Which Shorts - How to deal with delivery disasters this Christmas

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[00:00:09] **James Rowe:** Hello and welcome to Which? Shorts, I'm James Rowe. Each week on the podcast we give you a taste of one of the Which? Magazines, and bring to life a piece that was written by one of our brilliant writers. This week we're looking at the reality of getting a parcel delivered when you've been shopping online.

[00:00:31] **James Rowe:** In the December edition of The Which? Magazine, Hannah Downes looked into what our members experiences were with delivery companies, with some complaining that their orders were left in puddles, in bins, or delivered to the wrong address entirely. Here's her piece, adapted for the podcast, read by Hannah herself.

[00:00:49] **Hannah Downes:** Are you ordering Christmas shopping online this year? You might want to get it done early, after our research revealed the dismal experiences some people face with deliveries.

[00:01:01] **Hannah Downes:** We found that many shoppers pin the blame for problems on the delivery firm, rather than the shop. In fact, one in four people abandoned their online baskets in the past year, After seeing which courier a retailer used. One shopper told us, I will avoid any retailer that uses Every or Yodel. Others said they ordered elsewhere in a bid to avoid Amazon, DHL, DPD, FedEx, Royal Mail or UPS.

[00:01:25] **Hannah Downes:** One in four people had a problem with at least one order in the past year. Parcels that were late or handed to someone else, even when the recipient was at home, were among the biggest issues. One in four people who'd had a problem said their parcel either went to the wrong address or was left outside or stolen.

[00:01:41] **Hannah Downes:** One person said the parcel took five months to be delivered with very poor customer service. Another told us I was at home waiting for the parcel, but every didn't knock. They put it instantly in my shed. Others found their parcels left in puddles bins, or with neighbors living down different streets.

[00:01:58] **Hannah Downes:** Another gripe was with how well couriers kept. People informed about when parcels would arrive. I ordered a guitar with next day delivery, one shopper told us. The app kept stating it was out for delivery, only for the parcel to go back to the depot. This went on every day for three weeks before it was delivered.

[00:02:14] **Hannah Downes:** Trying to resolve issues with failed deliveries can be another headache. One in five people who faced an issue had to wait between 8 and 14 days to have it resolved. For 1 in 10, it was never sorted. One participant was left out of pocket after Yodel delivered their 350 pushchair to the wrong address.

[00:02:32] **Hannah Downes:** And there was confusion too about who to complain to. 1 in 3 people who contacted the retailer said they were told to contact the courier, despite it being the retailer's responsibility in law to rectify any issues with deliveries.

[00:02:48] **Hannah Downes:** It can be particularly infuriating to deal with a delivery disaster during the busy festive shopping period, so it's worth placing your orders in good time to account for late parcels or poor customer service. If you do need to complain, be sure to contact the retailer, not the courier. Under the Consumer Rights Act, the retailer is responsible for delivering your order safely.

[00:03:08] **Hannah Downes:** It must deliver your parcel without undue delay and within 30 days of when you buy the goods. If you're tired of waiting for an order, you have rights under the Consumer Contracts Regulations to cancel and get a full refund. You can do so from the moment you place the order until 14 days from the day you receive your goods.

[00:03:25] **Hannah Downes:** Or perhaps you paid more for next day delivery, but it arrived days later. If so, you can claim back the extra delivery cost you spent on top of standard shipping. Similarly, if you made clear to the retailer that you needed the order by Christmas, and it's late, you can treat the contract as ended and claim your money back.

[00:03:42] **Hannah Downes:** If your parcel was left with a neighbour who denies having it, or if it vanishes from your doorstep, your rights will depend on whether you gave permission for your order to be left there. If you gave specific delivery instructions for a parcel to be left with a neighbour or in a safe place, the retailer isn't responsible if something goes wrong.

[00:03:59] **Hannah Downes:** If you didn't leave instructions, the retailer is legally bound to refund or replace your parcel. For orders that arrive damaged or faulty, you're entitled to a refund, repair or replacement. Tampered with parcels have become more common recently, especially with high value orders. If you get a parcel that seems to have been opened, take photos of it from every angle before checking what's inside.

[00:04:20] **Hannah Downes:** If your order isn't in there, ask for a refund or replacement. If you struggle to get an issue resolved, we can help you start a claim. Head to our website to use our free tool. The link is in the show notes. But it's not just deliveries that can cause problems. Returns can be just as tricky. A colleague of mine needed school trainers for their daughter and ordered a pair at Sports Direct, a store they've shopped in before but never online.

[00:04:42] **Hannah Downes:** When the shoes arrived, they were too small. She thought it would have been simple to return them to store, but unfortunately, not. The returns policy stated that you can't return items ordered on sportsdirect. com to a bricks and mortar Sports Direct store. To add salt to the wound, they didn't offer free returns either.

[00:04:59] **Hannah Downes:** She had to fork out 4. 99 postage, ironically, sending the package from a post office across the street from the Sports Direct shop itself. The firm also didn't return the initial 4. 99 standard delivery charge, despite this being a statutory right. By the end of the experience, she was 9. 98 out of pocket on trainers that only cost 28.

[00:05:20] **Hannah Downes:** Sports Direct declined to comment. Before you place an online order, it's always worth checking the T's and C's. Especially the returns policy, so you know your rights if you change your mind.

[00:05:40] **James Rowe:** Hannah Downs was reading her own piece originally published in the December edition of The Which? Magazine. To read it in full then be should become a Which? Member. If you do it right now you'll save 50 percent off the usual price. I'll put a link in the show notes for you to find out more. You'll also find a link below for our free tool that will help you start a claim if you need to get a delivery issue resolved.

[00:06:02] **James Rowe:** We'll be back next week for another episode of Wytch Shorts, but in the meantime, do check out our other weekly podcasts from us here at Wytch. We've got the Money Podcast, where we give you a dose of financial advice every Friday, and Get Answers, where we explore everyday consumer problems. Just search Wytch Money and Wytch Get Answers wherever you're listening.

[00:06:20] **James Rowe:** Wytch Shorts was produced and edited by me, James Rowe, while the exec producer was Samara Mackereth.