



OUR TRADING STANDARDS TEAM AT ESSEX COUNTY COUNCIL RECEIVE THOUSANDS OF CALLS EACH YEAR FROM CONSUMERS CONCERNED ABOUT A SECOND-HAND CAR THEY HAVE PURCHASED.

DON'T BE TAKEN FOR A RIDE!

This is our checklist to help guide you through buying a second-hand car.

- 1.** Look at car adverts in your local paper and online to research the make & model which will best suit your needs.
- 2.** Look online to check car value guide prices & work out if you can afford the insurance & tax.
- 3.** View the car in daylight (so you can clearly see dents and scratches)
- 4.** Inspect the vehicle, looking for rust & corrosion or faulty & unsafe tyres. Ideally carry this out with a family member or friend who has more experience with buying a car.
- 5.** Consider who you are purchasing the vehicle from. Buying from a dealer may be more expensive, but you will have more rights than if you purchase from a private individual or at auction.
- 6.** Take the vehicle for a test drive.
- 7.** Ask to look at the vehicle alone without the pressure of a trader or seller distracting you from being able to fully examine the vehicle
- 8.** Check the details on all relevant paperwork to ensure they relate to the vehicle you are viewing. Does the V5c form have the same number as the chassis number or VIN (vehicle identification number)?
- 9.** Check the service history. Is the service record up to date?
- 10.** Check to see if the car has a valid tax disc. Is it the correct one for the car?
- 11.** Check the mileage. Is it high or low? (An average is 10000 – 12000 miles a year) Is the mileage on the car the same as on the MOT and service records? Does the condition of the car reflect the mileage? Check www.direct.gov.uk to ensure the mileage of the vehicle is accurate & to check any faults found at MOT or advisory notes made?
- 12.** Check on the HPI or Experian sites (this is chargeable) to ensure that the vehicle has not been stolen, involved in a serious accident & written off or has outstanding finance?
- 13.** Make sure any warranty or payment protection meets your needs & you understand any exclusions.
- 14.** Make sure you fully understand the conditions of the sale. Have you read the contract carefully before you sign?
- 15.** Ask for a receipt with the seller's name and address on it.

Buy with Confidence

Essex County Council Trading Standards always encourages the use of Buy with Confidence businesses that have been audited and approved by Trading Standards. Call **08454 040506** for those nearest to your postcode or go to www.buywithconfidence.gov.uk

This is our guide of the main points and not an exhaustive list. Please ensure you take all possible steps to protect yourself when buying a second-hand car. For advice from Essex County Council Trading Standards please call **08454 040506**.



Essex County Council