



Department of
**Finance and
Personnel**

www.dfpni.gov.uk

customer service standards

the standard of service you can expect from
the Department of Finance and Personnel



contents

customer service standards

	Page
1. Introduction	2
2. Standards	3
- Publishing service standards	3
- Informing the customer	3
- Service accessibility	3
- Consulting with customers	3
- Polite and helpful staff	4
- Seeing callers	4
- Answering telephone calls	4
- Answering letters, faxes and emails	4
- Having a complaints procedure	5
3. Contacting DFP	6
Contacting the NI Ombudsman	6

1

Introduction

The Department of Finance and Personnel (DFP) is committed to providing a high standard of service at all times.

This leaflet sets out the MINIMUM standards of service you can expect from us. If we do not meet these standards then you can expect a full explanation from us as to why. We would like to know if you are not satisfied. Your feedback helps us to put things right if they have gone wrong and to improve the standard of our services.

We will:

- publish a set of nine customer service standards including the complaints procedure for the Department;
- provide you with:
 - (i) clear information about our services;
 - (ii) telephone enquiry points to help you or put you in touch with someone who can.
- take all reasonable steps to make services accessible to everyone, including people with special needs;
- consult you regularly about services and report on findings;
- ensure that staff are polite and helpful at all times;
- aim to see callers at appointed time;
- aim to answer your telephone calls as promptly as possible and tell you the name and business area of the person to whom you are speaking;
- answer your letters, faxes and emails clearly within 10 working days (for general correspondence), 20 working days (for Freedom of Information Act and Environmental Information Regulations requests), and 40 calendar days (for Data Protection Act requests).

2

Standards

Standard 1 - Publishing service standards

- Copies of the Department's customer service standards will be made available on the DFP internet (www.dfpni.gov.uk) or posted out on request.
- The Departments Directorates/Agencies reserve the right to produce their own more stringent customer service standards which will be made available to all their internal and external customer groups.

Standard 2 - Informing the customer

- Details of the services provided by each of the Directorates/Agencies including contact names and numbers will be placed on the DFP internet site and updated, when necessary.
- Contact names and numbers will be included in the documented service standards for the Directorate/Agency.

Standard 3 - Service accessibility

- Where documents do not meet the needs of the customer, alternative arrangements for communication of the information may be considered where it is practical and appropriate to do so.
- All DFP accommodation will be made fully accessible to all callers including people with special needs where it is feasible to do so.
- Where this is not possible, every attempt will be made to provide alternative access arrangements for customers where necessary.

Standard 4 - Consulting with customers

- The customers of all Directorates/Agencies will be surveyed on a regular basis.
- Customer satisfaction survey results will be published.
- Customer satisfaction levels will be reviewed and opportunities for improvement integrated with the Department's Improvement Plan and/ or Directorate/Agency improvement plans. Improvement targets will be included in the Department's Annual Business Plan.

2

Standards (cont'd)

Standard 5 - Polite and helpful staff

- Staff will always act in a professional, polite and helpful manner.

Standard 6 - Seeing callers

- Reception areas will be advised of expected visitors in advance.
- Expected visitors will be seen within 10 minutes of their appointment.
- When we make an appointment to meet you we will aim to:
Arrive promptly or, if you are calling to see us, see you at the appointed time. On occasions when we are delayed more than 10 minutes due to circumstances beyond our control, we will make every effort to advise you of this and agree a new time.

Standard 7 - Answering telephone calls

- Staff will give name and division or business unit when answering telephone calls.
- Phones will be answered as promptly as possible.
- Following no more than 6 rings unanswered telephones will automatically divert to voicemail or an alternative extension.

Standard 8 - Answering letters, faxes and emails

- All emails will include contact details for internal/external customers.
- "Out of office emails" will be used during periods of absence and will provide alternative contact details.
- Where substantive responses to correspondence are unlikely to be provided promptly, ie within 10 working days, a holding response, acknowledging receipt of the correspondence will be issued within 3 working days.
- Official letter headed paper will be used where appropriate.

2

Standards (cont'd)

Standard 9 - Having a complaints procedure

The Department of Finance and Personnel and its Directorates/Agencies take all complaints about the quality of its services seriously. We will provide a speedy response and a full and fair investigation of your complaint, respecting your right to confidentiality.

Initially you should take-up your complaint directly and informally with the person with whom you have been in contact. You can express your dissatisfaction by letter, fax, email or telephone. You can expect a reply from us within 10 working days.

DFP and its Directorates/Agencies have the following 2-stage formal complaints process.

Stage 1: If you are not satisfied with the initial response you should then write to the line manager of the person you have been dealing with setting out your complaint clearly and in detail. Our target for replying to such formal complaints is 10 working days from the date of receipt. If a full reply cannot be issued within this time, (eg if further information is required) an interim reply should be issued which will include an indication as to when a final reply can be expected.

Stage 2: If you are still not satisfied with our explanation you can write to the Head of Departmental Directorate or the Chief Executive of the Agency. You will receive a full response within a further 15 working days.

If you continue to be dissatisfied you may ask a Member of the Assembly (MLA) to refer your complaint to the Office of the Northern Ireland Ombudsman for investigation. You will be expected to have already been through our formal complaints process, before requesting your MLA to take the matter up with the Ombudsman. In such circumstances the Office of the Ombudsman will consider the facts of each case and decide if the complaint falls within the jurisdiction of the Ombudsman.

The website for the Northern Ireland Ombudsman is www.ni-ombudsman.org.uk. Other contact details for the NI Ombudsman are at the end of this document.

Please note that this procedure relates to complaints about the service we provide and not about Government policy, the content of legislation or contractual issues. However when your complaint does not involve the Department of Finance and Personnel or is a matter outside our control, we will do our best to advise you how to pursue it.

Helping us to improve our service

We aim to improve our service by

- Listening to your views and ideas
- Taking full account of your complaints
- Undertaking customer surveys
- Reviewing and evaluating our performance annually and publishing the results
- Maintaining a complaints Register for each Directorate/Agency

3

Contacting DFP

DFP has numerous offices throughout Northern Ireland and the main Directorates/Agencies can be contacted:

Corporate Human Resources

6th Floor, Royston House
Upper Queen Street
Belfast BT1 6FD

Tel: 028 90 547400
Network extension: 47400

Central Procurement Directorate

2nd Floor, Clare House
303 Airport Road West
Belfast BT3 9ED

Tel: 028 90 816360
Network Extension: 76360
Email: procure.info@dfpni.gov.uk

Corporate Services Group

Rathgael House
Balloo Road
Bangor BT19 7NA

Tel: 028 91 858044
Network Extension: 68044

Central Finance Group

Rathgael House
Balloo Road
Bangor BT19 7NA

Tel: 028 91 858187
Network Extension: 68187

Departmental Solicitor's Office

Victoria Hall
12 May Street
Belfast

Tel: 028 90 251160
Network Extension: 51160

Land and Property Services

Customer Service Team
5th Floor, Lincoln Building
27-45 Great Victoria Street
Belfast BT2 7SL

Tel: 028 90 251859
Email: customerservices@lpsni.gov.uk

Northern Ireland Statistics & Research Agency

Corporate Service
McAuley House
2-14 Castle Street, Belfast BT1 1SA

Tel: 028 90 348100
Network Extension: 68100

Or you can contact our switch board (9.00am - 5.15pm) Monday-Friday on 028 91 858111 and they will direct you to the appropriate Directorate/Agency.

Contacting the NI Ombudsman

Office of the NI Ombudsman

Progressive House
33 Wellington Place
Belfast

Tel: Freephone 028 90 251859 or;
Switchboard 028 9023 3821
Fax: 028 9023 4912
You can write to: The Ombudsman, Freepost BEL 1478,
Belfast BT1 6BR; or
Call at the The Ombudsman's Office between 9.30am
and 4pm