

## We want you

### Tax issues

If you've had a problem with tax or the tax office, tell Ian Robinson.

### Card fraud

If you're a victim of credit or debit card fraud, contact Dan Moore.

### Dry cleaners

Have you received a less than sparkling service from a dry cleaner? James Tallack wants to hear from you.



### Cars bought online

If you've bought a car online, contact George Marshall-Thornhill to tell him about your experiences.

### Treatment overseas

Are you planning to have medical treatment abroad or have you had it? Why did you opt

for this, what have been your experiences and what are your questions about treatment abroad? Tell Lucy Hairsine.

### Exploding oven doors

If your oven door has exploded recently, contact Jaclyn Clarabut.

### Legal service success

Has advice from Which? Legal Service helped you pursue a claim? The team would love to hear from you. Email [wls@which.co.uk](mailto:wls@which.co.uk)

Send full contact details to [helpwanted@which.co.uk](mailto:helpwanted@which.co.uk) or Help Wanted, PO Box 44, Hertford X SG14 1SH. Go to [www.which.co.uk/helpwanted](http://www.which.co.uk/helpwanted) for more requests online. (We cannot respond personally to all replies)

Donations from cards this December vary by more than 40 per cent

## Lottery on charity cards

### CHRISTMAS CARDS

This Christmas, you could be donating anything between 4 and 50 per cent when you buy charity cards on the high street – and inconsistent pack information won't help you choose. The major discrepancy in seasonal goodwill was revealed in a survey obtained exclusively by Which?.

This year's findings, by the Charities Advisory Trust, show that Cards Galore, Harrods and Next cards are the most miserly, donating on average less than 10 per cent of the price from all charity packs. John Lewis also has a large proportion of packs with donations of less than 10 per cent, although its own-brand cards donate 25 per cent and it has a card that gives 34.6 per cent.

Overall, the most generous donation is at Waterstone's where 50 per cent goes to Unicef, although that charity, unlike others, funds card production itself. Also high on the list are Clinton Cards, which gives 21 per cent.

These figures came as our own survey revealed that 84 per cent of people feel that more than 40 per cent of a charity-card pack price should be donated.

Our research on the high street also highlighted the different ways of explaining contributions on packs, either showing percentage donations or giving figures in pence per pack. In addition, some show donations including VAT and others with VAT excluded.

The trust believes that if a donation is less than 10 per cent of the price, it shouldn't be called a charity card. 'It's just misleading,' said trust head Hilary Blume.

She added that retailers, and publishers that supply the cards, were not generous enough when agreeing how much charities will receive and that charities fail to use their bargaining position: 'Retailers want charity cards in their shops and charities should demand a greater share of proceeds.'

A spokesman for charity analysts Intelligent Giving said: 'Publishers and retailers should stop squeezing profits from good causes.'

Several charities we spoke to said that the best way to donate is to buy cards at charity shops or directly online. However, they felt that high-street deals are valuable, despite the small donations.

Shelter, for example, told us: 'It's worth doing high-street deals even if it's only a few pence per card – people get their cards on the high street because it's convenient. It's money for nothing for us.'

Read more about charity Christmas cards on p75.



It's hard to tell which charity card donates most

### EXAMPLES OF DONATIONS FROM CARDS

	NUMBER OF CHARITY PACKS	RANGE OF DONATIONS (%)
HARRODS	23	4 - 10
JOHN LEWIS	38	4.4 - 34.6
CARDS GALORE	7	5.3 - 10
NEXT	7	6.3 - 13
BOOTS	5	10
M&S	1	10
PAPERCHASE	9	10 - 20
DEBENHAMS	3	16.5
CLINTON CARDS	4	21
WATERSTONE'S	2	50

Based on one store visit. Latest figures available on 2 November.

### TAKE ACTION!

■ To be sure of donating higher amounts, you can buy cards direct from charities' websites. You can also buy from companies that offer a range of charity cards via their websites. Try Card Aid at [www.cardaid.co.uk](http://www.cardaid.co.uk), which gives an average of 40p to charity, or go to [www.cardsforcharity.co.uk](http://www.cardsforcharity.co.uk) to buy from Cards for Good Causes.

1,060 adults were interviewed in October 2007

**60%**

of Christmas cards were charity cards in 2006

MINTEL

**2%**

of groceries were bought online this year

IGD

**1 in 10**

people say they won't shop in supermarkets in five to ten years

IGD



Shopping trips to stores and online deliver different dates on food

# It's fresher to shop on foot

## SUPERMARKETS

Online grocery shopping might save you from traipsing around a busy supermarket, but you may have to eat your food sooner than if you shop in the store.

Our investigation into the main supermarkets reveals that foodstuffs bought in store have, on average, a longer shelf life than those bought online.

The findings confirm your concerns that foods bought online can be less fresh (see *Which?*, March 2007, p8).

That report found that around only four in ten Asda and Sainsbury's shoppers believed use-by dates on groceries from their most recent online shop were as good as those they would have selected in store. Six in ten Waitrose Deliver and Ocado customers felt the same.

## Shopping trips

To test this, we visited Tesco, Sainsbury's, Asda and Waitrose stores and bought ten items you might shop for on a weekly basis, choosing the freshest, non-organic produce.

We also booked online deliveries of the same items from the same supermarkets and from online grocer Ocado – which delivers Waitrose items – to arrive on the same day as our shop visits.

Our snapshot research in October found that, on average, the store's best-before dates are more than a day later than for the same products bought online. This included plums, carrots, potatoes and salad. In addition, one loaf had a sell-by date eight days later than the same bread bought through the store's online service.

But despite these differences, no supermarket chain performed worse than any other overall.



**One loaf bought online had a sell-by date eight days earlier than in store**

## Member frustrations

The findings will be no surprise for reader Subi Shah from London, who contacted us expressing concern about her website shopping experiences.

Subi said: 'I've had problems with Tesco.com. I've sent things back because they've been on the edge of their shelf life and, on occasion, I've had to use items by the next day.'

'When I last shopped there I received a loaf of bread and a 2.5kg bag of potatoes that I had to use by the next day, while the other items also had a short shelf life.'

For information on buying luxury foods online and shoppers' rights, see p20.

## Our shopping list

Semi-skimmed milk  
Carton of free-range eggs  
Bag of baking potatoes  
Hovis wholemeal loaf  
Bag of salad  
Cheddar cheese  
Two chicken breasts  
Punnet of plums  
Whole cucumber  
Bag of carrots

## Supermarket shoppers' list

**We asked stores how they pick products for their online customers**

■ **Tesco** told us it uses personal shoppers to pick the freshest produce from stores and customers can request minimum best-buy dates.

■ **Sainsbury's** also uses store pickers and said it was committed to providing the freshest produce.

■ **Waitrose** said that its shoppers pick orders

during opening hours, so goods are the same as those that customers can choose in store.

■ **Ocado** works from a warehouse, which, it says, allows it to deliver the freshest products and remove anything with a date deemed to be too short for customers.

■ **Asda** did not respond in time.