

News Release

Small Claims Bigger in Scotland from Today

Strictly embargoed until 00.01 hours on Monday 14th January 2008

The limit on the value of awards that people in Scotland can receive through the Small Claims system increases fourfold from today.

The Scottish Consumer Council says the increase in the limit on small claims from £750 to £3000 is a significant step towards matching the law with the reality of how people buy goods and services.

Douglas Sinclair, Chair of the Scottish Consumer Council says the organisation believes thousands of people will now be able to get a fairer settlement using the procedure where, previously, they often had to make do with much less than they had paid.

"We have been lobbying hard for a realistic small claims limit for a number of years. Today the law moves in to line with the reality of people's spending. Every day people in Scotland buy expensive items such as computers, holidays and home improvements, and they will now enjoy protection when they spend up to £3,000 instead of just £750.

"It is important that this change is widely publicised – not just to ensure everyone knows their new entitlement, but also as an incentive to businesses to ensure that they trade fairly."

Notes to Editors:

The Small Claims (Scotland) Amendment Order which comes into force today (14 January 2008) makes the following changes in small claims cases:

- An increase in the limit for small claims cases from £750 to £3000
- Exclusion of personal injury actions from small claims procedure

- An increase in the limits on the amount of expenses which may be awarded in claims of over £200

The Sheriff Courts (Scotland) Act 1971 (Privative Jurisdiction and Summary Cause) Order 2007, which also comes into force today makes the following changes:

- Summary cause actions can be brought for goods and services between £3,000 and £5,000 (previously over £750 up to £1,500)
- Ordinary cause rules will apply in cases over £5,000
- The privative jurisdiction limit (any cases below this figure must be raised in the sheriff court, rather than the Court of Session) will be set at £5,000 (previously £1,500).

About the SCC: The Scottish Consumer Council promotes the interests of consumers in Scotland. By researching issues and informing policy, we redress the balance and give consumers a stronger voice. SCC believes that every consumer should expect services that are accessible, that offer choice (or clear representation of the user interest where there is no choice), that are safe and that are delivered fairly – without prejudice or discrimination. We are working to ensure that every consumer has access to the information that allows them to make informed choices, access to ways of seeking redress when things go wrong, and to ways that their views can be aired and listened to.

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