

London Borough of Bexley

News Release

For Immediate Release

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£6,000 CASH HANDED OVER TO BEXLEY TRADING STANDARDS

Following an attempt last month to take advantage of an 80 year old Sidcup man by demanding extortionate roofing costs, Bexley's Trading Standards team is again advising residents not to deal with traders who turn up at their door uninvited.

The attempted con happened on 13 February. The resident, who lives alone, returned home to find a man standing at his door, saying that a large piece of concrete had just fallen off his roof. He was told that it could be mended for £2,500 cash, with a further £6,000 to be paid.

However, the trader ended up removing the entire roof - and then demanded a further £39,000 to finish the work. Fortunately, relatives of the man contacted Bexley's Trading Standards team.

Trading Standards attended the address but the unidentified trader had left. The trader then continued to contact the consumer by phone. During one call the trader was spoken to by police and informed that Trading Standards were dealing with the matter. After contacting Trading Standards by phone the same day, the trader was told he needed to return the total of £6,000 paid so far by the victim.

Much to their surprise, an anonymous female attended the Civic Offices the following day and handed over £6,000 in cash to Trading Standards.

Trading Standards have now liaised with Bexley's Staying Put Service for a reputable trader to put a new roof on the property.

Cllr Peter Craske said: "Sadly there are always unscrupulous traders around who will try to take advantage of people, particularly the elderly and vulnerable. The best advice is not to deal with uninvited traders at your door. Before hiring any trader check them out on reputable sites such as Bexley's 'What Tradesman?' scheme where bona fide traders are rated by residents who have used them and can recommend them."

Further information on the 'What Tradesman?' scheme can be found at www.bexley.gov.uk/whattradesman.

Staying Put is a home-improvement agency for older, vulnerable and disabled residents of Bexley, offering help and advice on home repairs, improvement and adaptations. Further details can be found at www.bexley.gov.uk/article/13614/Staying-Put

To report rogue traders please contact Citizens Advice Consumer Service on 03454 040506.

