



National Consumer Week 2020

16 November - 22 November

Summary

National Consumer Week (NCW) is an annual campaign which aims to raise awareness of issues that consumers are having across the country, and the protections and resources available to help people when they need it. The theme of this year's campaign is online shopping and delivery.

This is a particularly timely topic ahead of 'Black Friday' and 'Cyber Monday': two big pre-Christmas shopping days in November where there will be millions of people shopping online.

The coronavirus crisis has added an extra importance - the number of people shopping online has unsurprisingly increased during the pandemic. This will likely be heightened even further during the coming months as local lockdown restrictions are implemented and people rely more heavily on the internet to buy the things they need. It is therefore vital that consumers know their rights when buying products online.

Along with the increase in online shopping, **there has been an increase in the number of problems consumers are having with it.** In the months following lockdown, the number of cases reported to the consumer service relating to online shopping nearly doubled.

What are the main issues?



People are having a range of problems when shopping online. There has been an increase in consumers contacting the consumer service with problems relating to scams and defective goods, and we have particularly seen large numbers of consumers experiencing issues with parcel delivery.



Consumers don't know their rights might be different. 1 in 3 people (33%) didn't think there was a difference in their consumer rights when buying online compared to buying in a store.



They can have problems when seeking redress. With common redress issues ranging from struggling to get a refund or problems returning an item, it's important that consumers know their rights and what to do in these situations.

Campaign aims, key messaging and resources

Through the campaign we want to:

1. Raise awareness and understanding amongst consumers about their rights when buying goods online, including delivery.
2. Educate consumers on what steps they should take when online shopping to protect themselves from bad practice.
3. Empower consumers to seek redress in cases where something has gone wrong.
4. Raise awareness of where consumers can go if they need more advice on an issue. This will include the Citizens Advice web pages, the Consumer Service and where appropriate alternative dispute resolutions.

The campaign hashtags will be **#NCW20** and **#SafeShopper**.

Citizens Advice will be providing resources, including leaflets, posters, postcards, a model press release and a social media pack with template content. There will also be a variety of resources from our partners including tips, graphics, and videos you can share online.

Resources and more information can be found at

<https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/ncw20/>

How you can get involved

There are lots of ways your organisation can get involved in National Consumer Week, no matter how much time you have. Below are some ideas, set out with the Citizens Advice service and local partners in mind - although other organisations are welcome to join in and use the resources.

If you have an hour:

- Post about the campaign on your social media channels using some of our suggested posts included in our social media pack
- Feature the campaign on the front page of your website
- Update your social media graphics (Facebook cover image, Twitter background etc) to campaign images
- Do you have regular meetings with other local groups who might be interested in the campaign, like your local authority, trading standards, or other charities? Let them know it's happening and sign post them to our website to see how they can take part

If you have a day:

- Schedule regular posts on your social media channels using the hashtag #NCW20 - you can find instructions for how to do this in our social media pack

- Send a press release to the local media. If you're a local Citizens Advice office, a template version will be available to download on Cablink
- Write to other organisations such as libraries, community centres, and housing associations and invite them to promote the campaign - you can find a partner briefing and mini campaign pack on our website

If you have a week:

- Create your own social media content to promote the campaign - you can follow the topics suggested in our social media pack but create your own posts
- Contact your local radio stations in advance to pitch for an interview about the campaign. Case studies and personal stories will really help highlight the problems people can have when shopping online and why they need to know their rights. If you're a local Citizens Advice you can find guidance on case studies on Cablink
- Contact local MPs, Assembly Members and Councillors and ask them to highlight the campaign and our key messages to their constituents, for example through their social media channels
- Run a live online shopping and deliveries Q&A discussion in your local area on Twitter or Facebook
- Host a Zoom workshop with people in your community to help inform them of their rights when shopping online, and practical steps they can take to protect themselves. You can find a template presentation on our website

Help, support and advice for the campaign

We understand that carrying out campaign activities will be more difficult this year; anything you can do to help raise awareness of the campaign in your area is greatly appreciated. We've offered you a few ideas but we are keen to hear which activities work well so that we can share best practice with others.

Whatever you do for National Consumer Week, please let us know about it:

- If you are tweeting, remember to use the hashtag #NCW20
- You can email us pictures and updates directly to campaigns@citizensadvice.org.uk
- If you are part of the Citizens Advice service you can let us know about your activities by sending a Local Action Reporting Form - www.citizensadvice.org.uk/cablink/larf

If you have any questions about this briefing or National Consumer Week please contact us at campaigns@citizensadvice.org.uk