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Citizens Advice Sherwood & Newark gives their top tips to help people across Newark and Sherwood shop safely and securely from home

Since lockdown began in March we have seen an increasing number of clients turn to Citizens Advice Sherwood and Newark for help with consumer related issues. These have covered a range of issues but we have frequently seen clients with problems relating to buying electrical goods and warranties, second hand vehicles and frauds/scams.

As you might expect, due to the restrictions in place since March over half (51%) of people across the country feel more reliant on parcel deliveries. Across the East Midlands Citizens Advice has found that 46% of adults have had an issue with parcel delivery since the country went into lockdown in March.

Despite widespread problems, the charity found that only 35% people across the East Midlands knew their rights if something went wrong.

Jackie Insley Chief Executive of Citizens Advice Sherwood and Newark, said:

“Parcel delivery has been a lockdown lifeline for so many of us this year. It’s helped us turn our homes into makeshift offices; send gifts to those we love and miss; and get hold of essentials and the occasional luxury. As we all turn to shopping online more, it’s important people feel confident that they can shop safely and securely from home.”

As a result, Citizens Advice Sherwood and Newark are working to help clue Newark and Sherwood consumers up on their rights if something goes wrong with a parcel delivery.

1. Check delivery policies - before you place an order find out what the delivery times, costs and returns policies are of the items you have ordered.

2. If you’re out of the house during delivery - Consider asking a neighbour or friend if it can be delivered to their address. But beware, if you do provide details of a safe space or nominated neighbour and something goes wrong it’s not the seller or courier’s responsibility.

3. Online trader or online marketplace? - Make sure you know if you are dealing with a trader or a private seller on an online marketplace as dispute processes may vary. If you have an issue with a trader, a dispute can be raised directly with them, but if it’s a private individual it may be easier to go through a marketplace’s dispute process.

4. Review traders - Check and review if the trader is genuine. It’s always worth taking a look at reviews to gain an insight as to how reliable the company is and how well they deal with missing parcel complaints and refunds.

5. Who to deal with when a parcel goes missing - your purchase and contract is with the seller. If your parcel goes missing you should speak to the trader to deal with the problem, not the courier company.

You can contact Citizens Advice Sherwood & Newark for information and advice:

- **General advice** will be given via our Advice line on 0800 144 88 48 or Textphone: 18001 0800 144 88 84 Monday to Friday 10am to 4pm. Alternatively, you can ring our local office number on 01623 861769 where you may be offered a call back
- People can **chat online** to an advisor by visiting our website www.citizensadvice.org.uk/contact-us.
- To contact us via email use **advice@sn-ca.org.uk**
- You can find help with **Debt & Money Advice** on 01623 869081
- For advice on **Consumer issues** (e.g. issues related to products or services you've purchased) call the Citizens Advice consumer helpline on 0808 223 1133 Textphone: 18001 0808 223 1133 or chat online to an advisor on our website.
- Anyone seeking support to make a new claim for **Universal Credit** should call the Universal Credit Help to Claim line on 0800 1448444. Textphone: 18001 0800 144 8 444 and Web-chat: www.citizensadvice.org.uk/helptoclaim

Notes to editors:

1. Citizens Advice is made up of the national charity Citizens Advice; the network of independent local Citizens Advice charities across England and Wales; the Citizens Advice consumer service; and the Witness Service.
2. Our network of charities offers impartial advice online, over the phone, and in person, for free.
3. Citizens Advice is the largest provider of free, multi-channel debt advice. Providing that help gives Citizens Advice unique insight into the types of debts people struggle with.
4. Contact us on 01623 861769