

**June 2013**

## Consumer Alerts

### Bogus Roofers

Bogus roofers continue to cause problems. There have been numerous reports of people being cold called by traders who say they have noticed the roof needs attention. Often little or no work is done and any that is completed is of very poor quality.

One consumer reported being cold called every year by traders who each said they were calling to complete work started by the trader who called previously. Each time the consumer was charged hundreds of pounds which the trader insisted was paid in cash. The consumer did try to say they didn't want further work doing but was ignored.

Trading Standards advice is never deal with traders who cold call. If you want help finding a reputable trader visit our Safe Trader Scheme website [www.safetrader.org.uk](http://www.safetrader.org.uk) or contact Help Direct on 0303 333 1111.

### Lottery and Prize Draw Scams

A householder received a telephone call saying they had won £32,000 in a Spanish lottery. The caller asked the householder to telephone another number to claim.

Another consumer received a letter from an address in Madrid claiming they had won £825,000 in the Euro Millions Lottery. To claim the money the consumer had to complete a form which asked for personal information.

In another incident a consumer received a letter saying they had won a prize draw and that they had to place an order with the company to be eligible to claim their prize. Sometime later the consumer noticed other unauthorised payments being made from their account. Although these amounts were small they totalled over £1000.

Trading Standards advice is never respond to phone calls or letters like this.

### Council Tax Cold Callers

Many residents have reported receiving unsolicited telephone calls offering to check council tax bandings. In some instances residents are informed they may be due a rebate of between £2,000 and £3,000. A visit is then arranged where a fee of £165 is charged, plus 25% of any rebate obtained.

There are concerns about the hard-selling practices of this company, and the percentage of successful claims obtained. Residents should be aware that companies cold-calling to sell this type of service have no connection to any council or to the Valuation Office Agency.

Trading Standards are asking people to report the calls. They are also keen to alert people that they can check their council tax banding themselves. Any householder has the right to contact the Valuation Office Agency on 03000 501501, or via its website [www.voa.gov.uk](http://www.voa.gov.uk). If you are successful in getting the band lowered you will keep the entire rebate.

## Case Report

Steven Lee Snr, from Preston, who carried out shoddy roof repairs on victims' homes and then charged them huge bills, has been jailed for 3 months for offences under the Consumer Protection of Unfair Trading Regulations 2008. He was also ordered to pay £25,485 in compensation to his victims. Bolton Crown Court was told he will serve half his sentence before being released on license. His son, Steven Lee Jnr, was given a 2 year community order of 150 hours of unpaid work with costs of £500.

The pair were in court after an investigation by Trading Standards Officers in Bury.

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