

September 2013

Consumer Alerts

Email and Internet scams

Emails purporting to be from Fedex and Fedex Support have been received about parcels that consumers have never ordered. A typical message reads "Your rewards order has shipped". These come with requests for personal information, and attachments that consumers are requested to open. There have also been reports of emails purporting to be from Adobe stating that an intruder has entered the network and that consumers need to log on to a provided link and reset their passwords. They are also recommended to change passwords on all other sites where they use the old password.

Another email currently circulating claims to be from George Osborne, Chancellor of the Exchequer. The sender says that they are investigating fraud in fund transfers and advises the consumer to stop corresponding with anyone who is currently offering to transfer funds to their account and to let them deal with the matter instead. The email asks for personal information from the consumer.

Trading Standards' advice is to never respond to emails like these and to never give out personal information.

Consumers are warned about responding to advertisements on Facebook for slimming pills, offering a free product with only P&P of £4.95 to pay, where the company is unknown to them. In some circumstances consumers are being charged amounts of almost £100 per type

of product. Check terms and conditions carefully to ensure that you are not signing up to extra charges. If you have been misled contact your card provider to request a return (credit cards) or voluntary recharge (debit cards) of any money that you have not agreed to pay, quoting Section 75 of the Consumer Credit Act 1974 which makes the credit card provider jointly liable for any misrepresentations. Also report the matter to Action Fraud www.actionfraud.police.uk.

Cold Callers

One resident reported being cold called by a company offering a tree cutting service. The trader said they had spotted a dangerous branch on one of the consumer's trees and said he would cut it for £150. The cost would include cutting the branch up for logs and removing all the rubbish. The trader cut off the branch but did not remove any rubbish. The consumer has tried to contact the trader but his telephone number is now unobtainable.

Trading Standards advice is never deal with traders who cold call. If you are looking for a reputable trader for property repairs or home maintenance, Lancashire County Council operates a Safe Trader Scheme. For more information visit www.safetrader.org.uk or contact Help Direct on 0303 333 1111.

There have been several reports of consumers being cold called by traders offering a special test and a product which will reduce electricity bills. Trading Standards advice is never deal with traders

who cold call and never allow people into your home unless you are sure of their identity.

Finally, there have been numerous complaints of businesses that have cold called consumers, either by telephone or in person, and offered energy saving home improvements such as insulation, double glazing or heating. It is often suggested that there are grants available to pay for this work.

Trading Standards advice is never agree to work unless you are sure about what costs are involved. To get advice about energy-saving improvements to your home and to find information about government initiatives such as Green Deal, energy grants or help with your heating costs visit www.gov.uk or contact your district council.

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