

## **Updates from Citizens Advice Swale**

### **February 2026**

Are you concerned that something you've bought might be fake? How can you be sure and what are your rights? Counterfeit goods aren't only illegal, they can be dangerous, so you'd be right to seek advice.

Counterfeit goods are fake products designed to mimic the authentic ones sold by genuine brands. Sometimes it's easy to spot a knock-off, other times it can be harder to tell. Toys, games, clothing, footwear, e-cigarettes, perfumes and media devices can be counterfeit.

Things to watch out for include strangely low prices from well-known brands and signs of poor quality like missing security seals, bad or non-existent packaging, blurry logos and poor stitching. You may also spot some spelling mistakes in the advert or on the packaging.

Looking at photos from official sellers can help when making comparisons, and it's important to only buy products from reputable sellers.

If you have purchased a counterfeit item, there are some steps you can take to try and get your money back. You're legally entitled to a full refund on fake goods within 30 days of your purchase.

If it's been over 30 days since you paid, but less than six months, the seller can provide you with a real version of the item first. If they can't, then they're legally required to give you a full refund. If you paid more than six months ago, you're only entitled to a part-refund based on how much you've used the item and how long you've had it.

Sometimes sellers might refuse to refund you, and argue the items were obviously fake because they were very cheap, but they're breaking the law by selling them and your legal rights still apply.

If this happens and you paid by debit card, contact your bank and ask to use the 'chargeback scheme'. If you paid by credit card and the item cost less than £100, you can ask to use the same scheme.

If you paid by credit card and the item cost between £100 and £30,000, tell your credit card company you want to make a 'section 75' claim to get your money back.

To report counterfeit goods or get help getting your money back, contact the Citizens Advice Consumer Helpline on 0808 223 1133. You can also report a seller to Trading Standards, which investigates criminal activity.

## **How can we help you?**

### **Drop-in sessions (no appointment necessary):**

#### **Sittingbourne**

Mondays 10am-12pm - Swale House

Tuesdays 11.30am-1.30pm - Murston Family Hub

#### **Sheppey**

Tuesdays 10am-12pm - Sheppey Gateway (except the second Tuesday of every month, which is held at Sheerness East Working Mens Club)

#### **Faversham**

Wednesdays & Fridays 10am-12pm - 43 Stone Street, Faversham

Thursdays 10am-12pm - West Faversham Community Centre

**Telephone advice:** Call Adviceline on freephone 0808 278 7979 (Monday-Friday 10am-3.30pm)

**Email advice:** Contact us online at [www.citizensadviceswale.uk/email-general-advice](http://www.citizensadviceswale.uk/email-general-advice)

**Specialist debt advice:** Request a call back at [www.citizensadviceswale.uk/debt](http://www.citizensadviceswale.uk/debt)

To stay up to date with our opening times, please visit [www.citizensadviceswale.uk](http://www.citizensadviceswale.uk) or follow us on Facebook.