

# Trading Standards



**Gloucestershire**  
COUNTY COUNCIL

# Trading Standards:

## Are you aware of the service we provide?

### What we do for the people of Gloucestershire

The Trading Standards Service is provided by Gloucestershire County Council. The cost of our Service is paid for out of the council tax and is currently £3.38 per person per year.

The Service is responsible for enforcing a wide range of legislation relating to the supply and distribution of goods and services. We exercise our responsibilities by:

- Impartially advising consumers and businesses on their rights and obligations
- Investigating complaints about goods and services
- Carrying out surveys into various products and trade practices
- Inspecting trade premises
- Sampling and testing products
- Taking appropriate action in accordance with our enforcement policy. [www.tradingstandards.gov.uk/glos/about\\_enforcement.htm](http://www.tradingstandards.gov.uk/glos/about_enforcement.htm)

### Our service standards

- We aim to respond to all enquiries from the public within 5 days.
- We aim to provide an initial response to all requests for advice from traders within 5 days and aim to provide a full response to 90% of enquiries within 10 days.

## Our consumer advice service

Most of the enquiries we receive from the public are passed to us from the regional call centre Consumer Direct South West (CDSW). CDSW can be contacted on **08454 040506**. They will provide you with simple advice on your rights if you have a problem with goods or services you have purchased.

If you are a Gloucestershire resident Consumer Direct South West will refer your call to us if they think you require more detailed advice or your enquiry involves a likely criminal infringement of the law.

If your enquiry is referred to our advice team by CDSW we will contact you within **5 days**.

We will give further advice on your rights and will explain the options available to you. We will advise you on the most appropriate steps for you to take in your individual case. We can help you to write letters to the trader and where necessary advise on using the courts or other procedures to help you resolve your enquiry.

We will also pass your enquiry to one of our enforcement officers if we feel that a criminal infringement of law has taken place.

In some cases we may be able to resolve your enquiry through discussion with the trader but we will not normally do this unless you have given them an opportunity to resolve the matter first. We will only make contact with the trader where we consider that our intervention will assist in resolving a dispute or where we intend to investigate a criminal offence.

If we have given you advice on pursuing your problem, we will only discuss the matter with the trader with your permission. If we are investigating a possible criminal offence we may need to refer to your enquiry in discussions with the trader. If you do not want us to do this please tell us.

## **There are limitations to what we can do on behalf of a consumer**

We are not able to instruct a business to give you a refund or require them to take action to resolve your problem. We are not able to close a business down and we are not able to provide an opinion on the quality of goods or a trader's quality of service.

### **Criminal investigation**

We record all enquiries we receive and use the information to help us identify the issues of most concern to local residents and businesses. We also use the information to plan projects and to identify businesses which need advice or other attention.

We are not able to investigate all enquiries which contain a likely criminal infringement of the law and will give priority to complaints according to our available resources and internal policy.

If your enquiry results in an investigation into a potential criminal offence we may require a formal statement from you. If we do, you may be required as a witness for the prosecution in court, but we will inform you at the earliest opportunity if this is the case.

If we are not able to investigate your complaint for a criminal infringement, it will not hinder your own civil action to recover any money owed to you by the trader. Our advice officers can help you to prepare and pursue your civil claim.

If the trader involved in your enquiry is based outside of Gloucestershire or our investigations reveal that criminal offences were committed outside of the county, we will pass the details of your enquiry to the trader's local Trading Standards authority.

We will keep you informed as our investigation progresses and at the conclusion of our investigation.