

Cold Caller examples

2003/04

Chobham consumer conned

The consumer received a 'cold call' from a 'builder' and agreed to pay £150 to clear an area of the patio. The work was completed and then the 'builder' told the consumer that there was damp patches on the walls that need treating otherwise it would get under the house. The damp patches would need cementing. The consumer agreed to the work being done but told the 'builders' that he could not afford to pay above £2000. The 'builders' completed the work and presented the customer with a bill of £7500.

We advised the consumer on contractual issues and that he was in the right as the uninvited workmen had ignored his stated contractual terms. We were not informed of the eventual outcome.

Roofer flees with consumers money - Woking

'Uninvited workmen' called on an elderly consumer and persuaded him that they could replace / reset a few roof tiles for £40. The consumer agreed to the work being carried out. However they then 'found' some further problems with the roof that needed urgent attention. They took £500 deposit in cash for materials (with no receipt) and did not return.

The consumer had reported his experience to Surrey Police who reported the incident to us. On this occasion there was little we could do as the 'workmen' had disappeared.

Guttering 'rip off'.

A Woking resident was approached by an 'unsolicited builder' as he was working in the front garden. They convinced the consumer to replace the guttering and soffits of the house for £3,000. The work took them about a day to do and the consumer was told he would get a 15-year guarantee but never got any paperwork in relation to this. When the work was finished they insisted on a further £2,000. The consumer said he had no more money but the workmen took him to the bank to withdraw money.

We visited the consumer who told us he was pressurised to the workmen the money. Whilst we were at the consumers' address his relatives attended and recounted that the consumer had an operation a couple of years ago that affected his memory and from time now left him easily confused.

The 'uninvited workmen' had by the time of our intervention got their money and had gone but we are following up a few useful 'leads'.