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Money down the drain: The average homeowner wastes £724 fixing botched jobs

- Survey reveals

On average, UK homeowners stump up **£724** putting right the jobs botched by rogue traders, according to the annual survey by Checkatrade.com, which provides access to qualified, vetted and monitored tradespeople.

Whilst almost **half** of respondents suffering at the hands of a cowboy moaned to friends or on social media, shockingly **12%** said they took no action. When asked why, over **half** of these said they didn't think it would make a difference, with **22%** saying they felt unable to complain as they had paid cash in hand. **10%** simply felt too intimidated by the tradesperson.

Despite the national awareness relating to rogue traders, **half** of those questioned said they had fallen victim. This compares with a **third** of respondents in the last Checkatrade.com survey, indicating a **worrying rise** in occurrences over the last year or so.

Checkatrade.com's survey also reveals:

- **Three quarters** of people in the **North East** would not hesitate to complain to a tradesperson about a poor service.
- Youngsters are the savviest, with **16-24 year olds three times** more likely to go straight to the trading standards office or police to complain than those aged **55+** (just over **half** of these complaints were resolved satisfactorily).
- A **fifth** of those living in the **Midlands** said the experience had caused arguments with family and friends compared to just **5%** in the **South West**.
- **19%** of people, including a **third** of **25-34** year olds, said the experience put stress on their relationship.
- Nearly **half** of **Scots** felt ill with worry or had to take time off work compared to just a **fifth** of people living in the **North West**.
- The **over 55s** were the most resilient, with **60%** stating the damage was purely financial.

"The fact that more people are being targeted by rogue traders highlights the importance of checking up on a tradesperson and perhaps helps explain why our web traffic has jumped **88%** in just twelve months," says Checkatrade.com boss Kevin Byrne.

"In 1998 a tornado devastated my home town of Selsey and cowboys from the length and breadth of the country descended on those trying to rebuild their homes, sullyng the good

name of reputable businesses and destroying peoples' homes. Since then I made stamping them out my personal mission and Checkatrade.com is expanding nationally in response to this latest surge."

Methodology:

Fieldwork: Censuswide

Sample: 1,308 homeowners

Survey period: September 2013

Notes to editors:

So far this year nearly half of all customer feedback forms have been independently spot checked and verified to make sure the rating system is fair.

Checkatrade.com:

Checkatrade, which recently expanded into Birmingham, Bristol, Oxford, Suffolk and the North East, helps combat the UK's rogue trader problem by continuously vetting and monitoring local tradespeople. These include 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 **110 staff** with a turnover in excess of **£7.5m**. It includes over **11,000** 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** recently 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