

**February 2013**

## **Consumer Alerts**

### **Unsolicited Emails**

There is an email circulating with a link to what appears to be a CNBC news page. The page features an article about a work-from-home scheme which claims to earn the employees \$5000-\$7000 per month. The scheme asks for a \$50 maintenance fee. Trading Standards advice is to be very wary of paying any money upfront, a genuine job is unlikely to ask for a registration or maintenance fee.

### **Doorstep Incidents**

There have been reports of 3 men selling fish door-to-door from a white, transit van. They do not appear to be regular sellers. Trading Standards advice is never buy such products from door-to-door sellers who are not regular rounds men. You may not get the weight, quality or hygiene standards you are expecting.

A consumer has reported 2 men who knocked at her back door and told her that the ridge tiles on the roof had lifted in the wind and needed cementing. They also claimed some pointing needed doing on the chimney. The consumer said she didn't want the work doing but the men ignored her and started work anyway. The men asked for £650 in cash but the consumer said she had only £500, which she paid. Both men disappeared soon after.

In another roofing incident the trader turned up unsolicited at an elderly resident's home and said they had noticed loose roof tiles. They asked for £290 in cash and said they would call again the next day for a further

£300. Little if any work has been done on the roof.

In another incident a consumer received an unsolicited call from a man selling "Italian leather" coats. The man said he needed to make some money quickly so he could buy presents for his family at the airport when he flew back to Italy.

Trading Standards advice is never deal with traders who cold call.

### **Unsolicited Telephone Calls**

Following the purchase of a new laptop a consumer started getting calls from a trader, allegedly from Windows Technical Services, offering 3 years internet service for an upfront payment of £199.

### **Scam Letters**

There have been a number of reports of prize draw scams. One consumer received a letter stating they had won a cheque for £66,000 in a prize draw. The letter asked for £20 administration fee before the cheque could be sent. Another consumer received a letter saying they had won £300,000 – again a £20 fee was asked for. Trading Standards advice is do not respond to such letters.

**Contact the Trading Standards Service via the Citizens Advice Consumer Helpline on 08454 04 05 06**