



Consumer news

We want you

Opticians

What interests you about opticians? If you've any problems or concerns, or you have questions about opticians or eye health in general, contact Rosie Fletcher.

Property investment

If you've invested in property after attending a property investment course run by companies such as Inside Track, let Teresa Fritz know.

Renting DVDs online

Have you used a DVD rental site? Were you put off because you think you don't watch enough DVDs? Ceri Stanaway wants your views, especially if you use a lesser-known site.



Paying for university

Are you expecting to fund a child through university? How are you planning to pay? Have you already funded a child? Tell Cathy Neal.

Saving on tax

Do you complete a tax return each year? Have you used our free *Tax Saving Guide*? Was it helpful? Do you have unanswered questions? Please contact Ian Robinson.

NHS dentists

Have you had problems finding an NHS dentist? How easy was it to get appointments for check-ups and emergency treatment? Tell Nikki Ratcliff.



Please include full contact details and a daytime phone number

■ helpwanted@which.co.uk or write to Help Wanted, PO Box 44, Hertford X SG14 1SH

Computer giant continues to let down its customers

PC World charges for its faults

COMPUTERS

Computer firm PC World has come under fire again as members continue to get poor service.

Our February article (p81) told you about Alan Martin, who used Which? Legal Service to get a refund on his broken laptop from the company, and *Computing Which?* told members in November about PC World misdiagnosing simple computer faults and charging wildly different prices for repairs.

PC World promised to overhaul its service, but members have contacted us since after being asked to pay for repairs when problems should be fixed free under the Sale of Goods Act.

Ivan Robinson paid £650 for a Compaq laptop from the Wednesbury branch in October. Two months later a keyboard button fell out. He was told his guarantee didn't cover buttons and was quoted £160 plus labour for a repair.

Mark Otterson from Sunderland bought an Advent laptop for £470 from the town's branch at the beginning of November. But



Ivan Robinson was told to pay out £160 for a broken key

just over a month later Mark noticed the screen had cracked. Staff said he was out of warranty as he'd had the laptop for more than 28 days. He was told to pay £160 just to have the laptop picked up and returned.

After Which? contacted PC World it replaced both Ivan's and Mark's laptops. A spokesman told us staff were at fault, adding: 'We are recommunicating replacement of faulty goods policies to staff in all PC World stores to avoid a repeat of this misunderstanding.'

Mark's screen was cracked within a few weeks

TAKE ACTION!

Don't pay for breaks if you don't have to

■ Under the Sale of Goods Act, products should be fit for purpose and of satisfactory quality for a reasonable time. If things go wrong within six months it's presumed the fault existed when sold unless the retailer can prove otherwise.

eBay tackles rogue sellers

ONLINE SHOPPING

Internet auction site eBay has beefed up its security measures.

Now, anyone bidding £100 or more in an auction is anonymous to all except the seller. This follows fraudsters targeting unsuccessful bidders and offering them fake second chances to win. The site has also removed the ability of sellers to hide their feedback, so those

with poor ratings will be revealed.

It is also cracking down on counterfeit goods and will require additional verification for items frequently reported as fake.

And sellers who persistently breach eBay's rules, by charging excessive postage or lying about where their items are based, will also be removed from the site.



eBay's security has improved

PHOTOGRAPHY: JOHN TRENHOLM, NTI; MARK ADAMS, ALAMY

£152

weekly cost for nursery care for a child under two

DAYCARE TRUST

£277

spent a year by each British kid aged 10 to 13 on fizzy drinks and sweets

DATAMONITOR

£768

street value of your teen, including clothes, accessories and cash

CORNHILL DIRECT



Food Standards Agency looks at lightening labelling load for meat manufacturers

Labels may be watered down

FOOD

Shoppers may be confused about what is in meat products they wish to buy if proposed changes to labelling go ahead.

Currently, front labels on products made to look like cuts, slices and joints of meat must state what the meat is as well as added ingredients such as proteins, starches or water used for bulking up.

However, the government's food watchdog – the Food Standards Agency (FSA) – is considering simplifying meat-labelling regulations as part of a wider bid to cut administrative costs for manufacturers. It estimates current requirements cost the UK meat industry £11.2 million a year.

But Which? believes the rules need to be tightened and that labelling should be more prominent. Such regulations are essential if consumers are to make informed choices about meat products.

In a Which? survey last month of 1,000 members of the public, 92 per cent said they wanted to see added ingredients clearly labelled on the front of meat products.



Here today, but will clear labels be gone tomorrow?

Which? Chief Policy Adviser Sue Davies said: 'It is shocking that the FSA, which was set up to put the consumer first, is considering removing such valuable information from meat product labels because it is concerned about the administrative burden on industry.'

'Without this information it will be much

92 per cent of those we surveyed want clear labelling

more difficult for consumers to tell whether the product they are buying is mainly meat or whether they are paying for water and other bulking ingredients.'

The FSA told us all views were being considered and no options had been ruled out so far.

Which? makes plans to sue JJB Sports

RETAIL

Which? is taking on JJB Sports to get money back for fans who paid rip-off prices for their football shirts.

Which? has told the company it plans to sue for damages to pay back people who were overcharged for certain England and Manchester United shirts between April 2000 and August 2001.

In 2003 JJB Sports was one of ten companies fined a share of more than £18 million by the Office of Fair Trading for running a cartel that unlawfully fixed the price of shirts. Now, using new powers under the Enterprise Act that only Which? has in the UK, we are launching action to force JJB to pay compensation to those consumers who bought shirts.

JJB faces action because, of the ten companies, it alone was still contesting the OFT's decision when Which? got its powers in 2005, and because it was refused leave to appeal that decision last month by the House of Lords.

TAKE ACTION!

You may be able to claim if you bought these shirts from the following cartel firms: Allsports; Blacks Leisure Group; England-direct; Manchester United plc; Sports Soccer; JJB and JD Sports. You don't need a receipt. Register at www.which.co.uk/football-shirts



A selection of the shirts which were a rip-off from the cartel