



Fairness and the consumer conference – 29th October 2009

Breakout session feedback

The future of Housing Provision in the public and private sector

Speakers: Gavin Corbett, Shelter Scotland and Nick Fletcher, Chartered Institute of Housing

Facilitator: Douglas White

Key outcomes:

1. Access: consumers face barriers in housing provision.
2. Quality and suitability of housing: recognition that more needs to be done to make sure consumers get access to the quality accommodation.
3. Information and advice: consumers need information to assist them when buying a property or why entering into a contract with a social/private landlord.

Legal and advice services

Speakers: Hazel Thoms, The Scottish Legal Aid Board and Neil Stevenson, the Law Society of Scotland

Facilitator: Sarah O'Neill

Key outcomes:

1. Partnership within the local community is very important particularly between private sector solicitors and other advice providers.
2. Gill review – those recommendations that can be implemented now should be; but there may be risks in not implementing all together.
3. More provision of assisted self help services for those that can help themselves.

Services in rural areas

Speakers: Denis Donoghue, Hall Aitken Associates and Norman MacAskill, Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations

Facilitator: Trisha McAuley

Key outcomes:

1. Stop seeing rural Scotland as a series of problems for policy makers.
2. Redefine the 'centre'.
3. Design and deliver new partnership/service models with local communities.

Consumer engagement in public services

Speakers: Pat Dawson, NHS Lothian and Martin Brown, Improvement Service

Facilitator: Jennifer Wallace

Key outcomes:

1. There is a lot of good work going on to try and understand consumers expectation of public services.

2. However, could do better to reach seldom heard/hard to reach consumers who are missed out too often.
3. Barriers – culture/resistance to change rather than policy.

The role of regulation

Speakers: Robert Hammond, Consumer Focus and Russell Griggs, Regulatory Review Group

Facilitator: Martyn Evans

Key outcomes:

1. Better regulation doesn't necessarily mean less regulation; it is about light but not soft touch; light touch but not light protection; and this differs from market to market.
2. Transfer the risk to the service provider so it becomes a reputational risk.
3. Move from rules based principle to a principle based method.

Food – fair fare

Speakers: Kim Newstead, Community Food and Health Scotland, Liz Breckenridge, Consumer Focus Scotland Board Member

Facilitator: Mary Lawton

Key outcomes:

1. Food needs to be higher up political agenda and there needs to be more collaborative working.
2. Health should be a key element of the National Food Policy.
3. Community and voluntary initiatives are key in reaching hard to reach customers.

Energy efficiency and fuel poverty

Speakers: Alison Hardie, Ofgem, Laura MacGadie, Energy Savings Trust

Facilitator: Andrew Faulk

Key outcomes:

1. Great deal of work ongoing at moment; more focus on those who fall between two services just now; the sector needs to be more active in addressing this.
2. Incremental changes to improve partnership working; educating those who work with communities so that they know what services are available.
3. Better links across other sectors; particular the health sector.

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