

Consumer Alerts – June 2023

Beware bogus roofers & tree services in the Lancaster area

A householder in the Lancaster area asked a roofer they understood was working down the road to fix their roof. A small amount of work was carried out and the householder paid £500 up front, expecting further repair work to continue the next day. No one turned up. The householder wasn't given any paperwork and does not have any contact details for the trader.

Another instance in the Lancaster area saw a cold caller offering tree services, charging a resident over £1500 for one hours work cutting down some trees.

Please carry out your own research before employing a trader. Always get name and address details, without this it can be difficult to trace a trader if things go wrong. Be clear on the price before you agree to any work.

Remember for most contracts agreed in your own home you should be given, in writing, details of your 14 day right to cancel.

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

Chartered Trading Standards Institute scam letter

Investors who have previously put money into potential scam land and wine investments are asked to be aware of a current scam, received via letter, claiming to be able to release and return their money.

The letter purports to be from the Chartered Trading Standards Institute (CTSI),

providing the Institute's genuine Basildon address on deceptively convincing letter headed paper. It encloses an invoice stating that there will be an upfront cost of £2000, saying the payment will give them authorisation to release the money from an escrow. They claim that this money is refundable five days after a successful funds transfer to the consumer.

This is a scam, the CTSI are not an enforcement agency, they do not send out letters offering refunds, or carry out investigations.

Beware online advertisements

After a consumer in Nelson lost £400, residents are being warned about scams where you are asked to buy products from online companies, via adverts on search engines.

The deal is that they then refund you plus commission, saying this is a way to boost their apparent sales and profile. As well as taking part in possible fraudulent advertising, the "purchasers" are then victims of an attempted scam. After a number of small purchases, they are asked to buy a £400 item- and then told in order to get their money back they have to join the scheme formally, which costs £900.

Facebook marketplace scam buyer

A Lancashire resident wanting to sell their laptop advertised it on Facebook marketplace and secured a sale. The laptop was mailed, and a screen shot of the payment transaction was provided. However, the money did not arrive, and the seller then received a suspicious sounding request allegedly from the seller's bank

asking for further monies to be sent before the payment could be released.

Always be on the alert for potential scams if buying or selling via online marketplaces. Research methods of payment that carry purchase protection.

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