

National Consumer Week 2020



Key messages:

- Buying something online? As part of this year's National Consumer Week, we're raising awareness of what people's rights are when shopping online, and what they can do if something goes wrong
- Being able to buy things online has a lot of benefits for people - it can be more accessible, make it easier to shop around, and help consumers to save time and money. However, it's important people know how to shop online safely, and what to do if something goes wrong
- Find out more about your rights and National Consumer Week at www.citizensadvice.org.uk/NCW20
- You can also call the Citizens Advice consumer service for more advice on 0808 223 1133



Quick fire advice:

- **If something has gone wrong with an item you've bought online**
 - If the item you bought is broken or damaged, unusable or not what was advertised or doesn't match the seller's description you may be entitled to a refund, repair or replacement
- **If you've bought something online that's fake or counterfeit**
 - You have the legal right to a refund and you can report the seller to Trading Standards or report the seller for fraud
- **If something you ordered online hasn't arrived**
 - It's the seller's responsibility to make sure the item is delivered to you
 - If the seller used a courier, they should chase the courier to find out what's happened to your order - it's not your responsibility
 - Check the delivery address you gave the seller. Then contact them and ask where your order is
 - If the seller claims they've delivered it or don't know where it is, you can ask for a redelivery. You might be able to get a refund in some circumstances
- **If you're worried about being scammed**
 - Before you buy anything, take a few minutes to research the company or website you're using. Read reviews from different websites, and search for the company's details on gov.uk - this will tell you if they're a registered company or not
 - Pay by PayPal or by debit or credit card. This gives you extra protection if things go wrong

- Be wary of unofficial sites offering big discounts, and make sure you're buying from the retailer's official website. If it looks too good to be true, it probably is
- Scammers may appear like a trusted business, using links in ads or emails to direct you to a fake website. Don't click on any links you don't trust.
- Make your online shopping accounts secure. Try using 3 random words to create a long and strong password
- Use a strong password for your email accounts that you don't use anywhere else



Key stats:

- Between the March lockdown and August 2020, the number of cases reported to the Citizens Advice consumer service relating to online shopping went up by nearly 80% (just over 73,000 cases compared to just over 40,000 cases the same time period the year before)
- Huge numbers of people are using the internet to buy things. In 2019, ONS data indicated that 8 in 10 internet users had shopped online
- In February 2020, ONS figures showed that 19% of retail spending was online. This rose to 33% of retail spending in May 2020, during lockdown



5 top tips for avoiding online shopping delivery problems:

- 1. Check the delivery policies before you place an order.** Check the delivery times, the delivery costs as well as the process and potential cost of returning the items
- 2. If you won't be home...** provide as much detail as possible about where the parcel should be delivered to. Consider asking a neighbour or friend if you can deliver it to their address. However, this will be seen as a receipt of delivery, so only do this if you know the space is safe or the friend or neighbour will be home
- 3. Is it an online trader or online marketplace?** Check if you are dealing with a trader or a private seller on an online marketplace. Your rights can be different if you're buying online from a private seller - the goods must be as described and can't be misrepresented (e.g. by claiming something used is brand new). However, the seller doesn't have to disclose any faults of the items
- 4. Look at online reviews of the trader to see if they're genuine.** By reading the reviews of other customers, you can learn how reliable the company is and how well they deal with missing parcel complaints and refunds
- 5. Keep in mind who you should deal with when a parcel goes missing.** Your purchase and agreement is with the trader, therefore if your parcel goes missing you should speak to the trader to deal with the problem, not the courier company