

Consumer Alerts – May 2023

Beware cold callers in the Burnley area.

A householder in the Burnley area received a knock on the door from roofers claiming there was a pre-arranged agreement for them to carry out work to the roof. The cold callers were on the roof for no more than 5 minutes asking for nearly £700. The householder did not have that much cash in the house but did hand over some cash as the traders were pushy and the householder felt threatened.

This is a scam, no work was carried out to the roof. Be very suspicious of anyone knocking on your door claiming work you are unaware of has been agreed. Double check with other members of your household.

Roof repair cold callers in Rossendale & Preston.

Reports have been received from residents in the Rossendale and Preston areas where they have agreed to some roofing repairs after being cold called. The work has been of very poor quality, often with capping falling off shortly after being fitted, gutters still leaking after a repair has been carried out and the traders not coming back to rectify. Householders were asked to pay in cash, in one case VAT was charged, but the trader was not VAT registered.

You can check a UK VAT number via the www.gov.uk website.

Trading Standards advice is to never do business with 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

WhatsApp 'I've lost my phone' scam

Beware receiving a WhatsApp message from someone pretending to be your son or daughter claiming they have lost their phone. The message will of course come from an unknown number but you're your instinct will be to reply to help them out. The sender, pretending to be your son or daughter will then ask for money, eventually providing bank account details to pay this money into, sometimes with the explanation that the account number is that of a friend, as your son or daughter cannot access their account due to supposedly losing their mobile phone.

This is a version of the 'Hello Mum' WhatsApp scam. Be on the alert if you receive such a message, ring you son or daughter independently.

Mobile phone upgrade scam call

Beware receiving a phone call, supposedly on behalf of a mobile service provider, offering an upgrade. Once the scam caller has gathered the necessary personal details, they then contact the phone company, which posts out a new handset to the victim's address. When it arrives, the victim is contacted again and told that the wrong phone has been sent and is asked to post it back – this time, to the scammer's address.

Once the scammer receives the new phone, they disappear – leaving the victim with no phone and a new, more expensive contract.

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