including residents of park homes, with funding or grants for heating, electricity and insulation. Contact details: www.chil.uk.com, 03306 061488.

Avoid scams when booking a holiday

It's the time of year when many people may be looking to book a holiday. Remember, be suspicious if the holiday or flights are considerably cheaper than the average cost of a similar holiday elsewhere, this could be the signs of a scammer.

Be on the look out for copycat websites especially when applying for a GHIC (UK Global Health Insurance Card). Your EHIC (European Health Insurance Card) will be valid as long as it remains in date. GHIC cards are free, last for 5 years and can be applied for www.nhs.uk.

When booking flight with your holiday, always make sure the travel company is ATOL protected.

Look out for fake listings, offering too good to be true luxury villas or apartments. Be suspicious if required to pay for your stay outside of the official website or if the only option is a bank transfer. Remember you have added

protections when paying by credit card for purchases over £100.

Scam emails can be reported via report@phishing.gov.uk. Suspicious text messages can be forwarded to 7726.

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/