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| Role | Ordinary Members of the Customer Forum (Water) |
| Remuneration | To be paid an annual sum calculated on the basis of a commitment of up to 50 days per financial year at a daily rate which is equal to that payable from time to time to a member of WICS minus ten percent |
| Location | Scotland |
| Time Commitment | Up to 50 days per year |
| Contract Duration | May 2017 – March 2020. Extension to this appointment may be considered based on the needs of the Forum or SRC process |
| Travel | Across Scotland |
| Number of Vacancies | 3 |

**Background**

The Strategic Review of Charges 2021-2027 (SRC) process is designed to ensure that customers get value for money from the water and waste water services they pay for in terms of both the price that customers pay, and the service which they receive in return. This is an important process for all water customers in Scotland because:

* it sets a limit on the amount that customers can be charged
* it sets out the improvements that Scottish Water is required to deliver

The Water Industry Commission for Scotland (WICS), Scottish Water and the Consumer Futures Unit (CFU) of Citizens Advice Scotland (CAS) are establishing a new Customer Forum which will have a formal role in facilitating effective customer engagement throughout this process. This builds on the success of a similar approach at the last SRC and will ensure that customers’ and communities priorities and views are formally considered and taken into account.

The primary purpose of the Customer Forum is to promote the customer[[1]](#footnote-1) interest and embed it within the SRC process. The positions adopted by the Customer Forum will be informed by research and evidence. This will enable it to be a powerful, authoritative conduit of customers’ views on behalf of all water customers in Scotland. The Customer Forum will work to ensure that customer concerns are consistently understood and considered whilst encouraging customer participation. Where appropriate, the Customer Forum will provide direct advice and collaborate with WICS, the CFU and Scottish Water to find solutions.

The Customer Forum has been established under a Co-operation agreement between the three parties as a separate entity, with a ring-fenced remit. It will consist of a panel of 9 ordinary members and a Chair.

The Chair of the Customer Forum, in consultation with WICS and the CFU, will appoint up to 3 members of the original Customer Forum as ordinary members, to provide continuity. The CFU will nominate between 3 and 6 persons (depending on how many members continue from the previous Forum) with a strong customer focussed reputation as ordinary members. WICS will seek nominations for 3 other ordinary members from registered licensed providers. The persons nominated shall be appointed by the parties under the terms of the Co-operation agreement.

Members will participate in the Customer Forum’s decision making processes including preparation for and attendance at all meetings of the Forum and Forum structures to which they are appointed (such as the Business Plan Agreement Committee). The successful nominees will hold office in their personal capacities and not as a representative of the person(s) who nominated them.

**Key Responsibilities of the Customer Forum**

* The Customer Forum will collaborate with Scottish Water on a programme of high quality quantitative and qualitative research, seeking views and opinions from the public, to establish customers' priorities for service level improvement and their expectations in terms of the level of charges for the service they receive. The Customer Forum will also be able to conduct its own body of in-depth research to support this work, collaborating with the CFU if both parties wish to do so.
* The Customer Forum will advocate the priorities and preferences of customers and communities (as a whole, while taking into account diverse needs and circumstances) in the SRC 2015-2020 process. In this way, they will seek to secure the most appropriate outcome for customers and communities based on those priorities and preferences established through research.
* The Customer Forum will have discretion as to how to frame discussions with Scottish Water and WICS with reference to the views and opinions obtained from the public generally in consumer research. The Customer Forum will work with Scottish Water to agree policy relating to prices and levels of service.
* The Chair and members of the Customer Forum are accountable to WICS, Scottish Water and the CFU for ensuring that they act at all times in a manner consistent with the aims and principles of the Customer Forum.

**Customer Forum Resources**

* The Customer Forum will be provided with an annual budget which will be used for direct costs incurred by the Forum including staff costs, programme costs and running costs.
* Technical assistance to help analyse information will be available from WICS, the CFU and Scottish Water.
* Access to all existing and ongoing customer research in accordance with the agreed Scottish Water research programme.
* Corporate services support from WICS in terms of facilities management; information technology; human resources; senior management; payroll, other banking and accounting functions; Forum Budget management; and general administrative support services.
* Access to meeting rooms within the WICS, SW and CAS offices.

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| **Role Specification: Ordinary** Member of the Customer Forum | | |
| **Remuneration** | Ordinary members that are not employees of, or board members of, the Licensed Providers shall:   * be paid an annual sum calculated on the basis of a commitment of up to 50 days per financial year at a daily rate which is equal to that payable from time to time to a member of WICS Board minus ten percent. * be reimbursed for properly incurred expenses, which have been approved in advance by the Chair, in line with the WICS travel and expenses policy, upon submission of the relevant receipts to the Commission * be appointed for the period of May 2017 to March 2020 with a possibility of extension | |
| **Purpose of role** | * To promote the views and opinions of customers in the Strategic Review of Charges 2021-2027 process and to ensure that all advice is provided in good faith and based on robust research findings * To ensure that the Customer Forum is independent and impartial in its work to represent customers * To participate in the Customer Forum’s decision making processes including preparation for and attendance at all meetings of the Forum and Forum structures to which they are appointed (such as the Business Plan Agreement Committee) | |
| **Accountable for outcomes** | Contributes to the strategic outcomes of the Customer Forum, with respect to:   * establishing customers’ priorities for services * establishing customers’ expectations in terms of the level of charges * raising the influence of customers over the services they receive and price they pay | |
| **Reports to** | * The Chair of the Customer Forum | |
| **Key peer relationships** | * The CFU * WICS | |
| **Key accountabilities** | Works with the Chair to:  **Establish a strong research and evidence base**   * To influence and input to both the Scottish Water, the CFU and Customer Forum research programmes to ensure that the views they have are representative of Scottish Water customers * If both parties wish it, to collaborate with the CFU on research in the context of the SRC 2021-27   **Communication of Customers’ views**   * To undertake and encourage actions that build trust and credibility for the purpose of involving customers in the SRC process * To accurately portray the role of customers and communities in the decision making process * To ensure that the decision making process and evidence base in relation to identifying and representing customer and communities views are publicly available * To ensure that customers as a whole have fair and equal access to the process and the opportunity to influence decisions * To promote the value and use of customer participation * To encourage the free flow of ideas from Customer Forum staff and members to ensure a high level of participation from a wide range of sources   **Business management**   * To input to the Customer Forum work plan and budget * Members will participate in the Customer Forum’s decision making processes including preparation for and attendance at all meetings of the Forum and Forum structures to which they are appointed (such as the Business Plan Agreement Committee) |

**The Candidate**

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| **Skills and Experience** | |
| **Essential** | Effective team working, committee working skills and decision-making skills |
| Ability to uphold the principles of selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership |
| Ability to absorb, evaluate and interpret complex information |
| Demonstrate independence of judgement by challenging assumptions |
| Current knowledge and commitment to the interests of consumers |
| Excellent communication, representational, negotiation and mediation skills |
| Experience of the public or private sector; or regulated industry environment |
| **Desirable** | Ability to evaluate research and ensure that it is providing legitimate evidence of customer interests |
| Experience of articulating customer interests, concerns and perspectives whilst keeping an open mind to other views |
| Ability to empathise with the consumer perspective especially with the hard to reach groups |
| Experience in engaging with consumers and service users |
| Ability to ensure that customer concerns are consistently understood and considered |

Members of the Customer Forum must not:

* hold political office or be standing as a political candidate for election at any level
* have any criminal convictions
* have been disqualified from acting as a director
* be an employee or board member of, or have any commercial relationship with, SW, CAS or the WICS

1. This includes customers who don’t use the service at present but who might need to in the future, or who should have access to the service just now but for some reason do not. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)