

Dear Sir/Madam

We all know how expensive it is to bring up children, and charity shops help parents save money by providing access to good quality second-hand items, in addition to raising valuable funds for good causes. But, one item you should never take a gamble on selling is a second-hand child's car seat.

What's the danger?

It's impossible to know for certain if a used car seat has been in a collision and relying on a donor's word is too much of a risk to take. If a car seat has been involved in a crash there may be little or no visible damage to it, but there could well be substantial internal damage, rendering it dangerous. Missing instruction booklets in second-hand car seats could lead to them being fitted incorrectly, again rendering them dangerous.

How can you tell if it's safe?

With second hand car seats you can't. Just looking at a car seat won't tell you what you need to know. In fact the only way of checking a used car seats integrity is through laboratory testing. The fact that many seats 'look' OK after an incident leads some parents to continue using their car seats after a crash, unwittingly putting their children at risk. The Royal Society for Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA) advises that car crashes can weaken a child car seat to the extent that a child is left dangerously unprotected in the event of another incident. They advise parents to replace their children's car seats immediately after a crash.

How can you help keep children safe?

Please do not sell second-hand child car seats through your charity outlet, the consequences of a seat failing, even in a relatively low speed impact, are simply not worth taking.

Yours faithfully/sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. Collins'.

Councillor Melvin Collins
London Road Safety Council Representative
London Borough of Hounslow