



Buying Second Hand Cars

Second hand cars are the most complained about sector within the County Council's Trading Standards Service. A large proportion of the complaints received are about used cars becoming faulty after purchase. Whilst any car could suffer from mechanical faults, there are certain things that you can do to protect yourself from being ripped off.

- Who owns the business you're buying from? Don't buy from any trader who won't give you details of who owns the business, the limited company details and a geographical address that you can write to. It's a legal requirement to give this information and those that won't give the details may be hiding something. You could also check the address out via the [Royal Mail website](#) to make sure it's a real address.
- Check the history of the vehicle. Has the mileage been altered? Has it been in an accident? Does it have outstanding finance on it? A reputable car dealer should do these checks before they put the vehicle up for sale and tell you of any issues they have found, but it is worth doing the checks yourself. [Find out about checks you can do yourself](#).
- Ask for any warranties in writing. A business owner does not have to provide a warranty in addition to your normal consumer rights, however a lot of garages will i.e. a 3 months parts and labour guarantee. If a warranty is offered ask for it in writing - it is a legal requirement to provide warranties in writing, so do ask. Check what is covered by the warranty - is it actually of any use? Does it cover the things you think it should?
- Keep copies of all paperwork and the advert that you originally saw. Many consumers struggle to prove what a car trader has claimed about the vehicle during verbal discussions. If the trader mentions anything about the car that you think is important ask them to write it down on headed paper. If they won't put it in writing, question the truth of what you are being told.

If something does go wrong you can phone the [Citizens Advice Consumer Service \(CACS\)](#) on 03454 04 05 06 to get advice on how best to resolve your problem and to report a problem trader.

We would always advise speaking to CACS and the car dealer before you have any repair works carried out as you may lose your right to redress if you act before contacting them. The [County Council website](#) also contains detailed advice on what to do before and after purchasing used cars, whether buying from a dealer or via the internet.

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