



CUSTOMER complaints

A GUIDE TO OUR COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE



An Agency within the Department of

**Finance and
Personnel**

www.dfpni.gov.uk



Awarded for excellence



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

1. Introduction

We are committed to providing the highest standard of service to all our customers. Our aim is to get things right first time. Details of the standards you can expect are set out in our Charter Statement, which you can get from any of our offices. However, if you are not entirely satisfied with any aspect of our service, please let us know and we will do our best to resolve the matter as quickly as possible.

2. What complaints we can deal with

We can deal with your complaints about the standard of service you have received in relation to us:

- collecting and recovering rates;
- managing the Housing Benefit Scheme for owner-occupiers; and
- managing the Disabled Person's Allowance Scheme.

There is a separate Housing Benefit appeals procedure if you do not agree with the amount of Housing Benefit you are receiving. You can get details from Housing Benefit Central Unit, Londonderry House, Chichester Street, Belfast, BT1 4JJ. (Telephone 0800 5877477).

If you wish to make a complaint about any related services, please see Section 4.

3. How to make a complaint to the RCA

Informal procedure

We feel that most complaints can be sorted out quickly and satisfactorily by contacting the person you have been dealing with. Our staff will wear name badges and will also give their name over the phone and on any letters, faxes or e-mails. If you are not satisfied with the response, you may use our formal complaints procedure.

Formal procedure

Our complaints procedure has two stages.

Stage 1 – Write to the manager of the office involved, or e-mail the Customer Service Manager (at customerservices.rca@dfpni.gov.uk), setting out full details of your complaint. The matter will be fully investigated and they will send you a reply within 10 working days of receiving your letter or e-mail. If they cannot give you a full reply within this timescale, they will let you know how it is progressing and when you can expect a full response. (See section 5 for details of our office addresses).

Stage 2 – If you are not satisfied with the reply, you may write to:

**Mr Arthur Scott
Chief Executive
Rate Collection Agency
Oxford House
49-55 Chichester Street,
Belfast BT1 4HH.**

The Chief Executive will look at your complaint and the original response, and will reply to you, again within 10 working days.

If he cannot give you a full reply within this timescale, he will let you know how it is progressing and when you can expect a full response.

What you can expect

Your complaint will:

- be acknowledged immediately and investigated thoroughly;
- be treated confidentially; and
- not affect your continuing right to be treated fairly by us.

Our reply will:

- give a full explanation of our investigations;
- give an apology where we have made a mistake; and
- let you know what we have done to put things right.

The Assembly Ombudsman

If you are not satisfied with how we have handled your complaint, you can ask the Ombudsman to investigate the matter for you. However, the Ombudsman will generally expect you to have used our complaints procedure before he will accept your complaint. You must send a written complaint to the Ombudsman through a Member of the Legislative Assembly (MLA). You may contact the Ombudsman in a number of ways:

By Phone:

Freephone: 0800 343424
(You do not have to pay for this call).

By Letter:

The Assembly Ombudsman
Freepost
Belfast
BT1 6BR
(You do not need a stamp)

In Person:

The Ombudsman's Office
Progressive House
33 Wellington Place
Belfast
BT1 6HN

By Fax:

028 90234912

By E-mail:

ombudsman@ni-ombudsman.org.uk

4. Complaints or questions about related services

This procedure covers all the areas that we are responsible for, but other matters may arise which are about related services. If your question is about any of the following, you should contact the appropriate organisation directly.

**Valuation of Property
(including Appeals)**

This is the responsibility of the Valuation and Lands Agency. (See the phone book for local office addresses and phone numbers).

**Amount of the District
Rate and the services that
are provided, such as
leisure facilities and street
cleaning.**

This is the responsibility of each district council. (See the phone book for the address and phone number of your local council).

**Amount of the
Regional Rate**

This is the responsibility of the Department of Finance and Personnel. You can contact them at:
Rating Policy Branch
Rathgael House
Balloo Road
Bangor
BT19 7NA

Other Services

The Roads Service is responsible for things like street lighting and roads, and the Water Service is responsible for water and sewerage. (See the phone book for local offices addresses and phone numbers).

**Housing Benefit
Legislation**

This is the responsibility of the Social Security Agency.
You can contact them at:
Housing Benefit Policy Branch
Castle Buildings
Stormont
Belfast
BT4 3SJ

5. Our office contact details

Office	District Council areas	Address	Phone and fax number
North Eastern	Antrim, Ballymena, Ballymoney, Larne, Magherafelt, Moyle	Academy House 121A Broughshane Street, Ballymena BT43 6HY	Phone: 028 25664700 Fax: 028 25664715
Eastern	Ards, Belfast, Carrickfergus, Castlereagh, Down, Lisburn, Newtownabbey, North Down	Londonderry House 21-27 Chichester St Belfast BT1 4JJ	Phone: 028 90252757 Fax: 028 90252724
Southern	Armagh, Banbridge, Craigavon, Newry and Mourne	16 West Street Portadown BT62 3PD	Phone: 028 38396200 Fax: 028 38396222
North Western	Coleraine, Limavady, Derry, Strabane	Orchard House 40 Foyle Street Londonderry BT48 6AT	Phone: 028 71319900 Fax: 028 71319841
South Western	Cookstown, Dungannon, Fermanagh, Omagh	Boaz House 15 Scarffe's Entry Omagh BT78 1BR	Phone: 028 82254777 Fax: 028 82254722
Housing Benefit Central Unit	All District Council areas	Londonderry House 21-27 Chichester St Belfast BT1 4JJ	Phone: 0800 5877477 Fax: 028 90542960
Customer Services	All District Council areas	Oxford House 49-55 Chichester St Belfast BT1 4HH	Phone: 028 90252252 Fax: 028 90252113

You can get information about us on the Internet. Our website address is <http://www.ratecollectionagencyni.gov.uk>
You may E-mail us at Customerservices.rca@dfpni.gov.uk