

A Quick Guide: your rights when buying on the doorstep or in the home

Doorstep selling is when a salesperson sells you goods or services in your home or on your doorstep. This Quick Guide explains people's rights when they agree to spend more than £35 with a trader in their home or on their doorstep. These rights apply even if you invite someone into your home.

Sometimes salespeople apply pressure selling which is illegal. For advice on buying safely and wisely on the doorstep see our Ten Top Tips.

Written cancellation notice

By law the trader must give you a written cancellation notice at the time you buy, telling you about your right to cancel (even if there is no written contract). If you don't get a cancellation notice, there's no binding contract between you and the trader and you don't have to go through with the sale.

Seven day cooling off period

You usually have a cooling-off period of seven days to change your mind and cancel.

The cooling-off period starts on the day you get the cancellation notice. If you cancel within the seven days you won't owe anything and you should get back any money you have already paid (including a deposit).

Starting work or delivering goods within the cooling-off period

If you are buying services or certain types of goods (e.g. customised goods) you can agree in writing for work to start or goods to be delivered during the cooling-off period. If you have agreed this in writing then you can still cancel within seven days, but you may have to pay the trader something (usually a reasonable amount).

Deciding to cancel

If you do decide to cancel the contract you must let the trader know in writing within seven days of receiving the cancellation notice. When cancelling, keep a copy of your letter or email as proof of cancellation. If you send your letter by post, get proof of postage as well. If you receive goods during the cooling-off period and you didn't agree to this in writing, you don't have to pay anything if you cancel. Keep the goods safe and ask the trader to collect them. The trader should not insist that you pay any money.

