

Vinted fact sheet for consumers – City of London Trading Standards

Vinted is an online marketplace for buying and selling second-hand items, mainly clothing and accessories.

Due to the association of Vinted with an address in the City of London, the City of London Trading Standards has been monitoring complaints which have been made to the Citizens Advice Consumer Service. We are also aware of information and complaints about Vinted that is posted on open-source review sites.

The main categories of complaints that Trading Standards has seen, mainly from buyers, include:

- faulty/damaged goods
- fake goods
- that buyers of misdescribed/unsatisfactory/fake goods have to pay for the return to the seller
- the “2-day rule” to raise a problem is too short
- “buyer protection” not what customers expect
- delivery problems

When buying goods from the Vinted platform, you are most probably dealing with a contract between two consumers. In this case, the law says that the goods only need to be “as described”.

It is free of charge to sell an item on the Vinted platform. Anyone purchasing goods from the platform must pay what Vinted call a “Buyer Protection Fee”. The use of the term “Buyer Protection Fee” is likely to reassure purchasers that they will be protected if anything goes wrong with a transaction. However, the experience of Trading Standards, based on complaints that we have seen, is that there is no real buyer protection. For example, if a buyer receives goods that are significantly not as described, it is the responsibility of the buyer to pay to return the goods. This is not “buyer protection” in the view of Trading Standards and this is, potentially, a misleading term. This is our view and only the Courts can interpret such wording with any authority.

Another problem identified by Trading Standards is in relation to the “two-day rule” associated with buyer protection. Vinted make it a clear condition that unless a buyer raises a problem within two days, Vinted will complete the order, release payment to the seller and not deal with any legitimate complaints at a later date. Trading Standards feel that this is unfair, being far too short a time for a buyer to become aware of any problems.

Trading Standards have previously met with Vinted and raised our main concerns regarding the issues identified above. However, Vinted will not be making any significant changes to the platform or their policies.

If you have a complaint about a Vinted purchase, be aware that Vinted are not committed to any alternative dispute resolution schemes. Trading Standards suggest you follow this process:

- 1 - follow the complaints process via the Vinted app
- 2 - if no satisfaction, send an email to legal@vinted.co.uk
- 3 - if you paid with a debit card or with a credit card, Trading Standards suggest that you raise a disputed transaction with your bank or credit card provider. You can find advice on how to do this on the Which? website - see links below.

<https://www.which.co.uk/consumer-rights/advice/can-i-claim-on-my-credit-card-when-something-goes-wrong-amrSG5y3xh7b>

<https://www.which.co.uk/consumer-rights/advice/how-do-i-use-chargeback-abZ2d4z3nT8q>

If, after considering your complaint, the bank refuse to raise a chargeback, you can then complain to the Financial Services Ombudsman on the basis that the bank has not done enough to help you. This is free of charge.

<https://www.financial-ombudsman.org.uk/businesses/complaints-deal/consumer-credit/goods-services-bought-credit>

City of London Trading Standards think that Vinted have a responsibility for transactions – they take payment for goods from purchasers and then send that money to sellers and also collect the compulsory “buyer protection fee” from buyers. If you have paid for buyer protection and think it is a misdescription, then make this clear in your complaint to your bank or credit card provider.

In any civil law dispute, it is always possible to take the matter to the UK courts, in this case the County Court. You will need to establish the name and address of the seller of the goods and the only way you can get this is by asking Vinted - so make a formal request to them. A claim can be initiated by completing a form and paying a fee. This link will assist you to understand the process <https://www.gov.uk/make-court-claim-for-money> If your claim is contested, the process can be long and even if you win the case, you may then experience difficulties in being paid what you are owed. The reality, particularly for small amounts of money, is that it may not be worth pursuing a claim but there is a process.

In the case of a dispute with Vinted themselves in the UK, perhaps where you feel misled by the “buyer protection” claims, the correct legal entity to take a civil law claim against is Vinted Platform Limited which has a registered office address of 5 New Street Square, London EC4A 3TW.

Some complaints are received from sellers of goods, for example, where a buyer falsely claims that goods received are not as described. In these cases, the seller should follow steps 1 and 2 above but if this doesn't resolve the situation then the only option for the seller might be to take a case to the County Court against the buyer. This will not be easy, particularly if the buyer is outside the UK, and it may not be worthwhile.

If you have not already done so, you can contact the Citizens Advice Consumer Service who can advise you further (they will also update Trading Standards with any developments you report)

<https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/about-us/information/contact-the-consumer-service/>

City of London Trading Standards Service

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