



Stay switched on this Christmas...

Looking forward to sitting in front of the telly with a box of chocolates over the holidays? Not looking forward to the arguments over the remote control? Many of us take the chance to change or upgrade our TV services at this time of year, either to get a better choice of channels or to add other TVs in the house to our existing deal. However, the terms of TV packages are not always clear to consumers; see below for more.

Our consumer query this week comes a person who wants to buy vouchers from a well-known chain store in Dublin for relatives in Belfast. She wants to check if the Belfast store is automatically obliged to accept them. See answer below.

If you have had a problem with a purchase of goods or services from another EU country, please contact us on 01 8090600 or at info@eccireland.ie. For information on your consumer rights when buying something in another European country, see www.eccireland.ie.

Rosaleen Quinlan

Editor

1. Watch your TV contracts....

Many providers of TV services in Ireland offer 'quick, hassle-free' ways to sign for new or additional services. While these packages can offer good deals, you need to be aware of what you are signing up to:

- Do not sign up to contracts over the phone; you should first request written confirmation of any offer, and give yourself time to consider what level of package you really need.
- If there is a problem with your service, report it immediately. You should not be charged for days when you don't receive any service, but only if you have promptly reported the issue.

- Contacts are generally for a minimum of 12 months. If you cancel your subscription before 12 months have passed, you will have to pay for the remainder of the year.
- If you have an existing service, and want to avail of further offers e.g. service in additional rooms, you should be aware that you may be entering into a new, additional 12 month contract. Promotional prices may not be available to existing customers. Always check the Terms and Conditions.
- If you do decide to cancel your package, do it in writing (even if the provider says that this is not necessary) and keep a copy of the letter sent.

2. I am buying vouchers for large UK chain for all of my family. I've been told that any store has to accept a voucher bought in another store. I'll be buying the vouchers in Dublin, and they will be used in Belfast- should there be a problem?

You need to check the terms of vouchers carefully before you purchase them as gifts. Most stores, even if they look identical, are stand-alone companies. Essentially you are 'making a contract' with the Dublin store; you need to check which other stores, if any, the voucher can be used in. In many cases, vouchers will be honoured in ROI only. However, other stores may accept such vouchers as part of their customer service policy, but you do need to check first. You also need to check the expiry date of the voucher.

The European Consumer Centre is funded by the European Commission and the National Consumer Agency.

Disclaimer: Whilst every effort is made to ensure accuracy, the European Consumer Centre cannot be held responsible for matters arising from any errors or omissions contained in this publication. The information provided is intended as a guide only and not as a legal interpretation.