



WRITTEN MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

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Draft Consumer Rights Bill

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Today the Government is publishing its response to the recent consultations on consumer rights and, alongside this, a draft Consumer Rights Bill with explanatory notes and impact assessments.

UK consumer law is currently unnecessarily complex, ambiguous in places and has not kept up with technological developments. The Government therefore proposes a simple, modern framework of consumer rights, which is set out in the draft Bill. This will help consumers and their advocates understand their rights when things go wrong, with the aim of empowering consumers and promoting growth through competitive markets.

Part 1 of the draft Bill sets out clearly, in simple words and in one place, consumer rights to minimum quality for goods and services, which are currently contained within 8 separate pieces of legislation, and the new category of digital content (such as e-books or software). It also establishes what should happen to rectify matters if those rights are breached.

The proposed reforms will make it easier for consumers to understand and access their key rights, including the:

- Right to clear and honest information before you buy
- Right to get what you pay for
- Right to goods and digital content being fit for purpose and services being performed with reasonable care and skill;
- Right that faults in what you buy will be put right free of charge or a refund or replacement provided.



Part 2 of the draft Bill clarifies which contract terms can or cannot be challenged in court for fairness; and Part 3 consolidates powers of consumer law enforcers (for example, Trading Standards) to investigate breaches of consumer law, which are currently contained in around 60 pieces of legislation.

Part 3 also contains provisions to enable consumer law enforcers to ask the civil courts to require traders to compensate consumers where they have breached consumer law; and to provide faster and lower cost redress for consumers and businesses where there have been breaches of competition law.

Overall, the draft Bill reduces regulatory burdens for business, with the aim of making markets work better. For example, businesses should have fewer and less costly disputes with customers, because rights are clearer. Disruption caused by unplanned enforcement officers' visits should be reduced by the proposed requirement to give reasonable notice to businesses when carrying out routine inspections. It should be easier for businesses and consumers to hold to account those who have breached competition law.

A copy of the Government's response to the consultations on consumer rights and the impact assessments can be viewed here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/draft-consumer-rights-bill>.

A copy of the draft Bill and explanatory notes can also be found on the website.