

Consumer Alerts December 2023

Beware roofing scammers.

Rogue roofers are taking advantage of Lancashire residents worries and concerns about leaking roofs over the winter months. An older resident in Leyland was cold called by roofers stating the roof tiles needed some attention. Worried about leaks the householder agreed, giving an initial deposit of £1500 for materials. The work then began to escalate to an alleged roof being required, luckily no further monies were given.

In the Morecambe area a resident thought some property repair workers had come to finish off a small repair carried out in the summer months. This wasn't the case, the property repairers stated the repair could not be carried out as part of the roof was rotten, escalating the price of what had already been paid by another £12,000 to enable the work. Luckily a neighbour intervened before all the money was paid.

A Colne resident requiring a small roof repair put his job on an online trader platform. They quickly received a phone call from an interested trader who came round to look at the job, saying he could do it for a discounted rate there and then. The householder paid just under a £1000, with no repairs carried out to the roof tiles as had been agreed, and other minor repairs done badly.

Reputable roofers can be difficult to get hold of, especially at this time of year. Trading Standards advice is to always to use known local traders, shop around and get 3 quotes from different and independently sourced traders. Always

ask for a quote in writing before making any decisions. Never feel pressurised into using cold callers or into making hasty decisions for a supposed reduction in price.

Trading Standards advice is to always say no to cold callers. The Safetrader scheme can help you find a trader in our area, contact 0303 333 1111 or go to www.safetrader.org.uk

Romance fraud

After dealing with a spate of romance frauds, each of which has caused losses of many thousands of pounds to the victims, Lancashire Trading Standards is warning about online dating scams. You may think you have met the perfect person, when in reality they are gaining your trust before taking your money.

Warning signs include: a quick declaration of love; they ask you not to talk to others about the relationship; they claim to be based abroad so you cannot meet in person; once you are getting on well, they start asking for money for medical or rental emergencies, or so that they can save for air fares to come and see you.

Our advice is to take time to think, don't let yourself be rushed, don't make bank transfers, or send vouchers to anyone you have met in this way. Talk to friends or family if you are worried.

Further information can be found at www.actionfraud.police.uk and at www.Crimestoppers-0rg.uk.



Purchase fraud/ online shopping scams

With the festive season nearly upon us, avoid getting caught by fake social media listings or fake websites who try to trick you into paying for goods or services that don't exist. Such scams often offer DIY equipment or electronic devices at very low prices to tempt you.

Check for poor spelling or grammatical errors on websites, often contact details can be missing. Is there a sense of urgency about buying the goods so that you don't miss out? Be suspicious if payment is wanted by bank transfer rather than using the online platform's secure payment options.

Remember, for purchases over £100, paying by credit card will provide greater protection. If you think you have been scammed, always contact your bank or credit card company.

Report it to Action Fraud on 0300 123 2040 or via www.actionfraud.police.uk.

Scam parcel delivery texts and emails

At this busy time of year make sure you keep track of online orders and parcels that you are expecting to be delivered to your home. Be on the alert for scam texts or emails claiming to be from a delivery company to reschedule or pay additional delivery fees, or false tracking information being given for parcels that never arrive. Often the main aim of this scam is to attempt to obtain your personal information or bank details.

Scam emails can be reported via report@phishing.gov.uk. Suspicious text messages can be forwarded to 7726.

Contact the Trading Standards Service via the Citizens Advice Consumer Helpline on 0808 223 1133

Further information about current scams can be found on our Facebook page, www.facebook.com/StanleyDards/