

# Warwickshire Trading Standards Partner Update

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## Illegal muscle drugs worth half a million pounds seized by Trading Standards

£500,000 worth of SARMS, illegal and potentially dangerous muscle building drugs, have been seized by Warwickshire County Council Trading Standards.

SARMS (Selective Androgen Receptor Modulators) are an unauthorised ‘novel food’ the consumption of which may cause a range of problems including an increased risk of heart attack or stroke, psychosis and hallucinations, sexual dysfunction and infertility, and liver failure.

Trading Standards Officers were alerted to the existence of the products by a North Warwickshire fulfilment house and investigated. There they found 5577 SARMS and 38 Turkesterone food supplements.



**Councillor Andy Crump, Portfolio Holder for Community Safety at Warwickshire County Council, said:**

“These products, which are being promoted on some social media sites as a way for gym-goers to build muscle and shed fat, are both illegal to sell and potentially dangerous to consume.”

“I’m delighted that Trading Standards has taken this action to protect consumers. I would also like to thank the fulfilment house for its vigilance in identifying these products and alerting Trading Standards.”

SARMS are synthetic chemical substances that mimic the effects of testosterone and anabolic steroids. They

## Nuneaton Rogue Roofer Sentenced to Two-and-a-Half Years Imprisonment

A rogue roofer has been sentenced to two-and-a-half-years imprisonment and handed an 8-year Criminal Behaviour Order and an 8-year director disqualification order.

This followed a successful investigation and prosecution undertaken by Warwickshire County Council Trading Standards.

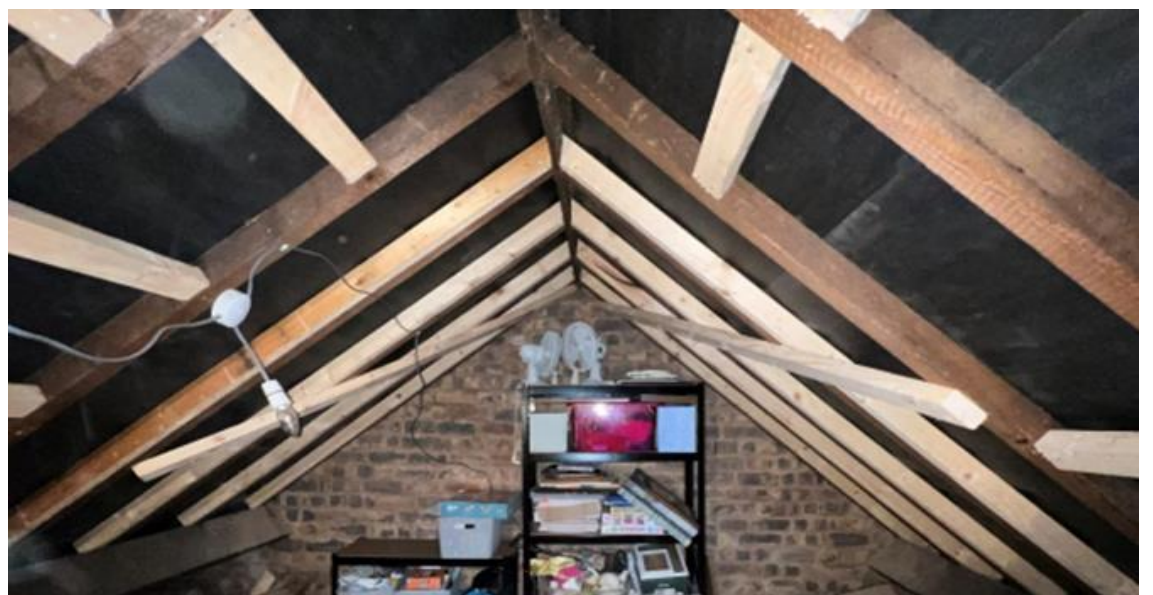
Roofer Darren Bullaman Lee (age 27 of Gilfil Road, Hill Top, Nuneaton) ripped off four Nuneaton and Leamington Spa residents to the tune of £82,500 by over-charging for work to their roofs that was largely unnecessary. Lee’s M.O. was to start with a lower quote before finding more and largely fictitious ‘problems’ with the roofs he was working on. Costs then soared!

In one case a Nuneaton resident who called Lee out to look at a leaky gutter ended up paying him over £43,000!

Three of the victims found Lee on trustatrader.com where he was advertising as Your Choice Roofing, The Crescent, Spalding, England, PE11 1AF.

On sentencing Lee at Warwick Crown Court, **His Honour Judge Walsh** said that his membership of a trusted trader scheme had given his victims ‘security and peace of mind’ such that Lee was able to convince them that work was needed on their properties, when in fact the work was ‘wholly unnecessary’. Addressing Lee, he added that this was ‘merely a device for you to get your hands on their money.’

The victims who lived in Nuneaton and Leamington Spa variously stated that they felt depressed and conned and that Lee’s activities had had a significant impact on their family finances and mental health. One Nuneaton resident asked Lee to repair some cracked cement on his roof and repoint the chimney brickwork.



*An example of some of the timber ‘strengthening’ batons fixed to consumer’s roofs by Darren Lee.*

After a fee of £1200 was agreed Lee told the resident that battens in the roof were rotten and needed replacing, alongside the felt. He also claimed that he’d found woodworm. Thicker, heavier battens were required he claimed

were originally developed as an experimental drug to treat muscle-wasting conditions.

In the UK SARMS are illegal to sell, but can still be found for sale, often marketed in both a liquid and tablet form to bodybuilders as 'steroid alternatives' or even 'legal steroids' and used to build muscle.

However, the bottles seized by Warwickshire Trading Standards clearly stated, 'Not for human consumption'.



On Wednesday 22nd May 2024 at Coventry Magistrates Court, Warwickshire County Council were granted a Food Condemnation Order under the Novel Foods (England)

Regulations 2018. The products will now be destroyed to prevent them from being used for human consumption.

At court, Ellis & Gallagher Ltd of Kenton Lane, Harrow, England, HA3 8RR were deemed to be the owners of the product. The court awarded Warwickshire County Council costs against Ellis & Gallagher Ltd in the sum of £2827.50.

to support the roof. Lee costed the work at £16,000 and the resident eventually paid him £16,200.

However, an expert surveyor employed by Warwickshire Trading Standards examined the roof and found that the 'strengthening work' had no purpose or positive effect on the roof structure and was therefore wholly unnecessary and superfluous. Further, there was no evidence of any decay or rotting of the roof timbers.

A second Nuneaton resident contacted Lee after being told that his roof might be leaking. Lee looked at the roof from the outside before claiming that a 'full roof repair' was required. Lee quoted £4200 before later inflating the price to £18,000, again after discovering more 'issues'. When the consumer refused to pay, Lee threatened to rip off the roof tiles. The expert surveyor concluded that the work carried out by Lee had no value as it did not benefit the roof structure. He also examined what was left of the original roof and stated that it was in a good and structurally sound condition and require absolutely no works to be undertaken.

Lee quoted a third Nuneaton resident £11000 for a completely new roof with new tiles, new battens and felt with all work guaranteed for 15 years. After the work was done Lee claimed that the roof was not strong enough to support the new tiles and further structural 'work' was needed. Lee claimed that the guarantee could not be issued unless this extra work was done. Lee also painted a wall and inflated the price of this work. The householder eventually paid Mr Lee £22000! The Trading Standards expert surveyor found that the roof did not need any strengthening and indeed the new tiles were lighter than those they replaced! The work was also overpriced.

In the fourth case a Leamington Spa householder asked Lee to come out to look at a leak to his guttering but ended up paying the rogue roofer over £43,000! Lee maintained that the cause of the problem was his tiles, and that scaffolding would need to be erected. He then claimed the tiles were disintegrating and would need replacing together with rotten battens. Costs further escalated to include the removal of an asbestos roof on the garage which the resident was told would be done professionally. However, this was done without any specific protective measures taking place. The homeowner eventually paid Lee £43,150.

A Proceeds of Crime Act investigation has commenced, and the matter will be back in Court on the 7th November 2024 when compensation, confiscation and costs will be considered.

**Warwickshire County Councillor Andy Crump, Portfolio Holder for Community Safety said:**

“This is an appalling example of how a rogue trader took advantage of some very vulnerable Warwickshire residents to defraud them of over £82,000.”

“Rogue traders are warned that if they try to operate in Warwickshire, our Trading Standards Service will tackle them and bring them to court.”

Mitigation heard in court related largely to Mr Lee’s drug addiction that had led him into debt.

## Warwickshire Trading Standards Support Community Fun Day

Warwickshire Trading Standards was one of several services that attended the Fareham Youth Partnership Community Fun Day on Saturday 29<sup>th</sup> June. Trading Standards Officers were on hand to offer consumers and businesses help and advice on Trading Standards related matters, as well as hand out scam and rogue trader consumer advice booklets and no cold calling doorstep stickers.

