

**Consumer protection**

Consumer protection is the process of defending consumers against unscrupulous practices by producers and sellers. Over time, case law in this country has developed to provide consumers with a range of protections, although the best protection is the common sense of an individual [consumer](#).

There are a number of [laws to protect consumers](#) including:

The Sale of Goods Act Sets out that goods must be:

- \* 'of satisfactory quality'
- \* 'fit for the purpose' for which they are intended
- \* 'as described' by the seller.

The Trades Descriptions Act Sets out that goods must be as described. The description provides part of the contract between the buyer and seller.

The Weights and Measures Act Sets out to make sure that consumers get the weight or measure (e.g. for liquids) that they are offered.

The Consumer Protection Act Provides for liability for damage by defective products.

The Trading Standards Department of your local authority has powers to investigate complaints. Environmental Health Inspectors check on a range of premises including those where food is prepared.

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There are a number of bodies that have been set up to [protect consumers](#). For example, the British Standards Institute (BSI) establishes a range of standards for products and processes. Products that comply with these standards are able to display the 'Kitemark' of the BSI, which is a mark of quality. Another well known body that protects consumers is The Consumers' Association which produces the magazine 'Which?'. The Consumers' Association, like the BSI, carry out tests on a range of products, and publish the results showing best buys and value for money from a range of products.

**Standards**

Every product or service that is bought and sold must meet standards. These standards include legal requirements such as those under the Sale of Goods Act, as well as those created by standardising bodies such as The British Standards Institute.