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Checktrade.com flooded: Searches up half a million as Britons scramble to make repairs

Trade vetting service Checktrade.com reports tradespeople searches are up half a million as flood victims scramble to repair damaged homes and businesses.

The most popular trades are fencing professionals, with searches up **972%** on the norm for this time of year and roofers, off the chart at **783%**.

Gardeners and tree surgeons are in high demand for clearing torn branches and debris from roads and properties, peaking at **698%** and **638%** respectively. Searches on Checktrade.com for builders are up **114%** and plumbers up **72%**.

“Finally the rains have stopped but when one curse leaves another arrives,” says Checktrade.com boss Kevin Byrne. “Unfortunately, rogue traders will see the fact that so many people are trying to rebuild their shattered lives as a lucrative business opportunity and I fear an imminent surge in cowboy-related activity as water levels drop.

“With the floods and severe weather wreaking havoc all over the country, checking up on a tradesperson before hiring them has never been more important. These figures demonstrate a high level of awareness among the general public, which is encouraging.

“However, with demand for tradespeople so high property owners desperate to make repairs may drop their guard. Rogue traders, who leap at the chance to make a quick buck, are well aware of this vulnerability and keen to exploit it.

“No matter how urgent the job is, check out tradespeople thoroughly before taking them on and ask for references. Genuine tradespeople will not mind you doing this! Do not be swayed by cheaper than cheap quotes or impossibly quick turnaround times. If something is too good to be true it usually is!”

-ENDS-

Notes to editors:

Every customer feedback is read by Checktrade.com before being made live. So far this year 55% of all customer feedback forms have been independently spot checked and verified to make sure the jobs and rating are genuine. Each month more than **550,000** people visit the website to find a trusted trader.

Checktrade.com:

Checkatrade helps combat the UK's rogue trader problem by continuously vetting and monitoring local tradespeople such as builders, plumbers and electricians as well as service providers. The idea was born in 1998 after a tornado hit the small West Sussex town of Selsey. Traders poured in from across the country. Unfortunately, some ripped off the inhabitants of the town. Local businessman, Kevin Byrne, realised there was nowhere to check out the traders' credentials and the company that became Checkatrade was formed.

Since then, Checkatrade has grown to employ **131 staff** with a turnover in excess of **£7.5m**. It has nearly **13,000** genuine trade members, growing by an average of **300** new members every month. Over the past 12 months, Checkatrade-certified tradesmen carried out a combined total of **£1.4b** worth of work, with complaints at just **one in 215**, compared to the national average of one in four.

Linda Barker, one of the UK's best-known interior designers and famous for shows such as **60 Minute Makeover** and the BBC's **Changing Rooms** has teamed up with Checkatrade.com. She said: "Checkatrade.com is by far the best service I've found to help keep the good guys in business and keep the cowboys out. The website is updated constantly and allows everyone to share recommendations and warnings." For more information visit www.checkatrade.com