



SCoWR Steering Group

Members' Terms of Reference and Information

SCoWR is an informal coalition of organisations and individuals who campaign for a better social security system. SCoWR was launched in 2006, when members came together to campaign against the then UK Government's welfare reform proposals.

Since then, SCoWR has worked to shift the narrative around social security and benefit claimants, arguing for a more rights-based system. This has included producing briefings for parliamentarians at both Westminster and Holyrood. For details of previous campaigning activity, see <http://www.cpag.org.uk/scotland/SCoWR>.

SCoWR encompasses a very wide range of over 40 organisations drawn from key third sector organisations, charities, faith groups and unions. One of the campaign's great strengths is that it represents the common views of much of civic society from across Scotland.

Membership

Membership of SCoWR is open to both organisations and individuals who sign up to the five principles in the Manifesto. There are no membership fees. All members are welcome to get involved in the running of the Steering Group.

Policy

SCoWR core policy is set out in our [Manifesto for Change](#). The Manifesto grew out of a strategic decision to shift the coalition's previous focus from reacting to the UK government agenda to beginning to set out an alternative to the current social security system as well as influencing new devolved social security powers (although SCoWR continues to be involved in responding to ongoing reforms to UK-wide benefits as well).

The SCoWR Manifesto was originally published as a result of a member's conference, followed by a line-by-line negotiation on the final manifesto. The manifesto was refreshed by the Steering Group and reaffirmed by the wider membership in autumn 2013.

The [SCoWR Manifesto Supplement 2016](#) was used for the Scottish parliamentary elections. It is a supplement to the SCoWR 'Manifesto for Change', focused on the development of a new Scottish social security system.

Policy is developed through open members' meetings and Steering Group meetings. Ongoing consultation responses and parliamentary briefings are drafted, discussed and signed off by Steering Group members before publication. Since the Manifesto forms the basis of membership, all work produced by SCoWR should be consistent with the principles set out in the Manifesto.

Media

As with other policy statements, in order to reflect the view of our members as a whole, all media comment should be consistent with, and not go beyond, the Manifesto principles. Two or more of SCoWR's leading members - CPAG, OPFS and the Poverty Alliance sign off Media comment. All members are encouraged to engage in joint media work.

Steering Group members are encouraged to also highlight their membership of SCoWR in their own media releases where appropriate (i.e. when they are commenting on issues in line with the Manifesto's calls). When doing so, they should add the standard statement on SCoWR to the notes of such press releases (see below).

SCoWR policy and members' policy

Membership of SCoWR does not, of course, imply that members need restrict their social security campaigning to those issues set out in the Manifesto. Members represent many different interests and have different areas of expertise. SCoWR provides a forum for members to articulate broad shared overarching concerns and principles whilst leaving individual organisation free to lobby in more detail on their own areas of interest. The strength of the coalition is its breadth on the one hand, and shared commitment to the principles set out in the Manifesto on the other.

When discussing policy priorities for SCoWR as a campaign, the Steering Group will attempt to reach a consensus position, bedded in the principles themselves. Where this process does not result in complete agreement, the Steering Group will generally err on the side of caution, to ensure that SCoWR's position does not contradict that of individual members.

Steering Group

The Steering Group meets monthly, alternating between Glasgow and Edinburgh. Steering Group members provide venues for meetings.

The co-ordination of SCoWR and chairing of Steering Group meetings is currently shared between OPFS, CPAG in Scotland and the Poverty Alliance. Other Steering Group members are encouraged to take an active role in co-ordinating the campaign. There is no formal secretariat and therefore members are expected to take turns in producing minutes etc. The chair of the forthcoming meeting ensures that agendas and minutes etc are circulated in advance.

As SCoWR does not have any paid staff, the Steering Group is responsible for both strategic decision-making and the implementation of the work of the campaign. The SCoWR Steering Group also acts as a forum for information exchange about member's activities, wider policy developments and other relevant matters.

Steering Group minutes are circulated to the wider membership. Between meetings, administrative matters are dealt with by email between Steering Group members, to avoid large numbers of emails being sent to the wider membership.

Membership

There are currently 10-15 organisations on the Steering Group.

Membership of the Steering Group is open to any members who wish to get more involved in the campaign and able to commit to sharing in the work of the group.

CPAG ensures that the membership and contacts database, and steering group email distribution list are up to date.

Membership enquiries are likely to be made to the people named on the SCoWR manifesto in the first instance. Other Steering Group members can re-direct any membership enquiries that they may receive to CPAG (info@cpag.org.uk), OPFS (info@opfs.org.uk) or the Poverty Alliance (admin@povertyalliance.org)

Communication

SCoWR does not have a website or Facebook but has a twitter account [@SCOWR Scotland](https://twitter.com/SCOWR_Scotland). Steering Group members are encouraged to highlight SCoWR information, media releases etc on their individual websites etc.

Finances

SCoWR does not have any resources beyond what Steering Group members are able to commit. All expenses are currently paid for on an ad hoc basis. In practice, from time to time, individual Steering Group members will offer to pay for one-off expenses.

Alternatively, members agree to contribute to a particular expense jointly. In this case, because SCoWR does not hold an account, an individual member pays for the expense up front and then invoices those who have agreed to contribute.

Steering Group members may also from time to time ask the wider membership to make contributions to costs if they wish.

As the Steering Group is large and generally well-attended expenses are low when shared amongst members. However, there is no expectation that all members should contribute. SCoWR recognises that different members will have different level of resources available at different times.

In general, expenses are required to cover items such as artwork and printing, venue hire and associated expenses for public events such as members' conferences, fringe meetings at Party Conferences etc. It is for the Steering Group to prioritise what they wish to spend monies on.

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