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## **Checkatrade.com imposters beware: We're on to you!**

Selsey based company instrumental in jailing fraudster trading in Portsmouth.

Checkatrade.com has dealt another blow to opportunist rogue traders, after catching one not just engaged in bad practice but also falsely claiming Checkatrade.com membership and using its trusted logo on advertising.

Following a customer complaint, the firm investigated Keith Winning, trading as Portsmouth Plumbing & Heating, and found he was not and **never had** been a member.

Checkatrade.com provides only carefully vetted and monitored trustworthy tradesmen, so its team immediately alerted Portsmouth Trading Standards. Faced with a damning witness statement from Checkatrade.com and further staff willing to testify in court, Winning admitted to several counts of fraud, including falsely using Checkatrade.com's logo.

He received a 13 month jail sentence and a seven year ASBO will be imposed when he is released to protect the public.

Speaking following the judgment, Kevin Byrne CEO of Checkatrade.com commented: "This is a fantastic result in the battle against rogue traders. We want to send a clear message to con artists hoping to legitimise their activity by using our logo that we will not tolerate this behaviour and will take the most punitive approach possible. I hope that seeing a jail term handed down to a prolific rogue trader will act as a further deterrent to other such cowboys."

### **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](http://www.checkatrade.com)