What is a Cookie?

Most websites you visit will use cookies in order to improve your user experience by enabling that website to "remember" you, either for the duration of your visit (using a "session cookie") or for repeated visits (using a "persistent cookie").

Cookies do lots of different jobs, like letting you navigate between pages efficiently, storing your preferences, and generally improving your experience of a website. Cookies make the interaction between you and the website faster and easier. If a website doesn't use cookies, it will think you are a new visitor every time you move to a new page on the site – for example, when you enter your login details and move to another page it won't recognise you and it won't be able to keep you logged in.

Some websites will also use cookies to enable them to target their advertising or marketing messages based for example, on your location and/or browsing habits.

What is in a cookie?

A cookie is a simple text file that is stored on your computer or mobile device by a website's server and only that server will be able to retrieve or read the contents of that cookie. Each cookie is unique to your web browser. It will contain some anonymous information such as a unique identifier and the site name and some digits and numbers. It allows a website to remember things like your preferences or what's in your shopping basket.

What to do if you don't want cookies to be set

Some people find the idea of a website storing information on their computer or mobile device a bit intrusive, particularly when this information is stored and used by a third party without them knowing. Although this is generally quite harmless you may not, for example, want to see advertising that has been targeted to your interests. If you prefer, it is possible to block some or all cookies, or even to delete cookies that have already been set; but you need to be aware that you might lose some functions of the website.

How to disable cookies or other types of tracking technology

Any user can change their browser settings in order to stop storing cookies. You can accept or decline the use of cookies using an integrated browser feature. For further information on cookie settings, go to the following links:

For Internet Explorer, click here
For Mozilla Firefox, click here
For Google Chrome, click here
For Safari, click here

If you use another browser, we recommend that you consult the different cookie management options for this browser.