

15 April 2008

LEAD THIEVES TARGET MORE COUNCIL HOMES IN CITY

Unscrupulous thieves who con unsuspecting council tenants into letting them strip lead from their roofs have been preying on more areas of Leeds.

People in Moortown and across east and north east Leeds are being warned about the thieves, who pretend to be contractors working for East North East Homes Leeds, the Arms Length Management Organisation (ALMO) which manages council housing in that part of the city. They convince tenants that they are carrying out legitimate repair work, before causing thousands of pounds worth of damage.

It comes just months after fellow ALMO West North West Homes Leeds issued a warning last to residents in Weetwood of a similar scam, and such incidents appear to be on the increase.

The culprits have been seen in Meanwood driving around in a white van marked as with logos claiming it is from contractors Excel/Baldwins, they have also been spotted in a silver Peugeot or Rover. It has been reported that the phoney workmen have ID badges and make convincing calls 'back to the office' if residents say they don't want the lead removing.

There are fears that the thieves might be targeting older and vulnerable people and, while they are currently only targeting lead flashings, it could escalate into them accessing people's homes for financial gain.

Tenants are warned that if any work is due to be carried out by contractors from the ALMOs, they will receive an advance warning by letter. They will also be given a specific day when the work will be carried out and which contractor will be doing it. Tenants are also advised

Corporate Communications, Civic Hall, Leeds LS1 1UR
Phone: 0113 247 4328 Fax: 0113 247 4736

For more news and information from Leeds City Council visit www.leeds.gov.uk

Switchboard: 0113 234 8080

that before allowing anyone to carry out any work on their property they should always ask to see and check their photo identification badge.

Residents who are approached by these individuals are urged to call East North East Homes Leeds on 0800 531 6555 / 0800 915 1600.

Cllr Les Carter, executive board member for housing, said:

“The activities of these thieves are disgraceful, and we are doing everything we can to stop them.

“Targeting residents, particularly those who are elderly or vulnerable, is despicable and such thefts cost the taxpayer thousands of pounds.

“If they come knocking on your door and you’ve not had a letter saying workmen will turn up with a specific time and date for repairs, then you need to call the Freephone number and check before you let them in.”

**For media enquiries please contact:
Michael Molcher, Leeds City Council Press Office (0113) 224 3937
e-mail michael.molcher@leeds.gov.uk
ENDS**