



# Consumer & Public Interest Network (CPIN)

You might not realize it, but standards affect you and your family every day. The mobile phone you use, the car you drive, your washing machine, the packaging around your food and the toys your children or grandchildren play with are all made to specific 'standards'. The CPIN exists to speak up for consumers and to make sure that new standards address key consumer issues and tackle everyday problems faced by ordinary people.



Standards can help to make products and services:

**Safer**

for example, by setting minimum standards for products such as toys, fire safety and electrical appliances, which can reduce accidents and save lives.



**Better quality**

for example, by giving guidance to companies about how to provide better customer service, produce clearer bills or handle complaints effectively.

**Easier to use**

for example, by ensuring that products and services are accessible to all consumers, including older and disabled people.

**What is a 'standard'?**

A standard is a document that sets guidelines and good practice for organizations to follow. In the UK, national standards are published by BSI Standards Ltd under licence from the British Standards Institution, which owns the copyright in the standard. European standards are published by CEN and CENELEC and international standards are published by ISO and IEC. Because it's not compulsory for organizations to sign up to a standard, you can feel confident that those that do choose to comply with standards believe in excellence and take things like safety, accessibility, sustainability and customer service seriously.

**Who writes standards?**

BSI Standards Ltd publishes standards, but they are written by committees of people with knowledge of the relevant topic (known as stakeholders) who have to agree on the content. For example, a committee might include industry experts, academics, manufacturers and retailers. But, for many products and services, it is important that the people who use products and services – consumers – are involved in creating standards too. This is where the CPI Network comes in.

## 60 years of representing consumers

Ordinary consumers have been taking an active part in standards since 1951. More than 60 years later, consumer representation in standards is still going strong in the form of the BSI CPI Network. The CPIN is made up of members of the public, who have relevant experience and are then trained as CPI Representatives or CPI Coordinators, and other experts from organizations such as Which?, Citizens Advice and Trading Standards. An important part of the CPI Network is the Disabled Expert Reference Group (DERG), whose members have first-hand knowledge and experience of accessibility issues.

The CPIN priority areas are:

**Inclusivity** – making sure that all consumers are treated fairly – including children, older people, disabled people and anyone else who might be vulnerable (e.g. due to illness or financial difficulty)

**Wellbeing** – safety and health

**Security, privacy & identity** – keeping personal and financial details safe

**Sustainability** – society, energy and environment

**Services standardization** – improving quality and choice in service markets

## What does a CPI Rep do?

CPI Reps are allocated by the CPI Unit to committees whose subjects are relevant to consumers, to make sure that the consumer viewpoint is included. As well as working on BSI committees, CPI Reps engage with other consumer and public interest organizations around the world (such as ANEC in Europe and ISO COPOLCO internationally) to voice wider concerns and help to develop European and international standards. Reps can also make suggestions for new standards that might benefit consumers. You can do this, too at: [standardsproposals.bsigroup.com](https://standardsproposals.bsigroup.com)



## Choosing organizations that use British Standards helps consumers

An organization that uses standards is showing people that:

- its products or services have been developed with all users (including consumers) in mind;
- it is concerned about its customers (both business and consumers) and understands the value of getting things right;
- it is willing to listen to the opinions of people outside its organization (including consumer and public interest representatives) about the way its products are made, or its services are delivered.

So look out for organizations that display the BSI Kitemark logo. Or they might advertise on their websites, products or company literature that they conform to particular standards (written as 'BS XXXX'). Ask if an organization conforms to standards the next time you buy something - they want to please their customers and the more organizations realize that standards are important to consumers, the more they will want to sign up to them, because standards improve safety, enhance quality and give better protection to consumers time and time again.

Contact us to  
find out how BSI  
helps to make  
excellence a habit.

## Get involved

### Have your say

We welcome comments and suggestions from members of the public. Do you have any bright ideas for new standards that could improve life for consumers, or concerns about existing standards? If so, share your thoughts with us at:

**[standardsproposals.bsigroup.com](https://standardsproposals.bsigroup.com)**

Members of the public can comment on draft standards before they are finally agreed and published, by going to the Draft Review page on the BSI website: **[drafts.bsigroup.com](https://drafts.bsigroup.com)**

### Become a CPI Rep

We welcome people of all ages and backgrounds. If you are interested in becoming a CPI Rep, or want to find out about the other ways you can get involved with standards, you can find out more from the BSI website at: **[bsigroup.com/getinvolved](https://bsigroup.com/getinvolved)** or email us at: **[consumer@bsigroup.com](mailto:consumer@bsigroup.com)**

### The CPIU

The CPI Unit manages the CPI Network from the BSI headquarters in Chiswick, London. The Unit engages in strategic discussions and consultations. It also recruits, trains and supports CPI Reps, holds events and publishes useful information for consumers. You can read consumer leaflets that explain some of the most important standards for consumers at: **[bsigroup.com/ConsumerStandards](https://bsigroup.com/ConsumerStandards)**

### Where to find us:

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