

Warwickshire Trading Standards Partner Update

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Suspended Prison Sentence and 180 Hours Unpaid Work for Rugby Shopkeeper Caught Selling Nitrous Oxide to Youngsters

Mr Sethukavalar Ramasethu age 55, the owner of Long Lawford Stores Rugby has been sentenced to 20 months in prison, suspended for 2 years and ordered to complete 180 hours unpaid work. Mr Ramasethu knew the dangers of Nitrous Oxide but was prepared to sell large cannisters to young people.



A young undercover Trading Standards Officer working for **Warwickshire County Council** paid £31.99 for a giant canister of Nitrous Oxide and a pack of balloons (used to inhale the gas) from the store.

Trading Standards worked in partnership with Warwickshire Police and acted on Police intelligence that the store was selling Nitrous Oxide, and an 18-year-old local had been hospitalised with burns to his throat and airways after allegedly breathing in the Class C drug.

Whilst there was no evidence that the Nitrous Oxide in that case had been sold by Mr Ramasethu, there was reasonable inference as he had accepted he was selling Nitrous Oxide to young people.

Immediately following the purchase, Trading Standards Officer supported by Warwickshire Police raided the store and discovered 30 Nitrous Oxide cannisters, some hidden in black bin liners behind boxes of wine, and bags of

Rogue Builder Sentenced to 22 Months in Prison After Leaving Leamington Spa Resident with Dangerous and Mouldy Garage Conversion

The Defendant Left the Victims in ‘Promise Land’

A rogue builder has been sentenced to 22 months in prison following a successful investigation and prosecution undertaken by **Warwickshire County Council Trading Standards**. The builder took money from the victim but did not have the skills to carry out the work leaving the victim’s build ‘wholly defective and dangerous’.

The judge described the victim as being left in ‘Promise Land’, the trader promising again and again to return to fix the work, which he failed to do, leaving a family, (including a newborn baby) in a home, some of which was mouldy and at risk of collapse!

Jonathan Rhys Lomas (age 50 of Wellington Road Leamington Spa) who traded as JD Lomas and Sons, had previously pleaded guilty to three offences under the Fraud Act 2006.



Mr Lomas had previously carried out some patio work for the victim, (which he was happy with) and approached the builder again to carry out some more extensive renovations to his property, which it transpired Mr Lomas did not have the skills to complete. The builder agreed to convert a garage into a wet room and playroom for the victim and almost immediately took the grossly inflated sum of £1200 from the victim to pay for planning permission but never made an application. He later took a further £10,000 for building materials but used most of the money to pay back another unhappy customer. Further payments were then made to Mr Lomas totalling £18,800 in all. Much of this money was also used to pay his debts.

Building work progressed slowly with Mr Lomas often claiming that either he or a family member was ill, and he could therefore not visit the property. When interviewed by Trading Standards, Mr Lomas admitted that he wasn’t coping and was unable to competently carry out the building and electrical work on the conversion, which he left in an unfinished, defective and dangerous state. His failure to complete the works in a timely fashion and use the correct damp proofing led to the garage walls becoming covered in mould. Consequently, the victim and his family, who had recently had a baby were forced to live upstairs.

balloons. 32 cannisters were seized in total.

The shopkeeper was found to have been organising the buying and selling of large cannisters of Nitrous Oxide on a commercial scale, knowing they would be consumed for their psychoactive properties, that doing so was harmful and to make a financial gain.

Warwickshire County Councillor Michael Bannister, Portfolio Holder for Customer and Localities said:

“The harmful sale of Nitrous Oxide concerns our communities. Our Trading Standards Service took decisive action to both seize the Nitrous Oxide and prosecute the seller, protecting local residents and especially young people.”

At Coventry Crown Court on Thursday 9th October 2025 Mr Ramasethu (age 55 of Holbrook Road, Long Lawford) and owner of Long Lawford Stores 7A Holbrook Road, Long Lawford was sentenced to 20 months in prison, suspended for 2 years and was ordered to complete 180 hours unpaid work, pay prosecution costs totalling £7920.44 and the victim surcharge. The seized Nitrous Oxide was forfeited for destruction.

At a previous hearing Mr Ramasethu had pleaded guilty to one offence of supplying Nitrous Oxide and one offence of possession with intent to supply Nitrous Oxide.

His Honour Judge Berlin, presiding, stated that it had been known for a long time that Nitrous Oxide is dangerous, that the defendant was in possession of large cannisters of the product, not the small silver bottles often seen littering our streets and his shop was adjacent to a Sure Start Children’s Centre and Primary School.

He added that Mr Ramasethu was very lucky to be walking out of court.

In mitigation, Sarah Taylor representing Mr Ramasethu said that her client had not been in trouble for 24 years, had been naïve and was extremely remorseful. She added that her client’s wife had health conditions, that he had put his family under a great deal of stress and that they relied on him.

Nitrous Oxide was previously controlled under the Psychoactive Substances Act 2016. This prosecution was brought under this act.

On 9th October 2025 at Coventry Crown Court Jonathan Rhys Lomas was sentenced to 22 months in prison and ordered to pay the victim surcharge.

His Honour Judge Berlin stated that the offences committed by Mr Lomas were appalling and from the start he had been acting fraudulently, a rogue trader who perpetrated a cynical, calculated, and persistent swindle. He had both lied and pressured the victim for money for personal gain, knowing he was in no position to complete the work. He added that he left the victim and his family in a house that could not be secured, with a permanent draft throughout and mouldy plasterboard.

In mitigation Mr Lomas representing himself said that he was deeply disgusted and ashamed of what he had done to the victim and their family and wanted to pay them back although he did not have the money to do so currently.

Warwickshire County Councillor Michael Bannister, Portfolio Holder for Customer and Localities said:

“This prosecution serves as a warning to rogue traders operating in Warwickshire, who are causing harm and misery to often very elderly and vulnerable residents, that we will take decisive action against them.”

“Our Trading Standards Service will continue to investigate and bring before the courts rogue traders who are taking residents’ money for work that is often unnecessary, is not completed and in some cases not even begun, or is carried out to an unacceptable standard.”

“To protect yourself from rogue traders, don’t use traders who simply turn up unexpectedly on your doorstep. Ideally look for traders with verifiable addresses and try to seek recommendations from people you know and trust. Finally, always get several written quotes before you agree to any work commencing and don’t pay all the money up front.”

Rogue Roofer Ordered to Pay over £103,000 to Compensate Victims

Rogue roofer Darren Bullaman Lee, who in 2024 was sentenced to two-and-a-half-years imprisonment for ripping off four Nuneaton and Leamington Spa residents, has been ordered to pay £103,899 to compensate his victims.

Warwickshire County Council Trading Standards Service, who investigated and prosecuted Lee in 2024, on 26th September 2025 applied to Warwick Crown Court for a Proceeds of Crime Act Confiscation Order.

Lee has agreed to pay the money, but if he does not, he will face another 18 months in prison, and he’ll still owe the money when he comes out.

Warwickshire County Councillor Michael Bannister, Portfolio Holder for Customer and Localities said:

“I’m delighted with the action our Trading Standards Service has taken in seeking to recover money lost by the victims of rogue traders, so that they can be compensated.”

“Warwickshire Trading Standards will continue to investigate and prosecute rogue traders and protect and support Warwickshire residents, especially our most elderly and vulnerable.”

Roofer Darren Bullaman Lee (age 29 of Windmill Road, Towersey, Oxfordshire) ripped off his victims by over-charging for work to their roofs that was largely unnecessary. Lee’s M.O. was to start with a lower quote before finding more and largely fictitious ‘problems’ with the roofs he was working on. Costs then soared! Three of the victims found Lee on trustatrader.com where he was advertising as Your Choice Roofing, The Crescent, Spalding, England, PE11 1AF.