

# Consumer Alerts – February 2025

## Bogus gardening work

Residents in South Ribble are being warned of cold callers knocking on doors offering to cut back trees and shrubs. In one instance a vulnerable householder was conned into having a tree cut back as the traders said neighbours had complained about it overhanging their property. This was untrue and luckily another neighbour stepped in to assist before any money exchanged hands.

Often cold callers offering gardening services will ask for cash up front, leave before the job is finished and/ or not take cuttings away. Use know local traders, be wary of flyers advertising such services.

**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](http://www.safetrader.org.uk).**

## Romance Scams

Be wary of romance scams as we approach Valentine's Day. These scams involve often vulnerable people being conned into sending money to people posing as trustworthy individuals. The con-artists will go to great lengths to build a relationship with the person they are scamming, taking their time to build their trust and confidence. Often, these scammers operate online and create extensive narratives to justify victims sending them thousands of pounds.

Be suspicious of anyone asking for money if you've never met them in person, especially if you only recently met online. Make sure you speak to

genuine friends and family before sending any money to anyone. Do your research: use reverse image search profile photographs online to check their authenticity. Do not give in to persistent requests for funds, regardless of how many times they ask. Report anything suspicious to police or Action Fraud.

**Report it to Action Fraud on 0300 123 2040 or via [www.actionfraud.police.uk](http://www.actionfraud.police.uk).**

## Scam BT calls - analogue to digital

Beware cold calls claiming to be from BT, stating they need to confirm personal and payment information so your landline can go digital before a January 2025 deadline. In some cases, the fake calls ask for on-the-spot payments to move to the digital service, telling the householder their landline would be disconnected immediately if they refused. The scammers may know your name and address and use this information to convince you to trust them.

The UK's landline network is being upgraded to be fully digital and was planned to be completed by January this year. Please be aware the completion deadline was recently extended to 2027. Your landline provider will never ask you to make payments or verify your payment information in order for your landline to be upgraded to the digital service. More information about the transition can be found at [UK transition from analogue to digital landlines - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/uk-transition-from-analogue-to-digital-landlines)

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

