

Consumer Alerts – April 2024

Beware cold callers offering tree cutting services.

A householder in Bacup was cold called, the trader stating the trees in his garden were diseased and needed cutting down. The trader threatened to report the matter to the Council if the householder did not agree. The work was done, which only took a few hours, costing £500 which the trader would only take in cash.

In a similar incident in Colne a householder was cold called and agreed to work to cut down some shrubs. The traders were there no more than 20 mins and charged £400.

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

Beware roofing scam

A Burnley resident posted a leaking roof job on an online quoting platform. When the trader arrived, further work was alleged costing £700 which included using a liquid treatment. The householder was told the treatment took 24 hours to dry. After 24 hours the leaks were still there, and the trader was no longer contactable.

Use caution if using online platforms and always make sure you have business contact details for any traders you deal with.

Beware line painting services.

Schools, churches and any business with a car park are being warned about a

line-painting scam that has left a school with a bill of £1000. A Lancashire Primary school believed the traders were working for the council. In a twist on the traditional cut-price driveway asphalt scam, the school was told that council workers had white paint left over and could repaint their line markings for a discount price of £9 per metre. All the negotiations were done verbally, it was only when an invoice was later received for a substantially inflated amount that the school realised the workers had not been sent by the council.

Trading Standards have heard of similar incidents in the past focussed on churches and village halls, but any public space with line marked areas needs to be wary and not deal with unsolicited calls from businesses.

HMRC phone scam

A resident in the South Ribble area received a phone call from a person claiming to be calling from HMRC stating the resident owed money. The caller was very convincing and managed to get personal details from the resident, but luckily the scam was realised before any money was paid. Please remember HMRC will never contact you threatening legal action or arrest. Suspicious phone calls, emails or messages can be reported to the HMRC, see www.tax.service.gov.uk for further details.

For information on current scams see www.facebook.com/StanleyDards/

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

