

About the Company

The Consumer Council is a non-departmental public body (NDPB) established through the General Consumer Council (Northern Ireland) Order 1984. They provide free, independent support and advice for all consumers and businesses in Northern Ireland.



The Challenge



The organisation represents all consumers but has a particular regard for those who are vulnerable. The client wanted to develop their team's understanding of vulnerability and ensure that they had the skills to evolve as an organisation to meet the demands of all kinds of vulnerabilities.

The objective was to gain a more in-depth understanding of vulnerability and ensure that the staff all had the skills and confidence to better assist vulnerable consumers.

The Solution

Across the organisation there were different levels of skill and knowledge of vulnerability. The training was an opportunity to come together as an organisation and ensure that all of their employees had a better insight into vulnerability and the skills to communicate and provide a first-class service to vulnerable consumers. It was also an opportunity for everyone to think about what they can do more of or what they can improve upon for vulnerable consumers.

We delivered 2-days of 'Supporting Vulnerable Customer' training with 28 team members across all departments at their offices in Belfast.

The training course covered the four main elements of vulnerability good practice:



1. Understanding Vulnerability
2. Recognising Vulnerability
3. Identifying Needs
4. Adapting to Needs

Taking into account the client's requirements, we provided activities and discussions throughout the day that focused on recognising the indicators of vulnerability and signposting.

The training course was interactive with tasks and activities relevant to the topic. The course allowed participants to individually reflect, share personal experiences and good practice in a safe and confidential environment.



Results

The training was completed in March 2020 just before Northern Ireland went into lockdown because of the pandemic, so it was a very apt time. The Consumer Council didn't realise just how important the training would be at the time, nothing could have prepared them for the impact of Covid-19.



The training definitely helped prepare staff for the increased calls they received from vulnerable consumers and improved their skills and knowledge on how to assist them better. It also made the staff think about how they could be pro-active in assisting vulnerable consumers and as a result they have implemented several new services and initiatives aimed specifically at vulnerable consumers.

Staff have a greater understanding and insight into vulnerability and it is now a consistent understanding across the whole organisation, regardless of whether staff are front-line or work on policy. The overall benefit of the training has been the change in staff, drive and willingness to improve the services they offer to vulnerable consumers. The staff have been going above and beyond to assist consumers during Covid-19 and the training has definitely paid off.

“What made the training so enjoyable was how Helen delivered it. She is extremely personable and used real-life stories and examples to explain vulnerability that made it interesting and thought-provoking. I would highly recommend the training for all organisations and hope to expand on this training in the future with Helen.”



“Helen was extremely personable and really connected with me and our training group. The course was very interactive and also thought-provoking and poignant. I have taken lots of new ideas away and will apply this to my day to day interactions with consumers. Thank you”

“Great training session expertly delivered. Eye opening, thought-provoking, and insightful”

“Excellent training, thank you”

“Very interesting and informative and loved the interaction with real life examples to share”

Can Helen Pettifer Training Help you?

Customer Service Consultancy and Training, specialising in Vulnerable Customers. Helen Pettifer Training provides in-house and on-line training, training manuals and eBooks. As well as compliance support, documentation and policy consultation.

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