

Residents alerted to cold calling workmen

New Forest residents are urged to be wary of workmen calling at their homes offering to resurface their driveways at a cut price.

The Safer New Forest Partnership is alerting people to the cold callers who have been operating in Hythe and Holbury. They have been calling at the homes of mainly elderly people, telling them they have been "working down the road and have materials left over from that job, and we noticed your drive needs doing. We can give you a good deal."

The workmen are offering residents a written quote and the right to cancel within seven days, but the Partnership is concerned about the quality of work on offer and a possible lack of after-sales service.

Local people are urged to remain vigilant for workmen cold calling in their areas and asks them to keep a lookout for elderly or vulnerable neighbours.

Cllr Jill Cleary, New Forest District Council portfolio holder for housing and communities, advised: "If you are thinking of having any work done, including resurfacing of your driveway, it pays to deal with reputable local tradesmen who, if something goes wrong, will return and sort out the problem.

"Always get a number of written estimates for any work, along with a description of what the work will entail and how it will be done. You should also be given a seven day "cooling off" period in which you can cancel."

Hampshire County Council Trading Standards runs the Buy with Confidence Scheme and recommends that residents refer to the Directory of Approved Local Businesses to find reputable tradesmen. Find out more at

<http://www3.hants.gov.uk/tradingstandards/bwc.htm>

Hampshire Trading Standards asks people to know their consumer rights before they agree to any work for peace of mind. In particular:

- Any work costing over £35 requires the trader to provide the purchaser with a written notice of their right to cancel any contract within seven days
- If the work is to be carried out there and then - the purchaser has to sign a "waiver" (provided by the trader) which states that the purchaser has been informed of their right to a seven day "cooling off" period but they have chosen to waive that right and have the work carried out immediately.

HCC Trading Standards Quick Response Team can be contacted on 01962 833666 - they will attend and advise the householder of their legal rights and the trader of their legal responsibilities.

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For information about the work of the Safer New Forest Partnership visit:

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