

Consumer Alerts – March 2025

Bogus guttering and asbestos work

Residents in Wyre and Fylde area are being warned of cold callers operating in the area following reports of two men offering to clean gutters for £10, this price quickly increased to £180. Without the permission of the householder, the cold callers also started to remove asbestos leaving it dumped on the ground for the householder to deal with.

Remember if you agree to a contract in your own home, you have the right to a 14 day cooling off period and can cancel the contract. You should be provided these rights in a durable medium at the outset, usually with your contract with the business. Be aware the safe removal of asbestos may require the contractor to be licensed.

Beware cold callers at social housing

A cold caller claimed to have been sent by the social housing provider to check a boiler. The householder, assuming the work would be free, agreed. The caller then insisted on payment and drove the householder to the bank. If in any doubt as to the authenticity of the caller, double check with your housing provider.

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.

Scam HSE calls to small businesses

A business in Lancashire received an unsolicited phone call where the trader stated they were working on behalf of the Health and Safety Executive and that

HSE inspections were imminent. The cold caller claimed the HSE were fining traders who did not have proper plans in place and was pressuring the business into buying a five year contract. Much of what they were offering was not applicable to the business they had called.

Small business should be wary of cold calls offering services such as advertising, publishing and guidance. Cold callers will often try to tie businesses into rolling contracts with exit fees.

Safe giving to charities this Ramadan

This Ramadan, the Muslim Charities Forum (MCF), Fundraising Regulator and Charity Commission for England and Wales are urging people to remain vigilant and be alert to the risk of fake charities, fake appeal websites and scam email appeals.

Check the charity's name and registration number on the Charity Register at www.gov.uk/find-charity-information. Be careful when responding to emails, texts and online messages, or clicking on links within these. Do your research, check how the charity spends its funds. Look out for the charity stating it is registered with the Fundraising Regulator who abide by a Code of Practice. Face to face collectors should have a permit from the District Council.

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

