

July 2015

Consumer Alerts

Doorstep Incidents

Warwickshire Police have issued a warning after a man claiming to be from trading standards conned a pensioner out of thousands of pounds. The elderly man was approached on his driveway by another man, claiming to be from trading standards. He told the man that a trader who had completed work at his home were in court for overcharging customers. He asked the consumer for his phone number and said he would be in touch. Soon after the consumer was called and told the company had been prosecuted and that they would receive compensation. He was persuaded that he needed to pay some cash up front. The consumer met the conman as arranged and handed over £4500 in an envelope.

As usual there have been several reports of rogue roofers. In one incident a vulnerable consumer was quoted £220 for roofing work. When they came to pay the bill the trader said he was mistaken and he'd quoted £2,200. In another incident the quote was for £240 but when the householder came to pay the trader claimed they'd agreed £350.

Trading Standards advice is never do business with doorstep traders. If you need help finding a reputable trader for home improvements, property repairs or gardening services why not try our Safe Trader Scheme. For more information visit www.safetrader.org.uk or call Help Direct on 0303 333 1111.

Trading Standards are again warning about itinerant fish sellers. One elderly man was persuaded to buy 20 packets of fish and charged £100. Residents are reminded that the fish is often not refrigerated and householders are likely to be put under pressure to buy more than they can eat or pay over the odds for it. Consumers are advised 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

Letter Scams

Unfortunately the People's Postcode Lottery scam is still in circulation. Consumers are sent a letter, allegedly from the People's Postcode Lottery saying they have won sums like £825,000 in prize money. Consumers are asked for a processing fee or admin fee to claim their prize. One consumer discovered her elderly parents had paid out £16,000. Other lottery scam letters around at the moment are from the Fifa World Cup Lottery and the European Postcode Lottery.

To report or get advice on fraud or internet crime contact Action Fraud on 0300 123 2040 or visit www.actionfraud.police.uk.

For more information about protecting elderly & vulnerable people from scams which come through the postal system and criminals who contact them by telephone visit www.thinkjessica.com.

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