

**Protecting the customer**

There are a number of laws that protect the customer against the actions of unscrupulous manufacturers and sellers.

Particularly important are the Sale of Goods Acts. These set out that goods must be:

- \* 'Of merchantable quality' - ie free of significant faults; accepting faults that are drawn to your attention by the seller (e.g. a tea shirt that is discounted because it has a snag in it).
- \* 'Fit for the purpose' - including any particular purpose mentioned by you to the seller. For example, if you ask for a pair of trousers that a machine-washable you should not be sold a pair that can only be hand washed.
- \* 'As described' - i.e. on the package or sales literature.

Any good that you buy from any sort of trader should meet these basic requirements.

Customers are also protected when buying a service.

When you pay for a service (for example from a travel agent, or washing machine repairer) you are entitled to certain standards.

A service should be carried out:

- \* 'With reasonable care and skill'. The job should be done to a proper standard of workmanship. For example, if you have your central heating system serviced then you would expect it to function properly rather than break down the next day.
- \* 'Within a reasonable time'. If you have to have your central heating system that has just been installed repaired. You would expect the repair to take place fairly promptly.
- \* 'At a reasonable charge, if no price has been fixed in advance'.

There are other consumer laws governing the way in which goods and services are described in advertising. There are others which concern Food Safety (what sorts of ingredients should go into food) and Toy Safety. The Weights and Measures Act also seeks to ensure that you get fair weights of materials supplied and the measures that you expect e.g. in fluids.