

Buying Goods & Services

Do you know what your rights are as a consumer?

Do you have a problem with goods or services that you have purchased?

Are you having difficulties persuading a trader you are entitled to a refund after purchasing faulty goods?

Do you know what your next step should be?

If you are experiencing difficulties because you do not know what rights you have as a consumer or are finding it difficult obtaining compensation after being sold faulty goods or poor quality services the Consumer Protection Service may be able to offer free help and assistance.

All consumers have rights when they buy goods and services.

In brief these rights are:

The Sale of Goods Act 1979 states all goods must be of satisfactory quality (not faulty), as described and fit for their purpose. If the problem, such as a faulty television, a car that keeps breaking down or something that is described as “leather” is actually synthetic is brought to the attention of the trader within a reasonable period after purchase (reasonably quickly after it was sold) then you can take the product back to the shop for a full refund. After this short period you may not get a full refund but may still be entitled to have the product replaced or repaired.



When a business provides you with a service it has to be provided to a reasonable standard of skill and care. A dry cleaner who ruins a suit, a garage who doesn't carry out a repair properly or a plumber who fits leaking pipes may all be in breach of contract. The trader may have to carry out remedial work or you may be entitled to compensation.

If you are shopping online or by mail order you often have extra rights and can cancel most contracts up to 7 days after the goods have been delivered.



Top tips to resolve a problem:

- ◆ Keep receipts or other proof of purchase to show when and where you purchased the goods / services.
- ◆ Complain to the manager or owner of the business as soon as possible.
- ◆ Know what your rights are and what you are entitled to.
- ◆ Remember most traders are reasonable if they can see there is a problem.
- ◆ Write to the Head Office if the branch cannot help you.
- ◆ Send letters Recorded Delivery and always keep copies.
- ◆ Seek further advice from Consumer Protection if you need it.

We can provide you with advice as to what you are legally entitled to, who you need to complain to and what your next step should be. Under some circumstances we may also be able to approach the trader to try and resolve the dispute.

It should be remembered that Consumer Protection do not have any powers to make traders give refunds or make repairs etc and so some complaints, though not many, need to be resolved by the courts. The Small Claims procedure allows the Sheriff Court to hear disputes of less than £750 in an informal and inexpensive way. This is not a complicated procedure but Consumer Protection may be able to help you by providing further advice and support for Small Claims cases.

If the business is a member of a trade association then it will be bound by its code of conduct and a dispute resolution procedure may be available. Some services also have an ombudsman scheme or are subject to an industry regulator. If you ask the business they should tell you what complaint procedures you should follow or Consumer Protection can provide details of who you can complain to.

If you suspect that a trader may have broken the law in some way by for example misdescribing products, over charging, giving short measure or selling unsafe or counterfeit goods then Consumer Protection can investigate if you make a complaint to us.





For further help and advice:

If you speak English, Consumer Direct Scotland provide free telephone advice.

Consumer Protection can also provide face-to-face advice if you make an appointment or visit either of our two offices. If you do not speak English then it may be easier to bring a friend with you who does or if this is not possible we can arrange for a telephone translation service.

Contacts

Consumer Direct Scotland: 08454 040506 (English speaking only)
Website: www.consumerdirect.gov.uk

Consumer Protection:

Gordon House
Blackhall Road

Inverurie
AB51 3WA
01467 628323

10 Commerce Street

Fraserburgh

AB43 9AQ
01346 510505

email: trading.standards@aberdeenshire.gov.uk

There are other local organisations in Fraserburgh, Peterhead, Banchory, Inverurie, Turriff and Stonehaven who may be able to help and advise on other issues such as financial debt, benefit rights and employment law. Further details can be found under "Advice Centres" at www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk. Free access to the internet is available at any Aberdeenshire library.