

**Annual Report on
Consumer Advocacy in
Energy and Postal
Markets**

2025-26

Contents

1. Introduction and Financial Statement.....	3
2. Work Programme Report for 2025-26	4

1. Introduction and Financial Statement

Overview

- 1.1. This document provides an overview of Consumer Scotland's activities during 2025-26 for its advocacy role for energy and postal consumers in Scotland.
- 1.2. As a statutory Non-Ministerial Organisation Consumer Scotland is accountable to the Scottish Parliament for the full range of its activity, including that funded by the electricity, gas, postal and water levies. Consumer Scotland provides an Annual Report to the Scottish Parliament by the end of December following the relevant financial year for that purpose. Consumer Scotland's fourth Annual Report, for 2024-2026, will be laid before the Scottish Parliament by the end of 2026.
- 1.3. This overview is provided to the Department of Business, Innovation, Science and Trade (DBIST) to provide information about the use of electricity, gas, heat networks and postal levy funding during 2025-26. We are providing this overview before Consumer Scotland's Annual Report is completed, so information within it remains subject to change.
- 1.4. This overview provides:
 - The financial statement for 2025-26
 - A summary of the key outputs and activities that comprised the Energy, Heat Networks and Post activities in our Annual Work Programme

Financial statement

- 1.5. Consumer Scotland was allocated a budget of £2,380,243 by DBIST to undertake consumer advocacy in energy and postal services for consumers in 2025-26.
- 1.6. Table 1 below sets out how the budget was used.

Table 1: Consumer Scotland Budget & Expenditure on Energy and Post Advocacy 2025-26

Expenditure Area	Annual budget as per Work Plan	Q1- Q4 Actual	Q1- Q4 Variance
Staffing – Energy	£620,965	£628,056	-£7,091
Staff-related Costs – Energy	£57,200	£57,200	£0
Programme – Energy	£120,000	£90,780	£29,220
Staffing – Heat Networks	£247,622	£247,962	-£340
Staff-related Costs – Heat Networks	£22,800	£22,800	£0
Programme – Heat Networks	£30,000	£84,827	-£54,827
Grant - Heat Networks Advice	£450,000	£383,000	£67,000
Staffing – Post	£150,027	£140,508	£9,519
Programme – Post	£15,100	£15,100	£0
Staff-related Costs – Post	£68,300	£62,122	£6,178
Grant - Big Energy Savings Campaign and Network	£325,300	£325,300	£0
Grant – Citizens Advice (England and Wales)	£272,929	£272,929	£0
Total	£2,380,243	£2,330,584	£49,659

Staffing

- 1.7. FY 2025-26 was the fourth year of operation for Consumer Scotland. Our staffing has been at full capacity with 21.82 FTE either fully or part funded by the DBIST grant budget spread across policy, advocacy, research and analysis roles. These teams are supported by colleagues from our operations and communications teams.
- 1.8. We saw an underspend on post staffing costs due to recruitment timings.
- 1.9. Spend on energy and heat networks was c£30k underspent overall due to the phased set up of the Tier 1 advice provision. Some spend was rebalanced between advice and programme.

2. Work Programme Report for 2025-26

Background

- 2.1. Consumer Scotland was established in April 2022. During our fourth year of operation, we delivered our Work Plan for Energy and Post advocacy in 2025-26 alongside building our heat networks advocacy and advice function in partnership with Advice Direct Scotland and Citizens Advice Scotland. All of this is underpinned by robust service and governance structures that sustain us as an organisation.
- 2.2. The work that we have undertaken to develop our strategy and embed our holistic programme management approach has been fundamental to both the effective delivery of our consumer advocacy work on energy, heat networks and post in 2025-26, and in establishing Consumer Scotland to continue delivering positive outcomes for energy, heat networks and post consumers in future years.
- 2.3. We describe some of the key foundations of this work below, to provide the context for the Work Plan Report.

Our Strategy

- 2.4. Central to Consumer Scotland's development in our fourth year was our commitment that our policy recommendations and advocacy, including our advocacy on energy, heat networks and post, be derived from a robust evidence base. Consumer Scotland's position in the consumer landscape in Scotland – with a statutory remit across the private, public and third sectors – puts us in strong position to gather evidence, data and statistics from a wide range of sources. During our fourth year we have further developed our organisation so that we have the expertise – economists, consumer researchers, intelligence analysts – to turn that data into high quality consumer analysis and insights. This has been demonstrated in our published work and coverage.
- 2.5. In March 2023 we published our Strategic Plan for 2023-27. It sets out our purpose, ambition, strategic objectives and our partnership approach. To deliver that strategy we are building an effective and efficient, value-driven organisation that makes a positive difference for consumers while operating with value for money for tax payers and consumers.
- 2.6. Our influence with stakeholders is key to our success in achieving improved consumer outcomes across our work. During 2025-26 we have continued to build the foundations for

this, further developing our Strategic Partnerships function to nurture relationships and engage with stakeholders across the energy, heat networks and post markets.

- 2.7. During the year we reported against our [performance framework](#) which enables us to demonstrate impact through a range of KPIs, recommendations register and impact case studies. A full year's summary will be published with our Annual Report and Accounts later this year.
- 2.8. During the year, we published our draft Work Programme for 2026-2027 and consulted widely on this, including engagement with Ofgem, Ofcom, the Competition and Markets Authority, the UK Government, the Scottish Government, the Consumer Council for Northern Ireland, Citizens Advice, Royal Mail, Post Office Limited, and energy companies. We have emphasised our intention to work collaboratively in the delivery of our work, to maximise value for money, and to deliver positive outcomes for consumers.
- 2.9. Alongside the consultation on our own Work Programme we also submitted Consumer Scotland responses to the latest work plan consultations from Ofcom, Ofgem, the Communications Consumer Panel, the Consumer Council for Northern Ireland and Citizens Advice.

Our People

- 2.10. In our fourth year, our focus has been to continue to build an effective and high performing team. Our people are our greatest asset and we have invested in leadership and programme management training as well as ensuring our staff maintain high levels of Continuing Professional Development through attendance at conferences and webinars.
- 2.11. **Resourcing and capability:** During the year, 8 new colleagues joined us (across our full organisation). They have brought a wealth of new skills and experience to Consumer Scotland, including expertise in heat networks. We aim to effectively retain, engage and invest in our people; our colleague engagement score is 72%.
- 2.12. **Leadership stability:** The leadership structure across Consumer Scotland has been stable through the year and both our Executive Team and Senior Leadership Team meet regularly to discuss progress across our Work Programme and wider strategic priorities ensuring senior level accountability.
- 2.13. **Board Governance:** The Board and Audit and Risk Committee (ARC) are well established and have met regularly during the year. Their advice and guidance has been invaluable in helping the Executive team to continue to successfully develop the organisation. Two new Board members joined in February 2026 bringing a wealth of experience from across the private and third sector.

Work Plan Overview

- 2.14. The key activities of Consumer Scotland's research, analysis, policy and advocacy activity in 2025-2026 are described in the tables at Annex A below, which are organised according to the projects that comprised our Work Programme for Cross-Market, Energy and Post.
- 2.15. Full details are provided in the tables, but key highlights from this work include:

- Influenced major policy decisions, with recommendations adopted by UK and Scottish Governments, Ofgem and Ofcom across energy and postal markets.
- Secured improved energy affordability support, including expansion of automatic Warm Home Discount payments in Scotland from 95,000 to approximately 345,000 households.
- Strengthened consumer protections through advocacy on energy debt, standing charges, heat network regulation and regulation of energy intermediaries.
- Identified energy, telecoms and water as the weakest markets for small businesses, driving calls for stronger protections and regulatory action.
- Shaped consumer-focused net zero policies, including work on heat pumps, EVs, heat networks and home energy efficiency through the “4Cs” framework.
- Influenced future energy market reforms, ensuring Scottish consumer interests are reflected in market design, smart metering and system change programmes.
- Delivered tangible improvements in postal services, including stronger consumer engagement in postal reform and the introduction of minimum Post Office service standards.
- Championed vulnerable and underserved consumers, including rural and island communities, people without fixed addresses, disabled consumers and those facing fuel poverty.

Annex A
Cross-Market

Workstream	What do we want to be done differently as a result	Analysis of Performance
Markets that deliver for small businesses	Government, regulators and policymakers to have greater understanding of the markets where most action is needed to tackle problems experienced by small business consumers. Government, regulators and policymakers to be aware of and supported to deliver interventions to reduce the risk of harm for small business consumers in Scotland and treat them fairly. Depending on the priority areas identified, interventions may include increasing choice, access to redress, information and advice or ensuring higher levels of consumer protection for small business consumers.	We published new research on the experiences of 700 small businesses in Scotland, examining their experiences as consumers in 11 different markets. Our analysis highlighted that small business satisfaction levels vary significantly across markets, with energy, water and telecoms performing worst out of 11 markets studied. Energy market dissatisfaction was particularly pronounced, with one in five businesses reporting problems including contacting energy suppliers, understanding bills and unfair terms and conditions. A particular issue in the energy market was reliance on Third Party Intermediaries to secure contracts, with examples of mis-selling and misrepresentation or products, inconsistent approaches to consumer protection, poor customer service and lack of access to dispute resolution Our recommendations proposed a greater focus by regulators on the issues that small businesses encounter as consumers. In particular, we recommended strengthening regulation of Third Party Intermediaries in the energy sector. Our work secured prominent media coverage and we are engaging with key stakeholders on the delivery of our recommendations, including Ofgem.

Energy

Workstream	What do we want to be done differently as a result	Analysis of Performance
A new approach to energy affordability	Consumers to have access to a range of well targeted affordability interventions and protections, put in place by governments and regulators. Energy suppliers to have an enhanced understanding of their customers in order to put such interventions in place to protect consumers. High essential energy users, including disabled consumers, to have access to a range of additional protections and measures that ensures their safety.	We published new analysis and options to improve the financial support available to energy consumers in Scotland with a terminal illness. Our proposals received prominent support in the media, including being the focus of an ongoing, front-page campaign by the Sunday Mail, the most read Sunday newspaper in Scotland. Our recommendations were adopted by a number of political parties ahead of the 2026 Scottish Parliament election and have now been committed to by the Scottish Government as part of its 2026 Programme for Government. We advocated for the UK Government to take action to deliver Warm Home Discounts (WHD) payments to consumers in Scotland automatically, in line with the system in England and Wales. The government has accepted our key recommendation on this issue and as a result of this policy change the number of households in Scotland receiving the Warm Homes Discount automatically will increase from 95,000 to approximately 345,000 from next year. We engaged with UK Government at the onset of the middle east crisis in spring 2026 to provide advice and options for the provision of targeted energy bill support to consumers in winter 2026. We commissioned Policy in Practice to examine opportunities and barriers to using data and data-sharing to enhance the targeting and take-up of affordability policy in the energy and water markets. The findings from this work

		will help to inform our further advice and recommendations to government on these issues. We engaged closely with Ofgem on its proposals for a Debt Relief Scheme for energy consumers. We advocated for the development of the scheme and provided advice on the data that should be used to identify eligible consumers, to avoid disadvantaging consumers in Scotland. We undertook a further wave of our Energy Tracker to examine the affordability and debt issues being experienced by consumers in Scotland in paying their energy bills. Our report was published in the spring, securing widespread media coverage. We provided written advice to the Scottish Government to inform the forthcoming refresh of its Fuel Poverty strategy, setting out a number of recommendations on the actions required to ensure the strategy delivers for consumers. We also engaged formally with the Scottish Fuel Poverty Advisory Panel on the Scottish Government's proposed Heat in Buildings Bill and on the Scottish Government's Fuel Poverty Periodic Report (2021-2024), highlighting the key issues for energy consumers. We responded to a number of consultations during the year on behalf of consumers in Scotland. These included Ofgem's consultations on tackling energy debt when consumers move house, the development of its debt relief scheme and new rules on standing charges. We also responded to the
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		Department for Energy Security and Net Zero's (DESNZ) consultations on issues including the continuation of the Warm Home Discount Scheme beyond 31 March 2026, the UK Government's consultation Fairer, Faster Redress in the Energy Retail Market on the role and powers of the energy ombudsman. We continued to convene the Energy Consumer Network for Scotland, which brings together frontline energy advice organisations from across the country on a regular basis. The Network provides a unique opportunity for information sharing and collaboration amongst organisations in Scotland providing energy advice. The Network also hosts engagement with government and regulators, providing opportunities for policy learning, advocacy and scrutiny.
A future energy retail market designed for consumers	Ofgem and the UK Government to actively consider consumers in Scotland, and the specific issues affecting them, in the design of a future GB energy market. Policy makers to give consideration to how to achieve an inclusive design approach to the future market. The distributional impacts of any reform to the GB energy retail market to consider and protect consumers at risk of poorer outcomes.	We published new analysis on the actions required in the future GB energy retail market to ensure a just transition is delivered for consumers in Scotland, focusing on energy bill support, consumer protection, innovation and digital inclusion. We supported the UK Government's reforms of Ofgem, including through participation by our Chief Executive in the review panel that considered the changes. We are pleased to that Ofgem's revised roles and responsibilities will be more comprehensive than they are at present, allowing them to regulate more of the new types of industry party that are coming to market. We are also pleased to see that

		Ofgem’s enforcement tools will be sharpened, which will enable them to take quicker, more assertive action when there has been consumer harm. We engaged with Ofgem and provided detailed evidence to represent the interests of consumers in Scotland in the initial phase of the regulator’s cost allocation and recovery review in the energy market. We engaged with the UK Government to on its plans for new legislation to regulate Third Party Intermediaries (TPIs), such as price-comparison websites, aggregators and auto-switching services, in the energy market. The government has committed to adopting a “hybrid” authorisation regime for the new regulations, which will enable closer scrutiny of high-risk TPI business models. This is in line with the model that Consumer Scotland recommended. The new regulations, when put in place, will help to protect users of TPIs from risks such as poor customer service, difficulties resolving complaints and lack of transparency. We highlighted a number of problems with Ofgem’s original plans for standing charge reform. The proposed changes would have benefitted some consumers but we were concerned that the proposals would have introduced additional complexity and led to more consumers being worse-off. Ofgem has revised its approach to a more balanced model which will give consumers greater choice of tariffs.
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		We commissioned new research to identify the different groups of consumers in Scotland who are most likely to benefit or face risks from increasing demand flexibility in the energy market. The evidence from this analysis will support our advocacy to ensure that future changes to the market maximise the benefits and mitigate the risks for consumers in Scotland. We responded to Ofgem’s consultation on making Data Best Practice Guidance a Code obligation for energy companies.
Electric Vehicle infrastructure that works for all consumers	Policymakers to more actively consider not only current electric vehicle drivers, but also future consumers whose needs will be different from current drivers. Future consumers’ vehicles are more likely to be purchased used and therefore older, they are less likely to have done significant personal research before purchasing, and they will be less likely to have access to domestic charging. These interests will be understood and responded to by policymakers.	We are delivering an ongoing programme of research and advocacy on the changes required to enable more people in Scotland to take-up Electric Vehicles (EVs). Transport Scotland has now agreed to work with Consumer Scotland to set up a Consumer Electric Vehicle Insight Group which will bring together government, consumer groups and industry. The group will work together to address key challenges we have identified including cost, availability and reliability of the public charging network, difficulties in charging at home for some consumers, the need for better pre-sale information on key issues such as battery range, and access to good quality repairs and servicing. We commissioned new qualitative and quantitative research to gain a detailed and up-to-date understanding of the charging experiences of EV drivers in Scotland who are unable to charge at home and therefore more reliant on public charging. This work will help to shape our future

		policy recommendations and advocacy on behalf of EV consumers. We responded to an HM Treasury consultation on the introduction of Electric Vehicle Excise Duty, and to the UK Parliament's Transport Committee Inquiry into supercharging the electric vehicle transition on behalf of consumers in Scotland.
A heat network market that works for consumers	Heat networks regulations to be designed with a clear understanding of and focus on the issues that matter to consumers in Scotland Heat network consumers to have access to high quality advice and support Heat network providers to have a clear understanding of the consumer perspective and to be responsive to this The Scottish Government heat in buildings policy to take account of the role of heat networks in the transition to low carbon heating	We engaged extensively with Ofgem during the past year as it designed the new regulations to protect heat network consumers across Great Britain. The new regulations went live in January 2026. Our evidence and insight helped to influenced key aspects of the new regulation system, including measures on pricing, billing, cost recovery and consumer protection. Alongside our work to help shape new heat networks regulations we set up new advice services for heat network consumers in Scotland, working closely with our partners Advice Direct Scotland and Citizens Advice Scotland. These new advice services have been available to customers in Scotland since April 2025. We have published a number of advice and advocacy outputs including: • An in-depth review of the evidence base highlighting challenges faced by heat network consumers in Scotland

		• Detailed guidance for advisers and case workers who provide support to heat network consumers • A briefing for parliamentarians on the current issues facing heat network consumers in Scotland • An overview of the work of the Heat Network Advice Service with case studies of consumers who have received advice We commissioned new research with both heat network consumers and heat network operators in Scotland. The evidence from this work will provide a strong foundation for our ongoing advocacy on behalf of heat network consumers. We responded to Ofgem consultations on: • enforcement guidelines and penalty policy • fair pricing protections • consumer protection guidance • authorisation conditions and guidance on measures to mitigate the risk and impact of financial failure. We responded to the Heat Trust consultation on facilitating a smooth transition from its voluntary consumer protection scheme for heat network suppliers to statutory Ofgem regulation. We also provided a response to the Scottish Government's consultation on potential measures to simplify planning processes and encourage the provision of new homes on behalf of energy consumers. The consultation included specific options related to heat pumps and heat network connections.
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Energy efficiency markets that deliver for consumers	The energy efficiency and low carbon technology markets and supporting landscape better reflect consumer needs. There is an increased understanding of what consumers require in order to make the changes being asked of them. Actions are taken to streamline and improve the consumer journey, raising the standards of advice, protection, and redress, thereby elevating overall consumer confidence.	We published the final report from our first investigation into Scotland’s green home heating market. We made recommendations on the actions required to tackle consumer detriment in this market, including proposals for improved consumer information, advice, funding, standards, enforcement and redress. Our work in this area received widespread media coverage and we are pleased that positive early action is now underway across a number of these areas, including on Energy Performance Certificates, consumer awareness raising and the provision of expert advice. We published new research and recommendations on the actions required to make it easier for consumers in Scotland to take-up low carbon technologies such as heat pumps and solar PV. We have engaged closely with the Scottish Government on its plans for heat in buildings, representing consumer interests on the government’s heat in buildings strategy group. We published a new toolkit to inform policymakers take account consumer interests when addressing climate change. Our ‘4Cs’ framework of cost, convenience, clarity and confidence has attracted significant interest from decision-makers across UK, Scottish and local government. We responded to the UK Parliament Environmental Audit Committee consultation on the Seventh Carbon Budget on behalf of consumers in Scotland. We also responded to the Scottish Government’s consultation on Scotland’s Draft Climate Change Plan: 2026–2040, highlighting key issues for energy consumers in this Plan. We submitted evidence to
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		the Scottish Parliament's Net Zero, Energy and Transport Committee to inform its scrutiny of the draft Climate Change Plan. We responded to Scottish Government consultations of importance to energy consumers, including on Private Rented Sector Minimum Energy Efficiency Standard regulations, on Heat and Energy Efficiency Technical Suitability Assessments response and on community benefits from net zero energy developments. We also responded to the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero consultation to extend the Energy Company Obligation (ECO4) scheme beyond its original end date of March 2026.
Markets, systems and metering	We will engage with a range of processes to represent consumers' interests in proposed changes to energy markets and systems. This will include ongoing engagement with the Review of Electricity Market Arrangements (REMA); gas and electricity network price controls; and working with the NESO in strategic partnership. Ahead of the Radio Teleswitch Service (RTS) switch-off in June 2025, we will continue to play a role in facilitating action and disseminating information across key stakeholders in the sector, including through our participation in the Ofgem RTS working group.	We published commentary of the UK Government's work to date on the Review of Electricity Market Arrangements (REMA) and set out our views on the next steps that are required to deliver positive outcomes for consumers in Scotland. We pressed Ofgem for action over many months to tackle risks to consumers presented by the switch off of RTS electricity meters. The regulator provided written assurance on the phasing of the switch off, contingency planning, customer communications, escalation routes, engineering capacity, and enforcement and accountability. Only select regions with a small number of RTS meters were part of the early phases of the switch off in Scotland while further switch offs were paused until spring 2026 to minimise the

		risk of negative impacts over winter. We continue to engage with Ofgem and the industry, pressing for action to provide funding to consumers to cover the cost of remedial work involved in meter replacements. We encouraged more action by Ofgem and the UK Government to improve the roll out of energy smart meters, highlighting that the supplier-led roll out programme is significantly behind in Scotland in general and in rural and remote Scotland in particular, compared to other parts of Great Britain. As part of our work we responded to the to the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero's (DESNZ) consultations on the smart metering policy framework and on non-domestic smart meter rollout post-2025. We also responded to the Ofgem Smart Meter Guaranteed Standards: Supplier Guaranteed Standards of Performance consultation, drawing attention to the key issues of importance for non-domestic consumers in Scotland. We joined the Smart Energy Code Panel, representing consumers in Scotland on the rights and obligations of energy suppliers, network operators and others involved in the management of smart metering.
The Big Energy Savings Network and Campaign	In 2025-2026, Consumer Scotland continued to work in partnership with Citizens Advice Scotland to deliver support directly to consumers through the Big Energy Savings Network (BESN) project and the Worried This Winter campaign. Both programmes were delivered in communities across Scotland by Citizens Advice Bureaux and other third-sector partners. BESN trains	Through the Big Energy Saving Network, 2,393 for one-to-one advice sessions were delivered by 24 Citizens Advice Bureaux and 9 partner organisations across Scotland, with a further 764 consumers and frontline workers participating in group sessions.

	advisers to deliver vital energy advocacy services to individuals and in group settings, while Worried This Winter provides energy and cost-saving advice in the coldest months.	The <i>Worried this Winter</i> Campaign provided energy saving advice to consumers at participating Citizens Advice Bureaux throughout the season. Over 30 bureaux supported this campaign locally, working with organisations to collaborate on outreach events and reach more people affected by rising living costs.
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Post

Workstream	What do we want to be done differently as a result	Analysis of Performance
Securing a universal postal service that delivers for consumers in Scotland	Changes to the universal postal service to be closely informed by the priorities of consumers in Scotland. Measures to be in place to improve the affordability and reliability of the postal service for consumers. The priorities of postal consumers in Scotland, particular those in vulnerable circumstances, to be better understood by government and the regulator, and will shape any future reform decisions. More stakeholders in Scotland to be aware of and engage in the postal service reform process.	We delivered a significant research and advocacy programme to represent consumers' interests in reforms to the universal postal service. We published new evidence on the potential impact of the changes for consumers in Scotland. Our recommendations were highlighted in the media and we provided evidence to the Scottish Affairs Committee to support its scrutiny of the consumer impacts in Scotland. We engaged widely with Ofcom, Royal Mail and other key stakeholders to advocate for improved consumer outcomes including better provision of information to consumers in both the USO and parcels market. The regulator, Ofcom, subsequently required Royal Mail to establish a Customer Engagement Forum to inform the implementation of the reformed service, responding to a key Consumer Scotland recommendation for a stronger consumer voice in the change process. We provided evidence to Ofcom to inform its review of affordability and pricing in the postal market, with our recommendations focusing on the need to ensure ongoing affordable access to second class post for all consumers. Our work on this issue has attracted significant media coverage. We continue to monitor Royal Mail's performance against its quality of service targets and to raise our concerns about poorly performing postcode areas in Scotland with both Royal Mail and Ofcom. To strengthen our advocacy on this issue, we wrote to all Scottish MPs and MSPs to understand

		specific challenges with postal services being experienced by their constituents. We have raised the issues highlighted through this engagement with both Ofcom and with Royal Mail, through the customer engagement forum.
Equitable postal services for Scotland's islands	Policy makers, including the government and the regulator, Royal Mail, parcel companies and Post Office Ltd to have a new understanding of the experiences and priorities of Scottish island consumers. Specific actions, identified through consumer input to the work, to be taken forward to tackle problems experienced by island consumers when using mail, parcels or Post Office services.	We launched new research to examine how effectively letters, parcels and post offices deliver for consumers in Scotland's islands and identify priorities for improvement. We published initial commentary on the emerging findings from this research in autumn 2025 with the final report in summer 2026. The Scottish Government has recognised the importance of postal services in its new National Islands Plan, reflecting our evidence about postal service standards in Scotland's islands. The Scottish Government has committed to working further with Consumer Scotland on this issue. We have engaged directly with parcel operators to ensure that consumers in rural Scotland are provided with clear and transparent information about the availability of postal products in their area.
Postal Service 2040: designing a consumer-centred future service	The workstream will engage with stakeholders from a wide range of sectors in Scotland, to build understanding of the role of post in current systems, and how this may change in future. There will be a shared vision amongst Scottish stakeholders of how postal services should be designed and delivered in 2040. There will be support for an increased	We launched our work in the future of postal services in Scotland, examining the actions required to deliver good consumer outcomes over the next 15 years, until 2040. To inform our work, we engaged with stakeholders from consumer bodies, postal operators, and regulators. We also undertook a literature review of academic work on postal

	consumer voice in post decision-making Government and the regulator will take a more strategic, future-looking approach to any future changes to postal services.	markets, looking specifically at universal service provision, new technologies, affordability and fairness, among other issues. For the literature review, we considered relevant studies on trends such as declining letter levels, increased demand for parcel deliveries, new technologies and changing international market dynamics. We also examined issues around market regulation, the impact of competition, and the delivery of the Universal Service Obligation (or equivalents) in other countries. The work examined letters, parcels, Post Offices, the role of technology and how changes could improve consumer outcomes, the role of regulation in improving consumer confidence and how market forces may shape consumer needs and behaviours in the future. Our report will be published shortly.
Decarbonised postal markets that deliver for consumers	Postal operators, Ofcom and governments to have a greater understanding of, and give more consideration to decarbonisation of postal deliveries and its relevance to consumer access, information and choice. This will include the needs of small business consumers. Better information to be provided to consumers on the environmental impacts of different delivery options. Parcel operators to be incentivised to develop more carbon neutral methods of delivery.	We published our report on decarbonisation of postal services, examining opportunities on how to reduce emissions in postal services in Scotland. Drawing on a range of qualitative and quantitative consumer research evidence, the report makes recommendations on improving consumer information and choice; enhancing the availability and presentation of data available to consumers to inform decision making; the provision of targeted support to small businesses; and action to address the specific needs of rural and remote consumers in Scotland.

		We undertook advocacy with key stakeholders, including Royal Mail, Ofcom and government, on our findings and recommendations.
Post Offices	We will monitor the data provided to us by Post Office Ltd on the post office network, including location, type of branch and business mix. We will publish a report with our analysis of the audited Post Office data and our assessment of its implications for consumers. We will also engage with the expected UK Government Green Paper on the future of the post office network.	We delivered a package of recommendations to the UK Government to inform its decisions about the future of the Post Office network. The government has accepted one of our key recommendations, to introduce minimum branch standards in post offices from 2026-2027. This will lead to stronger, clearer expectations around the services consumers can rely upon when they enter a post office branch as the service modernises. Following this decision we are now working with Post Office Ltd on the development of these standards to ensure they reflect a consumer viewpoint. The government has also committed to maintaining a minimum of 11,500 post office branches and to retaining geographical access criteria, key actions that we had also recommended. We published new analysis on consumers' use of the post office in Scotland. The research, based on a representative sample of more than 1,000 consumers, examined the mail services that consumers use and want at their post office, as well as consumer preferences on travel distance to their local post office. This work secured significant media coverage.
Tackling post exclusion	We will continue to work with Royal Mail, Post Office Ltd, UK Government and other consumer bodies to	We have worked with Citizens Advice to support the ongoing development of a new 'Address and Collect' scheme which would allow for postally excluded individuals to access

	identify and implement solutions to post exclusion for those consumers with no fixed address.	their mail safely and securely. Through such a scheme, postally excluded groups would be able to access their mail through their local Post Office. We engaged with stakeholders in Scotland representing the three main groups identified as most likely to benefit from the scheme: Homeless people, victim/survivors of domestic abuse, and Gypsy Roma Traveller communities, to test whether the proposed new scheme would meet their needs. We identified a range of factors which may require a modified approach if Address and Collect is to be effectively deployed in Scotland, due to policy, legislative and geographical differences. We provided a detailed report and advice on these issues to Citizens Advice.
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