

Doorstep Crime Prosecution of cold-callers

Alert 2.8

3 August 2021

Bromley Trading Standards is reminding all residents to be highly vigilant following the latest prosecution of two gardeners who cold-called a Bromley resident.

The warning follows an incident where a 74-year-old female resident was cold-called by the two gardeners and subsequently charged £18,640 for work which an expert estimated to be worth no more than £1,600.

Following the initial cold call, the pair returned to the victim **12 times**, each time demanding payment for routine garden maintenance. The fraud only came to light when the victims bank alerted Bromley Trading Standards who then conducted an investigation under the Fraud Act 2006.

Orpington based Clive Gibson and Danny Whitehead pleaded guilty to fraud charges and each defendant was sentenced to an 18-month suspended sentence, suspended for two years, with 80 hours of unpaid work and 10 days of rehabilitation activity requirement. The judge ordered compensation payments from the defendants to the victim of £5,040.

Trading Standards urge residents to look out for relatives, friends and neighbours to help spot someone who may be targeted by cold-callers. You could watch a short video on spotting the signs of financial abuse [here](#)

Be alert to the signs. Has someone you know:

- had unplanned work to their property or garden?
- been pressured into additional work that has cost more money?
- visited the bank or cash machine more than usual, or made large online transfers?
- started acting troubled or distracted?

Call the council's **Trading Standards Rapid Response** team on **07903 852090** if you, or someone you know who lives in the borough, is being tricked into handing over money for unnecessary property repairs or garden work.

Information and advice about avoiding scams is available by visiting www.bromley.gov.uk/scams where residents can also sign-up to receive these Trading Standards Alerts! direct to their inbox.

Trading Standards advise that residents:

Don't deal with doorstep callers

Don't contact traders from the leaflets that are delivered – without making thorough checks beforehand

Don't pay large sums of money in advance – schedule payment as works progress

Don't be rushed into making a decision

Do get a minimum of **3 written quotes** – be specific and have a clear detailed brief prepared

Do seek references, read reliable reviews, ask to visit previous jobs, and check directly with any reputable organisation named or who's logo is shown on a leaflet/website to make sure the trader is affiliated

Do get a contract in writing **before** works commence: You are entitled to a 14 day cooling off period

More detailed guidance on selecting a reputable trader can be found on Citizens Advice and Trustmark websites:

[Before you get building work done - Citizens Advice](#)

[Tips to hire a reputable tradesman \(trustmark.org.uk\)](http://trustmark.org.uk)

If you think you have been involved in a doorstep scam:

- **Call** the Police on 999 if you are in immediate danger
- **Contact** Trading Standards Rapid Response on **07903 852090**
- **Contact** your bank as soon as possible, especially if you have lost money or given your bank details.
- **Tell** someone you trust so they can help you to get the help you need
- **Call** Citizens Advice if you need advice and guidance **0808 223 1133**
- **Report** to Action Fraud on 0300 123 2040 or www.actionfraud.police.uk

Please share with family, friends, neighbours, colleagues & clients
Read it. Share it. Prevent it