

1.7 1.8, 1.10 Consumer

The Informed Consumer

- With regard to rights:
 - Is aware of their legal rights
 - Is aware of organisations that protect them
 - Is able to make a complaint
- With regard to responsibilities:
 - Does not buy impulsively
 - Shops around for the best price: [pricespy](#)
 - Prepares a budget and sticks to it
 - Keeps Receipts
 - Keeps the Guarantee
 - Supports local businesses
 - Spends their money in an environmentally friendly way

Consumer Protection

- The government protects consumers through **laws**
- Agencies have been set up to protect consumer rights including the Competition and Consumer Protection Commission, Small Claims Court, Ombudsman

Legal Protection

- Sale of Goods and Supply of Services Act 1980
 - Goods must be of **merchantable quality**
 - Goods should be **fit for their purpose**
 - Goods should be **as described**
 - Goods should **match the sample** (if they are purchased after using a sample)
 - Suppliers of Services should:
 - Have the **necessary skill** to provide the service
 - Provide the service with **proper care and diligence**
 - Ensure that all **materials and parts used are of merchantable quality**

Legal Protection

- Sale of Goods and Supply of Services Act 1980
 - The contract is between the buyer and the seller. It is the **seller's responsibility** to deal with problems with your purchase
 - If goods are bought in a **sale**, they still must be of merchantable quality, fit for their purpose, as described
 - **Illegal shop notices** must **not** be displayed
 - The following are **illegal**
 - No Money Refunded
 - Credit Notes Only
 - No liability accepted for faulty goods
 - Goods will not be exchanged
 - Under the act the consumer is entitled to a **Refund/Replacement/Repair (3Rs)** as forms of **Redress**

Legal Protection

- **Consumer Protection Act 2007**
 - It is an offence for a **supplier to give false or misleading description of goods**
 - It is an offence for a **supplier of services to make false or misleading claims** about the **services** it offers
 - It is an offence to publish an **advertisement** that will mislead the public
 - All the statements about **prices must be accurate**
 - You must not charge extra for items that appear to be included in the price
 - Goods on sale reduced from €99 to €59 must have been on display at €99 in the shop for **28 consecutive days in the previous three months**
 - Displaying a price excluding VAT
 - It is an offence to engage in **aggressive selling practices**
 - Pressurising people to purchase items

Legal Protection

- **EU Legislation** under states that labels should have
 - **Food labels**
 - Name of food
 - List of ingredients in descending order of weight
 - Quantity of units in box
 - Best before date for most foods
 - Storage conditions or conditions of use
 - Name and address of manufacturer
 - Place of origin
 - **Pricing of Food**
 - All foodstuffs must display a selling price
 - Food sold in bulk must display a unit price

Agencies that Protect the Consumer

- [The Competition and Consumer Protection Commission](#)
 - Established to ensure the rights of consumers are protected
 - Makes consumers aware of their rights through media and internet
 - Will prosecute companies breaking consumer law
- [Consumer Association of Ireland](#)
 - Voluntary organisation set up to protect consumer interests
 - Provides information to consumers
 - Publishes a magazine called *Consumer Choice*
- [Small Claims Court](#)
 - If a consumer has a claim against a trader for a faulty good or service up to €2000 it can be made to the SCC.
 - No solicitor is required as case is handled by the court registrar who makes a decision on the case
 - A fee of €15 is made by the claimant to have their case heard
 - Further details [here](#)
- [Ombudsman](#)
 - Assists members of the public if they have a complaint against a public service body like a government department (eg: the Department of Education), a local authority (eg: Wicklow County Council), The HSE etc

Consumer Complaints

- Genuine complaint
 - Where goods are **not** of merchantable quality, fit for purpose, as described, match sample you are entitled to some remedy (redress). **Refund, Replacement, Repair (3Rs)**
- Non-Valid Complaint
 - You change your mind after buying
 - Fault arises out of misuse
 - A fault was pointed out at the time of purchase

Consumer Complaints

- Examples of Complaints

| Complaint | Problem | Redress |
|---|---|---|
| New car battery will not start car | Battery not of merchantable quality | Replacement or refund |
| Stain remover does not remove stain | Stain remover not fit for purpose | Replacement or refund |
| Shoe polish described as black on box but navy when applied | Polish not as described | Replacement |
| Lawnmower breaks down after service | Service not provided by person with necessary skill | Proper service and compensation for inconvenience |
| Car described as never crashed but it was | False description of goods | Refund |

Caveat Emptor

- Latin for "let the buyer beware", caveat emptor is a legal principle that applies to the sale of property.
- It means the responsibility is on the buyer to check the quality and condition of a property before proceeding with its purchase.
- If there are problems with the property after the purchase, the buyer does not have the right to seek redress subsequent to the purchase

False Economy

- Spending your money in such a way as it saves you money in the short run BUT in the long run it ends up costing you more.
- Examples
 - Buying cheap shoes
 - Lying on your insurance proposal form to get a cheaper premium
 - Doing-it-yourself rather than employing a tradesman

Globalisation

- Globalisation is the process by which the **world** is becoming increasingly **interconnected** as a result of massively increased **trade** and **cultural exchange**.
- **Watch**
 - [Globalisation Explained](#)
- **History**
 - The **Globalisation process** began after World War II as countries began to remove **barriers to trade** with each other
 - **What are example of “barriers to trade” that exist within countries?**
 - The advent of the **internet** and **modern transport systems** has further increased the level of globalisation across the planet

Globalisation

- **Growth of Transnational Companies (Multinational Companies)**
 - These are large companies with bases (shops/factories/offices) spread across the globe
 - Ireland is very attractive to these companies due to:
 - Our low corporation tax (tax on business profits)
 - Educated and skilled workforce
 - English speaking country
 - Access to EU market without barriers to trade
 - **Customs Duties do not apply**
 - **No border checks**
 - **No administration barriers**
- **Read**
 - <https://www.irishtimes.com/culture/books/the-dark-side-of-globalisation-1.3516550>

Globalisation

- **Impact of Globalisation of the Consumer**
 - **Benefits**
 - More choice
 - Lower prices (competition)
 - Improved Quality (competition)
 - **Drawbacks**
 - Low prices – but at what cost? (Worker's rights/environmental damage)
 - Difficult to spend money in a way that supports the local economy
 - **Why Shop Locally?**
 - [Ask About Ireland – sustainable shopping](#)
 - [Irish Independ article – support local businesses](#)
 - [Video – Are we better to shop locally?](#)