GETTING READY FOR AUTUMN?

As the seasons change, many Kent residents start preparing their homes and gardens for autumn and winter. Guttering needs clearing, trees require maintenance, fences may need repairing and roofs often need checking before the colder months arrive.

Unfortunately, this is also a time when **doorstep criminals become more active**. They often claim to be "working in the area" or point out supposed issues with a property, offering to carry out urgent repairs immediately. These traders can appear convincing and friendly, but residents can be left with poor quality work, inflated charges, or jobs that are never completed.

Before agreeing to any work you should stop and ask yourself: **"Are they Trading Standards Checked?"** If the answer is no, take a step back.

Never feel pressured into making a quick decision. Reputable traders understand that customers need time to compare quotes, check reviews and make informed choices.

If someone turns up unexpectedly at your door offering services, be cautious. A genuine trader will not object to you taking time to check their credentials. Trading Standards Checked is Kent County Council's safe trader scheme.

Members are vetted by Kent Trading Standards, including checks on licences, insurance and fair trading practices.

SIMPLE WAYS TO STAY SAFE:

- Never agree to work at the door.
- Always get written quotes.
- Don't get pressured into "today-only" prices designed to rush you.
- Check any trader online before agreeing to work, look at their customer reviews and examples of previous work.
- Always use a safe, local trader that's been vetted by Kent Trading Standards
- Report suspicious doorstep activity to Kent Police by calling 101.

⚠ **If a crime is in progress and you are in immediate danger, call 999.**

Trading Standards Checked is Kent County Council's safe, local trader scheme for home improvement work. **To find out more:**

Visit kent.gov.uk/tschecked or call 03000 416438