

Advice and Enquiries about Faulty Goods

What do you do if you've bought something and it's faulty or not up to scratch? It might be goods such as a second hand car or a service such as a mobile phone service contract or the fitting of a kitchen.

The law says that any goods must be of a satisfactory quality, fit for their purpose and as described. Similarly, any service must be performed with reasonable care and skill. But if something goes wrong where do you go for help?

The answer is to ring **The Citizens Advice Consumer Service on 03454 04 05 06**. The service operates Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm.

This is a national service provided in partnership with local authorities. They will listen to your enquiry and advise you what to do to try and sort the problem out. If the problem is more complex or the trader may have broken the law, Citizens Advice will – with your agreement – refer the problem to your local Trading Standards Service to see whether anything more can be done.

In Derbyshire the Trading Standards Service is based at Matlock and is part of Derbyshire County Council. We investigate rogue trading such as 'clocked' or unroadworthy cars; misdescribed goods; misleading prices; counterfeit goods; unsafe products; unfair trading practices and many other issues that could be harmful to consumers.

The number of enquiries we receive (18,000 each year) means that we can't follow them all up. We do assess them all in order to identify and deal with the most important.

If we decide to investigate, we will talk to the consumer concerned and establish the facts before deciding what can be done to try and sort out the problems.

Some of the key aspects of our service are:

- The help we provide is free of charge.
- We will keep you informed of the progress of your enquiry at regular intervals.
- We will let you know the outcome of your enquiry, or tell you the reasons why we cannot resolve it.
- We will record details of all enquiries and handle our records in accordance with the Data Protection Act.
- Where we believe the enquirer is vulnerable we may help with writing letters and contacting the trader on their behalf.
- If the enquiry concerns one of our Trusted Traders it will always be dealt with as a priority.
- In other cases we may give basic advice or signpost to leaflets.
- We will not intervene in a consumer dispute if we feel that, with the right advice, you are capable of pursuing your own enquiry.
- We do not represent individuals in Court.
- Investigation and legal action are carried out in accordance with our compliance policy.

Sadly we cannot always resolve every problem to all parties' satisfaction. If an agreement cannot be reached, then the enquirer will have to consider whether to take the matter to Court.

If you are not satisfied with the service received from Trading Standards then you are welcome to make your views known via the Council's Putting People First Policy - contact Call Derbyshire on 01629 533190.

Our full Consumer Advice and Enquiries Policy, is available at;
http://www.derbyshire.gov.uk/community/consumer_advice/default.asp

We want everyone to be able to understand us. On request, we will arrange:

- Language interpreters, including for sign language
- Translation of written materials into other languages
- Materials in large print, on tape or in Braille.