

Warwickshire Trading Standards Partner Update

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Huge Illegal Tobacco Find at Bedworth Storage Unit

Warwickshire Trading Standards Officers using highly trained tobacco detection dogs recently uncovered a huge number of illegal cigarettes and hand rolling tobacco.

Officers visited a storage unit in Bedworth with sniffer dogs and their handler who identified a shipping container. Inside Officers found 187,280 cigarettes together with 397 packets of hand rolling tobacco. Some were hidden inside imported kitchen fryers.



Cigarettes hidden inside a kitchen fryer

The loss to the illegal tobacco sellers and smugglers will be more than £56,000. To report the sale of illegal tobacco to Warwickshire Trading Standards, phone 0808 223 1133



Some of the cigarettes seized and the tobacco dog

Ten-Month Sentence for Rogue Builder

A rogue builder has been sentenced to ten months imprisonment and handed a three-year Criminal Behaviour Order. A successful investigation and prosecution was undertaken by Warwickshire County Council Trading Standards.

Builder Luke Wilson (pictured right), also known as Sam Memetovic, age 37 of Lodge Crescent Warwick, ripped off a Leamington Spa resident. Wilson's method of operation was to introduce new contract conditions at short notice, demand additional costs and set increasingly urgent payment deadlines.



His victim had initially agreed a price of just over £14,500 to carry out plastering, electrical work, the removal of walls and a bathroom update. But within 20 days, Wilson had sent him six further invoices, increasing the cost to over £20,000.

Not only was this £5,000 more than the original quote, but an expert surveyor employed by Warwickshire Trading Standards concluded that the real value of the work carried out by Wilson was just £3,240. This meant the homeowner was charged six times the genuine value of the work.

The homeowner found Wilson on trustatrader.com where he was advertising as HR Building, Plumbing and Heating.

On sentencing Wilson at Warwick Crown Court, His Honour Judge Berlin said that this was a shocking case, a classic example of rogue trading. Addressing Wilson, he described him as an arrogant and deceitful bully who had swindled his customer in an unscrupulous way and had only shown remorse because he didn't wish to go to prison. He also said that these were an appalling set of offences, tantamount to fraud, and a clear and deliberate attempt to deceive and obtain money.

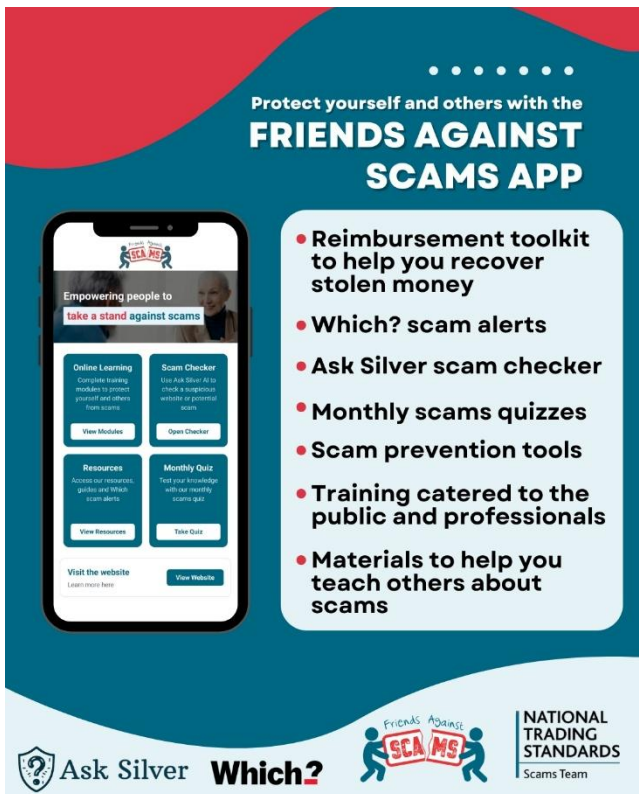
The victim stated that he was forced to borrow substantial amounts of money from a relative to rectify the work and that Wilson's activities had had a significant impact on his mental health and wellbeing.

In mitigation Sarah Turner representing Wilson said that her client found himself in over his head, producing contracts with no training and didn't take advice whilst accepting he should have done.

At Warwick Crown Court on 12 March 2026, Luke Wilson was sentenced to ten months imprisonment and handed a three-year Criminal Behaviour Order. Wilson had previously pleaded guilty to three counts of making misleading omissions and engaging in aggressive commercial practices contrary to regulation 9, 10 and 11 of the Consumer Protection from Unfair Trading Regulations 2008.

A Proceeds of Crime Act investigation has commenced, and the matter will be back in Court in August when compensation, confiscation and costs will be considered.

Report rogue traders to Warwickshire Trading Standards via the Citizens Advice Consumer Service on 0808 223 1133. For more advice visit: <https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/doorstepsellers>



Learn how to spot and stay safe from scams. The Friends Against Scams app offers free, easy-to-follow training to help you protect yourself and others from fraud. Download the app today on the App Store and Google Play to get started.

‘Squishy’ Toys Safety Warning

Some popular “squishy” toys may not meet UK standards

Food shaped “squishy” sensory toys – often designed to look like items such as donuts or dumplings – are trending online, driven by viral videos and collectible designs.



But Trading Standards activity in the UK has identified some products that may not meet basic safety requirements.

Frozen Food Alert

Frozen foods in packaging labelled Inarah’s Frozen Food, Inarah’s Fine Food, and New York Crispy may be unsafe to eat.

Consumers should not eat these products and instead dispose of them at home. This is due to food hygiene and safety concerns.

The products affected cover a wide range of frozen foods including chicken, beef, fish and vegetarian items, packaged in different size packaging with multiple best before dates and/or batch numbers.

UK businesses are advised to "immediately stop sales" and undertake product withdrawals and recalls.

Trading Standards Warns of Car Buyer Scam Targeting Private Sellers

Warwickshire County Council is warning residents who are selling their cars privately to be alert to fraudsters posing as genuine car buyers.

Reports suggest that fraudsters are approaching sellers in groups of three or more. They typically begin by acting like legitimate buyers, taking the vehicle out for a test drive and asking to see paperwork and the vehicle’s service history.

One of the fraudsters will then distract the seller while another opens the bonnet to ‘examine the engine’. During this distraction, they may tamper with electrical cables and pour oil over the engine or into the cooling system.



As a result, the vehicle may fail to start properly, warning lights may appear on the dashboard, or oil may be seen leaking underneath the car. The fraudsters then claim the vehicle has serious faults and attempt to negotiate a significantly lower price, sometimes reducing their offer by several thousand pounds.

There are concerns that elderly sellers may be being targeted. In one reported case, a victim was asked their age when the prospective buyers first called to enquire about the vehicle.

Several car-selling websites have published telephone numbers known to be associated with this scam, so sellers should watch out for alerts and notifications from these websites.

Anyone who has been approached by suspected fraudsters should report the incident to Warwickshire Trading Standards through the **Citizens Advice Consumer Helpline** on **0808 223 1133**.

Tips for car sellers

- Sell your vehicle from your home address or a busy location that you know well.
- Have all vehicle documents available and ready to show prospective buyers.
- If a buyer wishes to take the vehicle for a test drive, ensure they are insured to drive it and do not allow them to take it out unaccompanied.
- Where possible, avoid showing the vehicle on your own. Having a second person present can help keep an eye on buyers if you become distracted.
- Do not accept cash payments. Only accept payment by bank transfer and keep hold possession of the vehicle, keys and paperwork until the full payment has cleared in your bank account.
- If something doesn’t feel right, walk away.

Cllr Robert Gisbourne, Warwickshire County Council’s portfolio holder for Community Safety, said: “Our Trading Standards team works tirelessly to protect residents from fraud. But you can help by being aware of the tricks that are being used.

"If you're selling a car, be alert but, if possible, don't be alone. Don't let go of anything until the money is in your bank and let us know if you have any encounters that raise suspicion so we can protect other residents."

