

Residents are being warned to be wary of cold callers or leaflets offering to do garden clearances, tree cutting and work to roofs and gutters.

Oxfordshire County Council's trading standards team is encouraging caution if anyone knocks and offers to start work immediately, particularly if they are pushy or claim that urgent repairs are required. Each year, springtime and the start of the growing season results in an increase in offers to assist with gardening.

Here are some top tips from Oxfordshire County Council's trading standards team:

- If it is out of the blue, it's not for you! Don't agree to work from an unsolicited, cold call.
- Be aware of 'alarm bell' tactics, claims such as – 'I was working in the area and saw that your garden/roof needed urgent attention'; 'we are working at one of your neighbours' and we have some material left over'; 'I can take you to the bank/cashpoint to get the money'.
- Take five to stop fraud. Taking a moment to stop and think before parting with your money or information could keep you safe. Trust your instincts.
- If you want some work undertaken, get a number of detailed quotes in writing, including full contact details and a detailed breakdown of exactly what work will be done.
- Be cautious about any requests for large deposits. For larger work, agree when staged payments will be paid and what work should be completed before any money is handed over. And stick to what is agreed.
- Check with friends and family for trusted recommendations and consider a trading standards' approved trader, from the [Buy with Confidence](#) scheme.
- Consider learning more about how scams work and how you can protect yourself and others, by becoming a [Friend Against Scam](#).

For more advice on consumer rights, or to report to trading standards, contact the Citizens Advice national consumer helpline on **0808 223 1133** or by visiting its website citizensadvice.org.uk.

