

VOLUNTEER JOB DESCRIPTION

Consumer Network

The Scottish Consumer Council (SCC) works to represent consumer interests to policy makers, regulators and suppliers, by researching the experiences of consumers and identifying ways in which the provision of goods and services can be improved for all consumers, particularly those who face disadvantage.

The term '*consumer*' is often used to mean '*shopper*', but in our work a consumer means anyone who buys or uses all kinds of services, therefore hospital patients, bus and rail passengers, benefit claimants, and children receiving an education are as much consumers as shoppers are.

The Consumer Network is a group of volunteers who help keep SCC informed about the issues that affect ordinary consumers in their day to day lives. We aim to have around 100 individual members, and we also have several member groups. We are particularly interested in groups or individuals who have experienced disadvantage or discrimination.

Network activities

We ask volunteers to send us information about any issue that affects them or their local community. For example, they may be concerned about lack of access to basic foods at a reasonable price, or the level of service provided by a bus company or their local council. Information from the volunteers is circulated to the Policy Managers within SCC keeping them up to date on issues affecting different communities and different sections of these communities throughout Scotland.

We also ask volunteers to take part in research projects 2-3 times a year. Sometimes this can take the form of investigating local services or facilities (a '*mystery shopping*' exercise) or very often it simply means completing a questionnaire and giving us their own views and experiences on a particular topic.

Once a year we have a meeting of Network members, and we produce a newsletter for members 3-4 times a year to keep them up to date on Network activities.

Person specification

There is no such thing as a 'typical' volunteer. The strength of the Network lies in its diversity. We want to ensure that members of the Network are drawn from all walks of life, and different geographical areas, with a wide range of consumer experiences. The 'ideal' Network member is one who **gives us information**, who **takes part in surveys**, in short - one who **participates**. The time commitment is small, perhaps an hour or so every couple of months. There are no formal qualifications required and no barriers to eligibility: -

- ? You **don't** have to be an expert on consumer matters - you **do** have to have an interest in local and national consumer affairs
- ? You **don't** have to be opinionated - you **do** have to have opinion
- ? You **don't** have to be fit and active - you **do** have to have an active open mind
- ? You **don't** have to be well educated and highly articulate - you **do** have to want to communicate with us and keep us informed!

We prefer that members of groups give us their individual opinions, rather than a 'collective' response from the whole group, as this gives us a wider a range of views. Volunteers, individual or group members, can communicate by whatever method suits them best – by information form, telephone, e-mail etc.

Any expenses, such as telephone calls or travel costs, incurred in the course of Network activities, will be reimbursed so volunteers will not be out of pocket.

Any queries? Please 'phone the Co-ordinator on **0141 227 6462**,

or e-mail gmacgregor@scotconsumer.org.uk

or write to the Consumer Network Co-ordinator, Scottish Consumer Council, Royal Exchange House, 100 Queen Street, Glasgow G1 3DN.

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