

SPCA Community Support Officer



Community Support Officers (CSOs) work to help animals and the people who care for them. They answer questions, assist with animal emergencies, and make sure animals are safe and well cared for. They also support SPCA Centres with animal care, admin tasks and fostering.

CSOs visit schools, community groups and events to talk about caring for animals. They support SPCA events and campaigns, promote kindness to animals and build connections within their community. CSOs need strong communication skills and a passion for helping people and animals.

Staff Interview:

We interviewed Eric Odell about his experience as an SPCA Community Support Officer and here's what he had to say:



1 Why did you want to become an SPCA Community Support Officer?

Advocating for animals in our communities has always been a passion of mine. In the past I've focused on wildlife conservation and education, but the CSO role is a great opportunity to advocate for the animals a bit closer to home.



Visit spca.nz/kids to learn more about animal welfare careers.



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2 What are the main responsibilities and tasks of an SPCA CSO?

CSOs have many different responsibilities, such as:

Ambulance calls: When a member of the public calls about a sick, injured, or at risk animal often a CSO will collect the animal and transport them to either an SPCA Centre, a veterinarian, or back to their home.

Events: CSOs attend local events like street markets, A&P shows, or gala days. These are great opportunities to fundraise, recruit volunteers and foster parents, and share animal welfare knowledge with the community.

Education: Giving talks and answering questions in schools and community groups.

3 What do you enjoy most about being an SPCA CSO?

Every day is different! Some days it's ambulance calls non-stop, other days it's in the office replying to emails and event planning. While other days it's visiting a school for their "pet day". On really busy days it can be all of those, and more!

4 What did you have to do to become an SPCA CSO?

I applied for the job! I had to pass a police background check, have a driver's licence and be eligible to become an Auxiliary Officer as well.



5 What skills do you think you need to be an SPCA CSO?

A great CSO needs a mix of skills. Clear communication is important, along with the ability to multitask and manage many jobs at once. You also need emotional and physical resilience. As the "face of SPCA," some days you'll listen to people's worries; other days you might be running down the road trying to catch a stray goat!

6 What advice would you give to someone who wants to become an SPCA Community Support Officer?

Work on your people skills and public speaking. A lot of the role involves explaining what SPCA does and why it's important. Strong communication skills help you share messages clearly to educate, recruit, fundraise, and connect with the community.



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How to become an SPCA Community Support Officer:

To become an SPCA Community Support Officer, you must hold, or be willing to gain, an Auxiliary Officer Licence under the Animal Welfare Act 1999. This qualification allows you to act as an animal welfare officer for SPCA.

Additionally, having the below experiences and qualifications will help you become a Community Support Officer:

- Animal welfare and/or extensive animal handling experience.
- Full, clean driver's licence with the ability to drive a manual vehicle.
- Ability to work in the field which requires a degree of physical fitness.
- Strong communication and problem-solving skills.



Fun SPCA Community Support Officer Fact:

The hardest part about attending community events isn't talking all day or fundraising, it's setting up the tent and tables and making sure nothing blows away in the wind!



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