

Consumer Alerts – June 2024

Driveway scam

Beware cold callers knocking on doors in the Lancaster area offering to spray your driveway to kill weeds and/or power wash your drive. One resident paid £250 and suspects no weed killer was used. Another resident paid £200 upfront as part payment for the job, the traders did not return to carry out the work.

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.

Dating investment scam

A Lancashire resident lost £6,000 after meeting someone on a dating site who claimed to be a stock trader. After a number of conversations, and a future plan to meet, his date convinced the complainant to go into business with her, asking him to take out a loan in his name, which they would pay back together. The money was to be used to invest in stocks to generate additional profit which would then be invested into the business.

However, when it came time to pay the loan back, the scammer vanished with the money. This was a very professional scam, with an untraceable website and a plausible back story. Never send money to someone unrecommended, who you do not know, no matter how good the business opportunity sounds.

Message scam

Be suspicious and use caution if you receive a text or What's App message

from a family member or close friend from a mobile number you do not recognise asking for money. Typically, the message can allege it is from your son or daughter saying this is their new number and the request for money will sound urgent.

Fraudulent Virgin calls

Beware receiving a scam call from Virgin Media. One householder, on answering the phone call, stated they were not with Virgin but the caller managed to convince them they were carrying out improvement/ modernisation work for all internet providing companies. The caller managed to obtain personal information and shortly after tried to obtain money via the internet users Paypal account.

Another similar internet related scam call claims to be checking internet speeds, claiming the speed the user is getting is much less than they are paying for. This then leads to the caller advising they need to connect your hub to the main server and ask you to download an App to your phone, potentially enabling the caller direct access to your computer.

Report it to Action Fraud on 0300 123 2040 or via www.actionfraud.police.uk.

Scam emails can be reported via report@phishing.gov.uk. Suspicious text messages can be forwarded to 7726.

For information on current scams see www.facebook.com/StnleyDards/.

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

