

November/December 2015

Consumer Alerts

Cold Calling Sales

Consumers are advised that a company is currently cold calling older residents and selling £10,000 boxes to attach into their central heating systems, with promises of a reduction in heating bills. Savings are not guaranteed, and any obtained are unlikely to amount to the cost of the gadget. Residents are advised not to deal with door step callers and to use reputable recommended local plumbers if they want to discuss central heating improvements. If anyone has purchased these boxes please contact the Citizens Advice Consumer Helpline.

Lancashire Trading Standards Service would like to warn consumers and small traders about current issues with cold-calling energy suppliers. Complaints received include claiming links to official bodies, housing associations and Big Six energy suppliers, swapping consumer's energy contracts to another company when the consumer thinks they are signing for a new deal with the same supplier, and pushy sales tactics.

Bogus Roofers

The recent bad weather and high winds have been followed by bogus workmen cold-calling householders with offers to repair roofs, fences, guttering and remove trees damaged by gusts. Rogue traders will prey on vulnerable householders' concerns about the condition of their property and often undertake work that is not needed, of poor quality and vastly overpriced. A cold caller recently charged a Preston resident

£1,700 for two hours of unnecessary work on their roof, while a Chorley resident paid £12,500 for roofing work which left holes with daylight showing through - the problems caused had to be fixed by a reputable trader. If consumers think work needs to be done as a result of storm damage, they are advised to first check with their insurance company. If you do need to find a trader to do work, get quotes from two or three local businesses or ask friends and relatives to recommend a reputable business. You can also use our Safe Trader Scheme. For more information visit www.safetrader.org.uk or call 0303 333 1111.

Itinerant Fish Sellers

Trading Standards would like to remind residents of their warning about itinerant fish sellers as the service is still receiving complaints. Many residents have been misled into thinking they are buying a few pounds' worth of fish for dinner, then feel pressurised into paying an enormous bill and accepting more fish than their freezers can take. Other problems that have been reported are issues with misdescribed fish or underweight fish. Consumers are also reminded that the fish is often not refrigerated and may have travelled a long way. Trading Standards advice is to buy from local market traders, fishmongers and pre-arranged roundsmen, who have regular customers in the area and are easy to contact if things go wrong.

Contact the Trading Standards Service via the Citizens Advice Consumer Helpline on 03454 04 05 06