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Our promise

Expert advice when you need it

Which? aims to help you choose the best goods and services – and avoid the worst. We're entirely independent – we take no ads, no freebies and everything we test is paid for at full price. Since

1957 we've informed, influenced and campaigned on behalf of all consumers in the UK.



Best Buys

These are products that achieve high total test scores.

Don't Buys

These are products that have performed extremely poorly in at least one of our key tests or that have achieved very low total test scores.



Exceptional Value

Our coveted award is given on those rare occasions to products that are of both superb quality and outstandingly priced.



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Recycled paper was a star performer in our tests of loft insulation, offering great insulation at a decent price **PAGE 34**



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Still vigilant after all these years

Which? magazine first appeared 49 years ago this month. Our front cover memorably showed two behatted ladies admiring the latest electric kettles – the subjects of our first-ever report.

Many will say that Which? (the magazine and the organisation, born, of course, as Consumers' Association) has achieved its ambitious aims from all those years ago. There are no bad products these days, they argue – it's just that some are better than others.

But even a quick look at this month's magazine shows that our role is as important as ever. Whether it's a motoring giant such as Fiat – now set to recall one of its best-selling cars after we spotted a major design omission – or the numerous one-man electrical firms who make a mint out of overcharging desperate customers, the big and the small know our persistence is unbounded.

But it's not just consumer products that we scrutinise closely. In recent years our pressure on the government to reform pensions to ensure that all consumers have a fair deal in old age has been very effective. And we continue to lead the fight for consistent, clear food labelling as one of the weapons against obesity. As ever, we have some influential opponents – but we will not be deterred.

During the next 12 months we'll be celebrating with you the successes we've achieved on your behalf over the past 50 years. Watch out for the highs and lows of consumerism in the UK – you'll be amazed at what we've tested in the past half century.

But some things don't change. You'll be delighted to know that our main aim is still to get the best deal for all consumers – whether it's a 25p saving on an everyday item or a shake-up of the way legal services are regulated.

We're proud that we offer independent advice you can trust. It's been our trademark since 1957 – and will remain so.

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THIS ISSUE IN NUMBERS

1 million

The number of readings we took to measure the performance of solar panels on sunny and overcast days. Find out which brands shone on p36.

6,336

The number of metres of carpet vacuumed for our test of 22 cylinder and upright vacuum cleaners. To see which collected the best ratings, turn to p41.

129,600

The number of measurements taken from each of our 32 fridges in just one of our tests for temperature stability. We bring you the results on p67.