

May 2014

Consumer Alerts

Telephone Scams

A report has been received of a Wyre resident receiving a telephone call from someone purporting to be from Lancashire County Council and who was carrying out a survey. The caller asked for the householder to confirm their address and age and then asked if they had taken out a loan, insurance or a mortgage. When challenged, the caller ended the telephone call. Trading Standards advice is never give personal information to unsolicited telephone callers.

We are still receiving reports of cold callers offering to pursue claims for mis-sold PPI. In one incident the trader arranged to send a representative round to see the householder. They took all the householder's mortgage paperwork and a £100 cheque in payment. The trader has now disappeared. Trading Standards advice is never deal with cold callers.

Internet Scams

The National Crime Agency is urging members of the public to protect themselves against powerful malicious software (malware), which may be costing UK computer users millions of pounds. Members of the public can protect themselves by making sure security software is installed and updated, by running scans and checking that computer operating systems and applications are up to date. For more information visit <http://www.wired.gov.net/wg/news.nsf/articles/DNWA-9KPKFE>

Doorstep Incidents

The better weather seems to have prompted a number of incidents where traders cold call offering gardening, roofing and driveway work.

We have received information about a drive-washing company targeting older residents, particularly in the Lytham St Annes area. It is alleged the trader has not provided consumers written cancellation rights as required by the regulations.

In another doorstep incident, a vulnerable older lady was taken to the bank by traders who were demanding £1500 cash for cutting down a tree. Having got their money the traders left the lady to try and make her own way home.

We have also received several complaints about roofing work. In one incident the trader quoted £250 to replace the dry verge capping. The trader kept finding more and more 'problems' and the job grew until the total cost was over £8,000. The work that was carried out was of poor quality and the job was left incomplete. In another incident a roofer agreed to replace two tiles for £100. The consumer paid £100 cash and the trader disappeared without doing any work.

Trading Standards advice is to never deal with cold callers. If you need help finding a reputable trader why not check our Safe Trader Scheme. For further information visit www.safetrader.org.uk or call Help Direct on 0303 333 1111.

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