

Making the difference for consumers

Annual Review 2009/10



About us

Consumer Focus Scotland is the independent consumer champion for Scotland. We are rooted in over 30 years of work promoting the interests of consumers, particularly those who experience disadvantage in society.

Part of Consumer Focus, our structure reflects the devolved nature of the UK. Consumer Focus Scotland works on issues that affect consumers in Scotland, while at the same time feeding into and drawing on work done at a GB, UK and European level.

We work to secure a fair deal for consumers in different aspects of their lives by promoting fairer markets, greater value for money, improved customer service and more responsive public services. We represent consumers of all kinds: tenants, householders, patients, parents, energy users, solicitors' clients, postal service users or shoppers.

We aim to influence change and shape policy to reflect the needs of consumers. We do this in an informed way based on the evidence we gather through research and our unique knowledge of consumer issues.

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Reviewing our impact

Welcome

This annual review covers April 2009 to March 2010, our first full operational year since being established as a powerful advocacy body for Scottish consumers.

The period was characterised by difficult economic circumstances brought about by the recession with many consumers facing major difficulties in their everyday lives. This backdrop made it more crucial than ever that we stayed focused on issues where we could promote fairness for consumers, especially those experiencing disadvantage.

That was the theme of our first national conference in October 2009. It brought together a wide range of stakeholders to put fairness for the consumer during the recession in the spotlight. Many of the issues raised at that event will inform our future advocacy work for consumers.

We were also able to deliver or support some significant policy successes for consumers. The recommendations of the report of the Scottish civil courts review for making civil courts more user-friendly, adopted many of our proposals, and those of one of our predecessor organisations.

The Public Services Reform (Scotland) Act has introduced a new duty of user focus on scrutiny bodies and also a streamlined and simplified complaints system for users of public services. We also campaigned to bring about the new Post Office Challenge Fund to increase support for community post offices.

Our partnership work on the Scottish Fuel Poverty Forum, pressing for the extension of the support available through the Energy Assistance Package, resulted in another

10,000 households benefiting from the scheme. Our unique range of consumer guides were updated and promoted giving consumers the benefit of the specialist information they provide. These are just a few examples of the key outputs we have delivered and policy change we have contributed to over the year. Our key achievements are covered in more detail on pages 6 to 14.

This year also saw the departure of Martyn Evans, director of the Scottish Consumer Council for more than a decade, who then oversaw the launch of Consumer Focus Scotland, to a role with the Carnegie UK Trust. His successor, Marieke Dwarshuis, has joined us at a challenging time and I know that she will do an excellent job in taking our work forward.

So it has been a difficult year for many consumers, but also one of positive achievements and developments in the consumer interest. Our mission to give Scottish consumers a powerful voice and influence change in their interest will continue in the year ahead.

It just remains for me to thank the people who make Consumer Focus Scotland what it is because an organisation is only as good as its people. I value the commitment, wisdom and support of our Board members and I express my admiration and appreciation to the highly motivated staff team.

Douglas Sinclair

Chair,
Consumer Focus Scotland



Looking forward

I am delighted to have joined Consumer Focus Scotland just as we start work on the new annual plan for 2010-11. The plan we have put in place will enable us to continue making significant progress for Scottish consumers through our policy development and influencing work and in particular step up our direct impact on the day to day lives of consumers.

Our previous research has shown that people in Scotland are less likely to switch energy suppliers than customers elsewhere. We will carry out a major piece of work with advice agencies and consumers to empower them to make informed decisions on their options for obtaining a better energy deal.

Research projects aimed at influencing policy change, remain at the core of our work. These range from mapping public services available through the post office network to the future care preferences of older people.

As we approach the next year's Scottish Parliament election we will also present the case for the consumer voice to be heard at all levels on policy and markets in Scotland. We will prepare for the planned transfer of the advocacy role of Waterwatch Scotland to Consumer Focus Scotland. Critically we will seek to ensure that we maximise the potential benefits for consumers of a unified approach to advocacy on utilities.

I also want to highlight important work that the Extra Help Unit (EHU) and our Scottish Government-funded development projects will continue to do. The EHU provides a unique service for vulnerable consumers across Great Britain. It has already assisted many thousands of people with complicated energy problems and is also contributing to long term change in the policy and practice of energy companies.

The development projects provide expert support and advice to a diverse range of individuals and organisations. The impact they have on consumers' lives is widely acknowledged and their work continues to go from strength to strength.

Pages 15 and 16 provide an overview of our plans for the year ahead covering some of the key priorities we will be working on, rather than being a definitive programme of all we will do. More detail about our future work, including that of the development projects, is also available online.

We look forward to engaging with our partners and consumers to carry out this work during 2010/11.



Marieke Dwarshuis

Senior Director,
Consumer Focus Scotland

Our work: April 2009 to March 2010

Consumer Focus Scotland is working on four strategic goals over the period up to 2011:

Value: Help people receive better value by raising the influence they have over the goods and services they receive.

Service: Improve customer service and remove unnecessary problems that generate complaints from consumers.

Access: Create an economy in which everyone can access the essential services they need and where the poor no longer pay more to get less for their money.

Sustainability: Harness the appetite of consumers to move to more sustainable lifestyles.

During our first full year as Consumer Focus Scotland we worked across a wide range of issues to positively effect change on behalf of consumers, based on the four strategic goals.

Key areas where our work has benefited consumers either through our own outputs or by influencing change, include:

Value

Parental involvement and representation in education

Consumer Focus Scotland published the *Making the Difference* research report in June 2009. It was launched to coincide with the Scottish Government's national parents' conference and their announcement of the intention to support the development of a National Parents Forum.

The passage of the Schools Consultation (Scotland) Bill in November 2009 represents a significant improvement in consultation mechanisms for parents when schools are threatened with closure. This legislation was informed by our influential research into parental consultation on rural school closures.

Digital diaries

In June 2009 we published the final report of our ground-breaking work on the digital switchover in the Scottish Borders. Following discussions on the wider implications of the work in the Borders for consumers it was agreed that we would use our findings to develop a simple resource to support vulnerable consumers to make the switch to digital TV. The resource will be for use by intermediary organisations working with vulnerable consumers, to enable them to support their clients/service users to switch to digital TV.

User focus in public services

Consumer Focus Scotland published *User focus: Seven Key Tests* in April 2009. We also sponsored a seminar on complaints handling in the voluntary sector, run by the Association of Chief Officers of Scottish Voluntary Organisations in June 2009.

The Public Services Reform (Scotland) Bill was passed in March 2010. It includes a duty on scrutiny bodies to continuously improve user focus. It also brings about a more standardised and simplified complaints system for consumers of public services by extending the scope of the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman to act as the complaints standards authority for the public sector.

Information for consumers

We produced an updated (third) edition of *Moving Home in Scotland*, providing detailed information to consumers on buying and selling a home and a second edition of *Common Repair, Common Sense*, our information guide for home owners with common repair responsibilities.

We also updated and published a third edition of the *A-Z of Scots Education law: A guide for parents*. They are part of our range of consumer guides and we ran a promotional campaign to highlight the guides to stakeholders and consumers in Spring 2010.



Civil justice

Consumer Focus Scotland undertook a range of work advocating improved access to civil justice last year. The report of the Scottish civil courts review was published on 30 September 2009, and received considerable press coverage. It followed many years of work by the Scottish Consumer Council and then Consumer Focus Scotland on modernising Scotland's civil justice system. We have since met with Scottish Government officials to discuss the way forward on the civil courts review.

Our Making Civil Justice Work for Consumers report was published in March and Sarah O'Neill, our Head of Policy and Solicitor, spoke at a Legal Services Agency seminar and a Holyrood conference about the publication in the same month.



Service

Administrative Justice

We published the second report of the Administrative Justice Steering Group on 25 June 2009. This examined the scope of administrative justice as a whole, including ombudsmen, complaints procedures and other forms of Alternative Dispute Resolution, as well as tribunals. At the launch Fergus Ewing MSP, the Minister for Community Safety, announced that the Scottish Government intended to take forward proposals for a Scottish Tribunals Service following the first report of the Steering Group in October 2008.

Regulation of property managers

Our work on the regulation of property management and land-owning maintenance companies continued this year with significant progress being made on both. We worked with the Scottish Government on the development of core standards for an accreditation scheme for property managers which will be consulted on from May 2010. We also anticipate being able to take forward our plans to empower consumers on the issue of land owning maintenance companies.

Food Hygiene Information Scheme

Consumer Focus Scotland worked with the Food Standards Agency in Scotland and other partners to support the roll out of the Food Hygiene Information Scheme. The scheme allows consumers to see how well food businesses in their area have fared in their last food hygiene inspection. The roll out includes an Implementation Group which Mary Lawton, one of our Senior Policy Advocates, sits on. Around 27 out of 32 Scottish local authorities have so far indicated that they intend to implement the scheme.

Widening access to legal services

Consumer Focus Scotland gave written and oral evidence on the Legal Services (Scotland) Bill following its introduction to the Scottish Parliament on 30 September 2009. Our evidence supported the Bill's aim of opening up access to the legal services market to providers other than traditional legal firms, through the introduction of alternative business structures which we believe will result in better access to legal services for consumers. Our evidence was also quoted several times in the Justice Committee's Stage 1 report on the Bill. We sent all MSPs a further briefing highlighting key areas of benefit for users of legal services, prior to the Stage 1 debate in April 2010. Work will continue as the Bill completes its passage through parliament.



Review of trading standards in Scotland

We conducted omnibus research on consumer perception of trading standards and qualitative research examining public experience of trading standards to support the work of the Review Group. In February 2010 the Review Group approved a final report and this along with the research on consumer experience of problems with goods and services and a discussion paper on local regulation and consumer protection in Scotland was published at the Trading Standards Institute Conference in Edinburgh in June 2010.

Court users experiences

Consumer Focus Scotland worked in partnership with the Scottish Legal Aid Board to produce *What's Going to Happen to Me?*, a report on the views and experiences of Sheriff Court users. The report was published in July 2009 and submitted to the civil courts review and the Scottish Government. The report was referenced within the report of the civil courts review.

Fairness in the recession

Consumer Focus Scotland's 'Fairness and the Consumer' Conference took place in October 2009. It brought together over 120 key stakeholders and partners across a wide range of sectors to discuss the position of consumers in the recession. The conference helped to inform the thinking of policy-makers on consumer issues and will also instruct Consumer Focus Scotland's future advocacy work on behalf of disadvantaged and vulnerable consumers.

Best practice in consumer engagement

In October 2009 we held a discussion seminar with key local government stakeholders to help us explore the possible role Consumer Focus Scotland could play in responding to the impact of the recession on local government services. An expert panel was subsequently convened to look at nominations of best practice in consumer engagement on decision making in local public services. Invitations were sent out in April 2010 and the work will be finalised later this year with an event and publication to share best practice across public sector organisations.

Access

Tackling fuel poverty

We are a member of the Fuel Poverty Forum, which oversees delivery of the Scottish Government's Energy Assistance Package (EAP), the main initiative to address fuel poverty in Scotland. In late 2009 we worked with other members of the Forum to encourage the Scottish Government to extend the EAP. Housing Minister Alex Neil announced in January 2010 that the scheme eligibility would be extended to include another 10,000 households.

More widely, we have commissioned work to examine, firstly, the reasons for the significant differences in the numbers of households in fuel poverty in UK countries; and, secondly, to benchmark the Scottish approach to addressing fuel poverty against those taken elsewhere. This will be published later in 2010.

Attitudes to switching energy suppliers

In November 2009 we published *Switching Off*, a report exploring the views and experiences of disadvantaged consumers to switching energy suppliers. It received widespread media interest and will be used to support our work to empower consumers in Scotland to achieve a better deal on their energy bills in the future.

Representing post office users

During 2009/10 we conducted a variety of work on Post Offices in Scotland. This included: conducting the biggest independent survey of customers of postal services in Scotland; meeting with Royal Mail to discuss outreach services in the Western Isles; contributing to a roundtable discussion on the Northern Periphery Programme's Retail in Rural Regions project; supporting Christine Grahame MSP's debate in the Scottish Parliament on a Post Office Diversification Fund for Scotland; and contacting MSPs and stakeholders about the UK Government's consultation on post office banking.

After the Scottish Government announced the establishment of the Post Office Challenge Fund we met with the officials responsible for establishing it, and with Welsh Assembly Government officials responsible for operating a similar fund in Wales. The results of our Postal Services Consumer Survey will be published in the summer of 2010.





Post Office closure programme

In December 2009 we published our final report on the impact of the Network Change Programme (NCP) in Argyll and Bute. It outlined the views and experiences of consumers of post office services in the areas affected by the changes to the network. We met with Royal Mail in January 2010 to discuss the report's findings and recommendations and implications for both Argyll and Bute and the rest of Scotland's post office network.

Tenants in the private rented sector

Consumer Focus Scotland commissioned Shelter Scotland to produce a report on the position of disadvantaged and potentially vulnerable households in the private rented sector and the extent to which their needs are considered in policy debates in Scotland. The findings of the report were used to develop a joint policy paper to address key areas of concern for disadvantaged tenants in the sector with the Scottish Government, published in December 2009. One of the paper's recommendations, that a scheme to safeguard rental deposits should be introduced, is being consulted on by the Scottish Government.

Sustainability

Parcel delivery in rural areas

Consumer Focus Scotland has conducted research into consumers' experience of parcel deliveries in rural areas. The findings will be published in a final report in the summer of 2010. This research will feed into UK-wide activity examining the parcel delivery market, including two key points identified in our work – the fairness of surcharges placed on deliveries to rural and remote areas, and whether online retailers make the existence and level of delivery charges sufficiently clear.

Promoting energy efficiency

It is increasingly clear that a range of energy efficiency solutions will be necessary to meet the needs of all consumers, taking into account housing type and tenure, and different circumstances. Consumer Focus Scotland has conducted research into consumer attitudes to energy efficiency and follow-up research on area-based energy efficiency projects, including their impact in addressing fuel poverty. A report on this work will be published later in 2010.



Food Standards Agency Calendar

Consumer Focus Scotland worked in partnership with the Food Standards Agency in Scotland to involve over 4,000 primary school children from more than 200 schools across Scotland in the healthy eating and safe food schools calendar competition.

The judges selected one overall winning design, with a further 11 being highly commended. The overall winner and the highly commended designs featured in the 2010 Food Standards Agency in Scotland and Consumer Focus Scotland Safe Food and Healthy Eating Calendar that was distributed to schools and stakeholders in December 2009. TV chef James Martin gave a cookery demonstration at the winning school in February 2010.

Consumer perspective on waste management and recycling

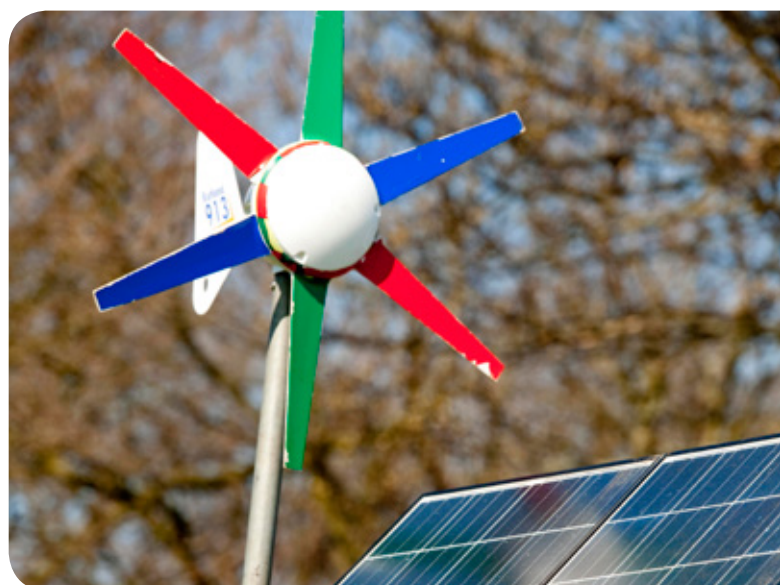
A background research paper exploring the position of waste management and recycling from the consumer perspective in other European countries informed Consumer Focus Scotland's response to the Scottish Government's Zero Waste consultation. A briefing paper, *Household Recycling and the Consumer*, was also subsequently produced.

Scottish Parliament cross-party group on Food

Consumer Focus Scotland continued to provide the secretariat for the Scottish Parliament cross-party group on Food, which now has 150 members. It addressed a variety of topical food issues over the year including the new national food policy and delivering reductions on food and packaging waste.

Access to microgeneration

Microgeneration is likely to have an increasingly important role in heating and in addressing fuel poverty, particularly for rural consumers without access to mains gas. Consumer Focus Scotland commissioned a scoping study, combining desk research and engagement with stakeholders, to explore ways in which disadvantaged consumers' access to the benefits of microgeneration and other technologies can be improved. The results of the study will be published later in 2010.



Other highlights include:

A digital future for Scotland

Consumer Focus Scotland worked with the Consumer Communications Panel to hold a seminar on the Digital Britain report. It brought together a diverse range of organisations and interest groups to consider how Scotland can fully benefit from the report and develop its own broadband strategy. Consumer Focus Scotland has subsequently been asked to join the Scottish Government's new Digital Britain Stakeholder Group. We also hosted a meeting with the Rt. Hon. Stephen Timms MP, Minister for Digital Britain, Peter Peacock MSP, and a range of stakeholder organisations to discuss Digital Britain and the Digital Economy Bill, and the implications of these for rural areas in Scotland.

Home Owner and Debtor Protection

Consumer Focus Scotland supported the passage of the Home Owner and Debtor Protection (Scotland) Act, which contains measures to protect people struggling to deal with debt by increasing protection against repossession of their homes or bankruptcy. We had been closely involved with the policy development work of the Scottish Government's repossessions group which led to the introduction of the legislation.

Public information notices

Consumer Focus Scotland gave evidence against the proposals to end the obligation on local authorities to publish information notices in the press, because we believed it would exclude consumers who do not have access to the internet from accessing this important information. The Scottish Government announced its decision not to go ahead with the proposals to end the obligation in March 2010.

Prisoner call charges

Inmates in Scottish prisons benefited from fairer call charges after the Scottish Prison Service introduced a new telephone contract for Scottish prisons in April 2010. The change came about following the response of telephone regulator Ofcom to a super-complaint from the Scottish Consumer Council, one of Consumer Focus Scotland's predecessor bodies, and the National Consumer Council.

Consumer Network

Our Consumer Network of volunteers acts as our 'eyes and ears' across the country. We have over 360 members organised around Scotland 32 local authority areas. The network has two main aims:

- Helping to keep Consumer Focus Scotland in touch with the concerns of people from all over Scotland by sending us information about consumer issues and acting as a sounding board to determine which issues are of common concern across the country
- Providing a source of information to assist in our research studies and providing some research input in the form of 'mystery shopping' exercises as appropriate.

During 2009/10 the network was involved in a range of activity including:

- Telephoning local Royal Mail delivery offices over a period of one week to determine standards of service provided
- Testing core questions for an Improvement Service online survey
- Undertaking a review of Waterwatch Scotland's new website
- Telephoning or calling in at their local GPs surgery to find out what information they are given about viewing and/or copying their health records

- Providing feedback on their online shopping habits – which websites are used most often and what kind of goods purchased
- Giving feedback on Audit Scotland's Best Value 2 reports to assist with work to make them more user-friendly and accessible
- Attending a focus group to discuss the Food Standards Agency in Scotland's consultation on their 'Draft Guidance for Consumers on Country of Origin Labelling for Consumers'

Ongoing development work with the Network includes producing and distributing Consumers Count, the quarterly newsletter for Network members, maintaining and developing links with volunteer centres to recruit new Network members, regular Network meetings and development of the Network's pages on the Consumer Focus Scotland website.

More information about the work that we have undertaken during the last year and the impact that we have had can be found on our website at **www.consumerfocus-scotland.org.uk**

The Year Ahead

Our annual plan for 2010/11 was agreed after consultation with stakeholders and partners. Highlights of the work we propose to carry out include:

A fair deal for energy consumers

Our priority for 2010/11 is to work towards ensuring that energy consumers in Scotland get a better deal so that they are able to live in a warm and fuel efficient home.

To support this we will:

- Support training to build capacity among advice-providers to empower consumers to make informed decisions on their options for obtaining a better deal on their energy bills

A fair deal for postal consumers

Our priority for 2010/11 is to promote high standards of postal services in Scotland, and to ensure that consumers can access a range of good quality services through their local post office.

To support this we will:

- Commission a mapping exercise to provide comprehensive, robust information on central and local Government services offered through Post Offices



A fair deal for consumers of public services

Our priority for 2010/11 is to ensure an increased focus on the needs and expectations of users in the provision of public services.

To support this we will:

- Carry out research into the provision of food services for older people in the community, with consumers, local authorities and other providers

A fair deal in consumer rights, consumer redress and consumer focused regulation

Our priority for 2010/11 is to continue to work towards ensuring that the needs and rights of consumers, particularly the most disadvantaged, are clearly taken into account by providers of goods and services in Scotland, and particularly at a time of decline in public expenditure.

To support this we will:

- Conduct research into the needs and preferences of the likely future consumers of care services.
- Undertake a range of activity under the broad principle of improving consumers' access to civil justice.
- Support the empowerment of owners on the provisions of the Title Conditions (Scotland) Act 2003 to increase choice in relation to land maintenance services.

This is not an exhaustive list of our plans for 2010/11. Many projects will continue from last year, for example, our review of Trading Standards services in Scotland and our work on consumer engagement in the public sector.

Other areas of ongoing work with stakeholders to turn policy into practice will include:

- developing measurement of customer satisfaction with local government services,
- supporting the Scottish Parliament's cross-party group on food,
- our membership of the Scottish Fuel Poverty Forum
- the development of an accreditation scheme for property managers to drive up standards in the industry.

We will also retain the flexibility to respond to new issues that emerge during the year. Our Consumer Network of volunteers, which continues to grow and offer an informed local perspective on our work, will be asked to engage in projects where their expertise and knowledge will help consumers

For more details about our work please visit **www.consumerfocus-scotland.org.uk** or email **mail@consumerfocus-scotland.org.uk**.

Extra Help Unit (EHU)

The Extra Help Unit, based in Glasgow and managed by Consumer Focus Scotland, was established on 1 October 2008. It supports vulnerable consumers across Great Britain with their energy and postal complaints. Consumers are 'vulnerable' if they are unable to resolve a complaint themselves due to personal circumstances, urgency or complexity of the case.

Consumer Focus has a statutory duty to investigate cases where a consumer has been disconnected, is threatened with disconnection or has experienced a failure in prepayment meter system. Consumers are referred to the EHU through agreed channels which include Consumer Direct, Ofgem, the Energy Ombudsman and parliamentarians.

The EHU's Executive Liaison Team (ELT) responds to high level correspondence and investigates referrals from MPs, MSPs and AMs. The ELT also provides an 'Ask the Adviser' telephone based service to advice agencies seeking assistance on how to progress their client's complaint.

In its first operational year EHU dealt with 7,606 cases and obtained almost £700,000 compensation through negotiation with suppliers. 89 per cent of contacts were from domestic consumers and 99.45 per cent of cases related to energy. In addition to investigating and resolving complaints the EHU identified many key policy issues within the industry – including vulnerable consumers being disconnected and suppliers not considering ability to pay for consumers in debt.



The EHU works closely with other Consumer Focus teams, flagging up policies and potential licence breaches for investigation. In the first quarter of the year EHU staff identified that vulnerable consumers were being disconnected for debt and meter tampering. A joint project with Ofgem was launched to review suppliers' debt & disconnection processes, with a fast-track review of vulnerable disconnections. This led to changes to licence conditions relating to disconnection and the industry's Disconnection Safety Net being strengthened.

Consumer Focus Scotland national development projects

Consumer Focus Scotland manages four Scottish Government-funded national development projects:



Health Rights Information Scotland

Health Rights Information Scotland produces nationally relevant information about patients' health rights and about the health services that are available from the NHS in Scotland.

During 2009/10 we led the production of an innovative Scottish Government-funded multilingual online and DVD guide to NHS Scotland services providing information for patients in 17 languages, including Gaelic and British Sign Language. The new resource was launched in February 2009 and will assist thousands of users of NHS services to find out more about the types of service they are able to access and how to go about accessing them.

Other work over the last year included a new resource on caring and consent, work with NHS Health Scotland to design a poster reassuring young people about confidentiality when accessing NHS services and a revised version of our *Making a Complaint about the NHS* leaflet.

Key activities for 2010/11 will include producing, maintaining and updating high quality information for patients about their health rights, especially in connection with the Patients' Rights (Scotland) Bill, promoting appropriate patient and public involvement in information production and advising and assisting others in producing information for patients.

www.hris.org.uk



The healthy living award

The **healthy living** award was launched in 2006 to work with the food service sector in Scotland to make it easier for people to eat healthily when they eat out. More than 915 businesses and other food outlets have now achieved full award status, including large and small establishments from both the private and public sectors. Around 300,000 people a day now eat in establishments with the award.

During 2009/10 significant progress has been made by NHS catering outlets and NHS Boards across Scotland have now achieved the award. We also launched a higher level of award called healthy living award plus in May 2009 with Public Health Minister Shona Robison MSP. healthy living award plus is now available to award holders as they are invited to renew their award holding status.

The healthy living award annual award ceremony was held in May at the Perth Concert Hall, with three events held over the course of the day, over 230 awards presented and more than 500 people invited to attend. We exhibited and held workshops at a wide range of events and conferences, and worked collaboratively with partners including local authorities, NHS boards, contract caterers and High Street providers.

In 2010/11 we will continue to engage with the catering industry to encourage participation in healthy living award, actively engage with the high street sector to promote the award, address health inequalities, increase exposure of the award brand and strengthen and develop links with existing and new stakeholders.

www.healthylivingaward.co.uk



Scottish Accessible Information Forum (SAiF)

SAiF aims to improve the standards and accessibility of information and advice services for the benefit of disabled people and their carers. It consists of representatives of organisations for and of disabled people and of information providers.

During the last year we have conducted research into providing accessible information with public service providers, launched our *The Social Model of Disability* publication, produced *A Brief Guide to Easy Read* and published our guide to making information accessible through different formats. We also worked collaboratively with a range of organisations including the Long Term Conditions Alliance Scotland, CrossReach, Communication Forum Scotland, NHS 24 and Borders College.

We also provided our annual in-house training programme. Courses available included:

- Creating Accessible Documents
- Sending Accessible Emails
- Testing Website Accessibility
- Raising Awareness
- Is It Accessible?

Key areas of work for 2010/11 will include:

- providing in-house training tailored to the individual needs of organisations
- promoting and meeting demand for the SAiF standards for Disability and Advice Provision in Scotland
- working with public sector bodies to help them implement accessible information policies and strategies
- promoting and maximising use of the new SAiF website.

www.saifscotland.org.uk



Community Food and Health (Scotland) (CFHS)

Community Food and Health (Scotland) provides a national, strategic focus and practical support to low income communities facing barriers to a healthy diet. The project also works on the ground to add value to the activities of low income communities and those supporting them in tackling these barriers. CFHS has been particularly active in both ensuring that the less-heard voices in our society are a valued part of wider national food policy activity as well as directly contributing to the development of policy at a national level. We are assisted by a Steering Group made up of a range of groups and agencies, which advises on the nature and direction of the work.

In 2009/10 we built on past work with excluded groups, with events and publications involving homelessness, learning disability and early years, alongside new work evolving around youth work, mental health, older people and the black and minority ethnic community. Highlights included our annual networking conference in Dunfermline, attended by over 200 delegates, the publication of *Food, training and learning disability* and *The Missing Ingredients* on homelessness and food and celebrating the 50th edition of our *Fare Choice Newsletter*.

Key areas of work for 2010/11 will include continuing to support the voluntary sector to reach excluded, disadvantaged and vulnerable communities and promoting the relevance of the sector to the delivery of national food and health priorities. Our training, networking, website, quarterly newsletter and annual conference will support these activities.

www.communityfoodandhealth.org.uk

Consumer Focus Scotland Board

Our policies and work priorities are agreed by our Board members who are appointed by the Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills in consultation with the First Minister. They bring a wide range of experience and expertise in the formulation and development of consumer policies.



Douglas Sinclair (Chair)

Douglas was appointed the Chair of the Scottish Consumer Council in May 2006 and Chair of Consumer Focus Scotland in January 2008. Douglas has held posts as Chief Executive at Ross & Cromarty District Council, Central Region Council, COSLA and Fife Council. Douglas is also Deputy Chair of the Accounts Commission of Scotland.



Alan Hutton

Alan has been a Member of Consumer Focus Scotland since 2008. Alan was previously a Member of the Scottish Consumer Council, a Member of the Advisory Group of the National Consumer Council, and a Member of Energywatch Scotland. He is currently a Board Member of Energy Action Scotland. Alan is a Senior Lecturer in Economics at Glasgow Caledonian University and Senior Research Fellow at the Stirling Centre for Economic Methodology, University of Stirling.



Alan Sinclair

Alan has been a member of Consumer Focus Scotland since 2008. Alan is a Visiting Fellow at the Work Foundation. He was previously the Senior Director for

Skills and Learning in Scottish Enterprise. He led youth and adult skill programmes, the formation of Career Scotland and Future Skill Scotland. Before Scottish Enterprise Alan started Heatwise and became the Chief Executive of the Wise Group. Alan was a member of the Scottish New Deal Task Force and a member of the UK Advisory Group on the New Deal. He was awarded a CBE for training unemployed people.



Coinneach Maclean

Coinneach has been a Member of Consumer Focus Scotland since 2008. Coinneach was latterly the Deputy Chief Executive of the National Trust of

Scotland. Previously, he held posts in the public service in Scotland covering business, enterprise and housing.



Angela McCormack

Angela has been a Member of Consumer Focus Scotland since 2008. Angela was a Member of Postwatch Scotland and worked in charity finance for Stepping

Stones for Families. Angela has a background in finance, working for The Royal Bank of Scotland. She has wide experience in the voluntary sector, largely working with young people and for a disability charity. Angela is a Trustee and Company Secretary of Voluntary Action East Renfrewshire.



Liz Breckenridge

Liz was a member of the Scottish Consumer Council for five years and has been a Member of Consumer Focus Scotland since 2008. Liz is

currently a Panel Member of Waterwatch Scotland and is also a Member of the Food Standards Agency Committee on Customer Engagement. She is a Public Interest Member for the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Scotland. Liz was previously Marketing Director for Highland Spring Ltd and held senior posts in marketing for other global brands.



John Sawkins

John has been a Member of Consumer Focus Scotland since 2008. John is a Panel Member of Waterwatch Scotland and Chair of its national Charging

Committee. He is a Professor of Economics, Head of the Department of Accountancy, Economics and Finance and Dean of Heriot-Watt University.



Nicola Munro

Nicola has been a Member of Consumer Focus Scotland since 2008. During her Scottish Government career, she led work on health, environment,

transport, housing, planning, third sector, equality and anti-poverty programmes. She is a board member of the Scottish Refugee Council and Fairbridge in Scotland.

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