



October 2013

Consumer Alerts

Letter scams

The inheritance letter scam is back, claiming that a foreign inheritance will go to the government unless the letter's recipient, (who happens to have the same name as the intestate deceased), agrees to make a claim and split the inheritance with a Dutch or Belgian law firm and a charity of his/her choice. Personal details are requested and admin or transfer fees for the non-existent inheritance will then be claimed by the foreign firm from the British consumer. The current round of letters are sent by a non-existent law firm calling itself HD International Legal Consults

Telephone Callers

Timeshares can be difficult to sell as there are usually more people selling than want to buy. If you do decide to sell your timeshare, you need to watch out for scams. In a recent incident a consumer was offered the full purchase price for their timeshare points but only if they met the trader in Tenerife and paid the £99 administration fee in cash.

For more information about the resale of timeshares visit the Citizen's Advice Bureau website www.adviceguide.org.uk.

Lancashire's trading standards service has received inquiries from a number of residents about their rights when dealing with callers who have been offering Green Deal assessments. Residents have been cold-called by telephone and on their doorstep and subject to high pressure

selling techniques so they feel forced into agreeing to an assessment.

Trading Standards advice is to always say no to cold callers. If you need further information about the Green Deal visit www.gov.uk or contact the Energy Saving Advice Service on 0300 123 1234.

Email Scams

As usual, there have been many reports of emails offering to transfer funds into the recipient's bank account. The reasons given for these funds suddenly becoming available range from it being oil money that they are trying not to let the government have, its unclaimed money left in someone's will and there was even one which said it came from the United Nations.

Cold Callers

Mattresses are being sold door to door in the Leyland area. No address is given for the sellers; hence consumers cannot exercise their right to cancel if they change their minds. It is also not clear whether these mattresses meet the flammability requirements of the regulations.

Reports of cold callers offering to power wash your driveway are regularly received – the traders often do not give any address or give an accommodation address. In one incident a Lancashire resident ended up paying £950 for work she was told initially would cost £150.

There have also been reports of rogue traders who cold call offering to power wash

the roof and apply coatings. In one incident a vulnerable lady was charged £4,000.

A man showing a sign claiming to be deaf and dumb is going around areas in Pendle with high proportions of older residents and requesting money for small jobs around the house. He is believed to be stretching the truth since a couple of consumers have spoken to his back and he has turned around.

Consumers are advised not to have any dealings with cold callers, and not to pay cash for work carried out. If you are looking for a reputable trader for property repairs or home maintenance jobs why not look at our Safe Trader Scheme. Traders on the scheme have signed up to a Code of Practice and are committed to working with Trading Standards to resolve problems should they occur. For more 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**