

Consumer Alerts – March 2023

Beware cold callers offering gardening services

Residents in the Chorley area are being warned to be on the alert for cold callers offering gardening work. One householder who agreed to some general gardening work was charged £800 for three hours work, with damaged caused and the garden in a worst state than when the traders arrived.

Major renovation works

This Service receives complaints where householders have employed traders via social media sites to carry out renovation work or build extensions to their homes and have been left with jobs being only half or less completed, leaving rooms unusable and in some cases open to the elements. In some instances, the trader, after obtaining a large amount of money upfront, and carrying out only a small amount of work, has cut all contact with the householder, leaving them devastated, unable to afford to pay out again for the works to be rectified and continued.

Trading Standards advice would always be to shop around, do your research, including online research. Get at least 3 quotes, especially for such big projects. Use known local trades people, ask family and friends for recommendations rather than relying on social media.

The Safetrader scheme can help you find a trader in your area, contact 0303 333 1111 or go to www.safetrader.org.uk

Cold callers selling household items

Reports have been received of cold callers in the Ribble Valley area offering kitchen wares and household goods. The doorstep

sellers may carry ID, stating the business they work for, but can be very pushy, making residents feel ill at ease and under pressure to buy.

Often items offered for sale on your doorstep can be expensive and of low quality. Sometimes the sellers can imply they are on probation. Please be aware neither the Council nor the Probation Service run schemes where ex-offenders call door to door selling such items.

Trading Standards advice is to always say no to cold callers.

Romance scams

The majority of accounts on dating websites are genuine people looking for romance, but fraudsters may try to contact you by making fake profiles, getting in touch and building what feels like a loving relationship.

Once a fraudster using a fake dating profile is confident that they've won your trust, they will tell you about a problem they are experiencing and ask you to help out by sending money. They may have arranged to visit you but need money to pay for the flight, or their flight ticket has been stolen. They may say a family member is ill and money is needed for medical treatment.

Once you send them money, the fraudsters will keep coming back and invent new reasons to send them more money.

Dating scams can be reported to Action Fraud, www.actionfraud.police.uk, Tel 0300 123 2040

Contact the Trading Standards Service via the Citizens Advice Consumer Helpline on 0800 223 1133