

# Buying on the doorstep

Your guide to buying mobility aids on the doorstep or from a salesperson in your home



**Your rights explained**

# What is doorstep selling?

Doorstep selling is when someone sells you goods or services, such as mobility aids, in your home or on your doorstep.

# Mobility aids

Mobility aids are products such as wheelchairs, scooters, stair lifts, bath aids and adjustable beds that are used to assist people who have difficulty moving around independently.

These products are sometimes sold by people who come to your doorstep, or who visit you in your home after arranging an appointment on the telephone. Many traders are genuine. However, there is a risk you may be pressured into buying something you do not want or that is not good value for money from rogue salespeople.

This guide helps you shop more safely with a trader at your home, and explains some of your legal rights.

# Think twice before you buy

If you feel under pressure to make a purchase, be confident and say:

- you do not buy goods or services from your home or doorstep
- you'd like more time to think about it
- you want to shop around and get other quotes
- you have to discuss it with someone else (for example, your partner, carer or son/daughter).

If the trader tells you you'll miss an exclusive or time-limited offer, don't worry, it's just another high pressure tactic.

## Double check the facts

Only make a purchase when you are satisfied that you have all of the information you need.

Before you buy:

- do you know if the trader is indeed who they say they are?
- do you fully understand the costs, including quotes, delivery, installation and maintenance?
- do you understand what your right to cancel is if you sign a contract?
- do you know the arrangements for aftersales servicing, guarantees or warranties?

# Your rights

If you spend more than £35 with a trader in your home or on your doorstep, you usually have seven days to change your mind, cancel and get back any money you have paid.

Your seven day cancellation period starts once you are told of your right to cancel by the trader. This information should be given to you in writing by the trader at the time you buy. If you are not given this information, the trader can't hold you to the contract and you don't have to pay anything.

If you have agreed (in writing) to work starting within the seven days you may have to pay something. Therefore, if you order a custom made product and work has already started on it (with your agreement) then you may have to pay something. If the trader has started work early and you didn't agree to it in writing, then you don't have to pay anything if you cancel.

When cancelling, advise the trader in writing and keep a copy of your letter or email as proof of cancellation. If sending your letter via post, get a proof of postage as well.

# Get peace of mind

Some traders are members of associations or schemes that encourage members to offer higher standards of customer care than is required by law. It's a good idea to check if traders are members of these organisations:



Members of **British Healthcare Trades Association** work to a Code of Practice that has been approved by the Office of Fair Trading.



**Local Authority Trading Services' Buy With Confidence** scheme, this means that traders have been approved by Trading Standards to ensure that they operate in a legal, honest and fair way.

**Local Authority Assured Trader Scheme**, this means that traders have committed to trading fairly and have been approved by Trading Standards before becoming members of the scheme.

If you have a complaint about a trader that is a member of any of the above schemes, the scheme will deal with your complaint. For more information about the schemes contact Consumer Direct **08454 04 05 06**

## Trade Associations

If the trader claims to be a member of a trade association, you may wish to get in contact with the association directly to confirm their membership.

## Buy wisely

- don't sign anything on the spot, carefully consider whether you really want the goods or service
- ask family and friends to help you shop around to compare products and prices
- be wary of special offers which sound too good to be true
- ask for a starting price and price range before a trader visits your home
- confirm who the trader is and the company they represent by checking their identification and contact information
- don't hand over a cash deposit
- don't agree to a trader starting any work straight away
- talk to someone you trust for a second opinion
- If you are still unsure, need advice or things go wrong please call Consumer Direct on **08454 04 05 06**

**Keep this leaflet somewhere easy to refer to if a trader calls at your door.**

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