



News Release 14.2.18

Trading Standards publish new fair trading guide for secondhand car dealers in Scotland

Scottish local authority Trading Standards services have today (14th February) released new guidance for secondhand car dealers, aimed at ensuring a high level of understanding of consumer protection law by Scotland's motor trade.

The guidance, published by The Society of Chief Officers of Trading Standards in Scotland (SCOTSS) is intended to help second-hand car dealers comply with a number of important pieces of consumer protection law, such as the Consumer Protection from Unfair Trading Regulations 2008 and the Consumer Rights Act 2015.

Secondhand car sales is still one of the biggest areas of consumer complaint across the UK, and usually involves the biggest purchase a consumer will make next to their home.

In April 2016, Citizens Advice Scotland reported that 'Used car purchased from an independent dealer' was almost universally the number one issue reported in each Scottish local authority area.

Chair of SCOTSS, Peter Adamson, said:

"Secondhand car sales is still a significant area of consumer detriment in Scotland, and complaint numbers are still high, partly due to the complexity and nature of the product, and partly due to the complexity of the law.

We are publishing this comprehensive guide to the law to help car dealers in Scotland comply with the law and improve the level of service they give to their customers"

Mr Adamson added:

"We have consulted widely on the content of this guidance, with trade and consumer bodies, and we hope it will make a significant difference to general understanding of the law. We are pleased to work with the SMTA in launching the guide and highlighting it through their member network.

Any consumers who encounter problems with car purchases, or indeed any other types of products, can gain advice through the Citizens Advice Consumer Service Helpline on 03454 040506, online at www.citizensadvice.org.uk/scotland/consumer or from their local council trading standards service⁶"

Sandy Burgess Chief Executive of the Scottish Motor Trade Association (SMTA) commented

“This document is a welcome addition to the level of guidance and advice available to our members and the wider industry of professionals who are engaged in the retailing of used vehicles across Scotland. By adhering to the detailed advice given, our membership can expect to maximize their exposure to the motoring consumers seeking to buy their next vehicle”.

He added “we are delighted to have been involved in the creation of these guidelines which will serve our membership and the consumer well for years to come”.

Sheila Scobie, CMA representative in Scotland said:

“The CMA welcomes this initiative by SCOTSS. Purchasing a second-hand item always feels more risky, and it is important that customers know that their consumer rights are being protected. The guidance provides car dealers with the information they need to enable them to treat customers fairly and to know when they might be breaking the law.”

Notes for editors:

- 1. The Society of Chief Officers of Trading Standards in Scotland (SCOTSS), is a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SC047951). Our members are professional trading standards managers representing every Scottish local authority trading standards service.*
- 2. SCOTSS liaises with local council colleagues across the UK, and engages with government and others around the operation of the consumer protection landscape. We aim to educate, coordinate, and support good practice.*
- 3. This guide is based in part on an original guide issued by the Office of Fair Trading OFT1241 in 2010.*
- 4. The primary trade association for motor dealers in Scotland is the Scottish Motor Trade Association, Palmerston House, 10 The Loan, South Queensferry with over 1,150 member sites across Scotland and the Islands.*
- 5. The CMA is the UK’s Competition and Markets Authority, which works to promote competition for the benefit of consumers. Its aim is to make markets work well for consumers, businesses and the economy.*
- 6. You can find your local council trading standards service by postcode here:
<https://www.tradingstandards.uk/consumers/support-advice>*
- 7. The guide is available for download at www.scotss.org/cars/SCOTSScarsalesguide.pdf*

SCOTSS spokespeople are available for interview, please contact

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