

Barrow Parish Council

Consumer Alerts – July 2022

Cold callers offering guttering work

Beware doorstep callers offering to clean your gutter for an initial low price which then escalates. A resident in Accrington agreed to their gutters being cleaned for £40, a further problem was found, a few loose tiles were fixed, the trader then asked for £450, which the householder felt pressured into paying.

Beware outdoor maintenance scams

A householder in rural Lancaster area agreed to some gardening work after contacting a trader via a leaflet put through their door. The workers were there for less than 5 hours and charged £2000. Also, in the Lancaster area a householder agreed to some driveway work, they paid half the agreed price upfront, over £4000. A small amount of work took place, the traders have not returned, and the address given has turned out to be false.

Cold callers have been operating in the Poulton area offering jet washing and weed treatment of driveways. One householder agreed to £300, the workers have left the driveway in more of a mess than before the work was carried out.

Always use known local traders, ask family and friends for recommendations and get a written quote upfront. Paperwork should contain name and address details of the trader, but it is always worth checking the legitimacy of addresses and checking online for any reviews.

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

Purchase Scams

There has been a spate of reports of Lancashire online shoppers becoming victim to purchase scams. Shoppers have reported ordering and paying for garden furniture, lawnmowers and pressure washers via online websites, the goods never arrive, the telephone numbers provided do not work and the trader is not at the given address.

This is known as a purchase scam and is common in relation to branded trainers, clothing and tickets for events advertised via social media where fake profiles can be used. Best advice is to use known websites. Report concerns to your bank as soon as possible if paid by debit card. Remember, for purchases over £100 paid by credit card, the credit card company is jointly liable.

Misdescribed Puppies

Lancashire Trading Standards has recently received a number of complaints about misdescribed puppies, or about puppies that buyers suspect were not bred by the seller as claimed. Buyers are advised to always see their intended puppy and its mother together at the seller's home or kennels at least once before purchase. Make sure you have possession of all papers relating to vaccinations, microchip, Kennel Club registration and breed. Do not agree to have such documents sent on afterwards.

Energy rebate text scam

Beware receiving an email or text message claiming to be from the energy regulator Ofgem. The text message provides a link for recipients to follow to enable their 'application to be completed' for the £400 government scheme refund. Clicking on the

link brings you to a scam Ofgem branded page and you are asked for personal details to set up a direct debit

This is a phishing scam designed to steal your personal and financial information. The government refund scheme will be applied automatically to energy bills in October, you do not have to apply for it or claim it. Customers with pre-payment meters will have the money applied to their meter or paid via a voucher.

Details of phishing scams can be forwarded to the National Cyber Security Centre at report@phishing.gov.uk

Further information about current scams can be found on our Facebook page, www.facebook.com/StanleyDards/

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