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Recording conversations with tradespeople: Checktrade.com members fiercely divided!

A survey of Checktrade.com's qualified, vetted and monitored tradespeople reveals that opinion is **fiercely divided** over the comments MP Jo Swinson made after unveiling the new Consumer Bill of Rights: That consumers should **record conversations** with traders to ensure that verbal agreements are upheld. **53%** of the firm's members said they would agree to such a request but **47%** would decline.

"Why not?" commented one. "Honest, reputable tradespeople have nothing to hide and a recording would protect both parties. In addition to rooting out cowboys, it would actually help genuine firms stand their ground against unreasonable customers."

But there are almost as many Checktrade.com members who do not view Swinson's suggestion so positively. Another said: "If a customer wants to record conversations, this indicates that they don't trust you to do the work properly and jeopardises the relationship right from the word go."

Despite this controversy, the survey shows that the **majority** of Checktrade.com's members questioned **support** the proposals outlined in the Consumer Rights Bill, which include the right to demand substandard work is redone or else receive a reasonable reduction in price or a refund. **75%** feel the legislation would be beneficial and help stem the tide of rogue traders.

Yet a **quarter** of the Checktrade.com's members oppose the new Consumer Rights Bill. "It's a nice idea but gives the consumer enormous power to bully honest tradesman," said one. "The bill also works under the premise that the majority of tradesmen are rogues, which is a bit of an insult. The reality is the exact opposite!"

People visit Checktrade.com, which now has over **10,000** members, to find reputable tradespeople. They can view previous customer feedback and leave their own when a job is complete.

Methodology:

Fieldwork: Checktrade.com

Sample: 119 Checktrade.com members

Survey period: June 2013

Notes to editors:

So far this year 55% of all customer feedback forms have been independently spot checked and verified to make sure the ratings are genuine.

Checkatrade.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 **100 staff** with a turnover in excess of **£7m**. It has over **10,000** genuine trade members, growing by an average of **250** new members every month. Over the past 12 months, Checkatrade-certified tradesmen carried out a combined total of **£1.2b** 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