

ROGUE TO
RUIN: Give
cowboy
builders
the boot



Showdown time finally arrives for cowboy builders

A NEW service that aims to bridge the communications gap between homeowners and tradesmen was launched last month by DIY Doctor. It works by providing a simple to understand contract that can be downloaded and sets out the responsibilities of both parties in domestic building projects.

"Consumers commonly place high emphasis on the price of the job and so do their homework in getting quotes beforehand. Often, this is where the precautionary measures end," said DIY

Doctor founder Mike Edwards. "The majority of tradespeople are honest and price their work fairly. A good contract should protect them as much as it protects the homeowner.

Cheap

"However, there are too many rogue operators who get jobs. They offer a very cheap price but supplement it with high cost so-called extras or unforeseen problems."

Research published this year by Santander Insurance showed rogue traders to have

cost British homeowners £6.8 billion, with more than one third (37 per cent) of people footing an average bill of £1,592 for botched jobs.

DIY Doctor's desired outcome building contract, which has been drawn up by legal experts, is designed for domestic building contracts up to £75,000 where no architect, building surveyor or consultant has been employed.

To find a reliable tradesman take a look at MyHammer. A site that's a cross between Facebook and eBay, it puts householders in touch with

tradespeople and enables users to put home improvement jobs online. Registered tradesmen then bid for the contract.

It can be anything from painting and decorating, plumbing and repair work to full-scale extensions. MyHammer has been operating in Germany since 2005.

Checkatrade offers a simple way to contact local traders and view their credentials.

INFORMATION:

- www.diydoctor.org.uk
- www.myhammer.co.uk
- www.checkatrade.com