



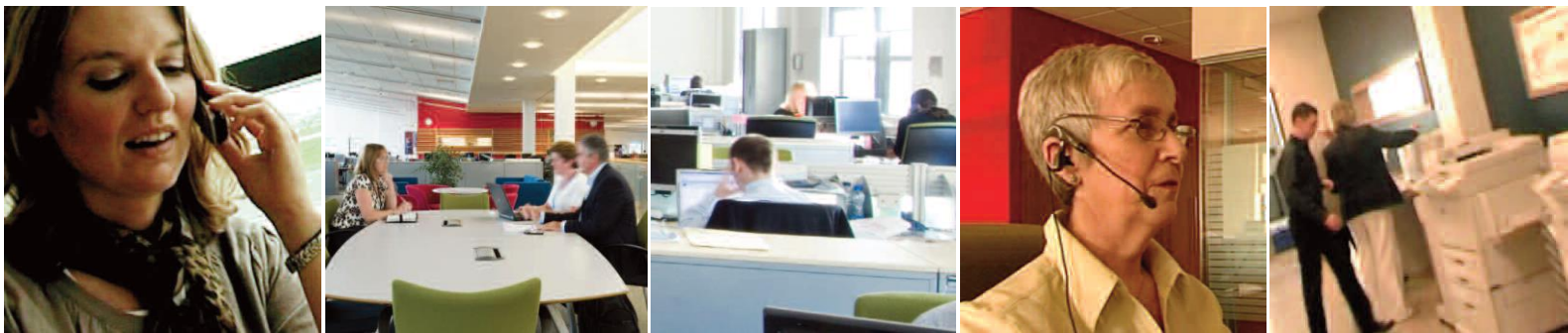
Department of  
**Finance**

An Roinn

**Airgeadais**

[www.finance-ni.gov.uk](http://www.finance-ni.gov.uk)

# customer service standards



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## customer service standards

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# 1

# Introduction

**The Department of Finance (DoF) is committed to providing a high standard of service at all times, details of which are set out in this leaflet.**

We will:

- publish a set of nine customer service standards, including the complaints procedure for the Department;
- provide you with clear information about our services and contact details;
- take all reasonable steps to make services accessible to everyone, including people with special needs;
- consult you regularly about services and report on findings;
- expect our staff to be polite and helpful at all times;
- aim to see callers at the appointed time;
- aim to answer your telephone calls promptly; and
- answer your general written correspondence within 10 working days; answer Freedom of Information Act requests and Environmental Information Regulations requests within 20 working days; and answer Data Protection Act requests within 40 calendar days.

# 2

## Standards

### Standard 1 – Publishing customer service standards

- A copy of the Department's customer service standards will be published on the DoF internet ([www.finance-ni.gov.uk/](http://www.finance-ni.gov.uk/)). Hard copies will be provided on request.
- The Department's Directorates/Agency may produce their own more detailed customer service standards, which will be made available to all their internal and external customer groups.

### Standard 2 – Informing the customer

- Information about the services provided by each of the Directorates/Agency, including contact details, will be published on the DoF internet site and updated as necessary.
- Contact details will be included in the service standards for the Directorate/Agency.

### Standard 3 – Service accessibility

- Where documents do not meet the needs of a customer, alternative formats will be considered.
- We will endeavour, where possible, to ensure that DoF accommodation is accessible to customers.
- Where this is not possible, every attempt will be made to provide alternative access arrangements for customers.

### Standard 4 – Consulting with customers

- The customers of all Directorates/Agency will be surveyed on a regular basis.
- Customer satisfaction survey results will be published.

# 2

## Standards (cont'd)

### **Standard 5 – Polite and helpful staff**

- We expect our staff to act in a professional, polite and helpful manner.

### **Standard 6 – Seeing callers**

- Reception areas will be notified of expected visitors in advance.
- We will aim to see you at the appointed time.
- If we are delayed more than 10 minutes, we will make every effort to contact you and, if necessary, arrange a new appointment.

### **Standard 7 – Answering telephone calls**

- Staff will give their name and division or business unit when answering telephone calls.
- We will aim to answer phones promptly.
- Unanswered telephones will automatically divert to voicemail or an alternative extension after 6 rings.

### **Standard 8 – Answering written correspondence**

- All our emails will include our contact details.
- “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, i.e. 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 its Directorates/Agency take all complaints about the quality of their services seriously. We will provide a timely response and a full and fair investigation of your complaint.

#### Making a complaint

Our Complaints Procedure is designed to address any specific concerns that relate to the quality of customer service provided by our staff.

This might include:

- maladministration
- delays in receiving information/responses within accepted timeframes
- difficulty in contacting the correct office, branch or person
- incorrect information or guidance issued by the Department
- attitude and conduct of staff

The DoF Complaints Procedure does not cover:

- a routine first-time request for a service
- issues that are in court or have already been heard by a court or tribunal
- disagreement with a decision where a statutory right of appeal or other procedure for review exists
- an attempt to reopen a previously concluded complaint (or appeal) or to have a complaint (or appeal) reconsidered where the final decision has been given
- contractual issues
- matters of policy or legislation which are the direct responsibility of the Minister

#### How to make a complaint

##### Informal procedure

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 in writing or by telephone. If you are putting your complaint in writing, please clearly state the reason for your complaint in the 'Subject' bar of your email, or at the top of your letter, and provide as much information as possible about your complaint along with contact details, such as your name, telephone number, email address

# 2

## Standards (cont'd)

and/or postal address. You can expect a reply from us within 10 working days. Our reply will also include details of the person (i.e. the line manager) you can complain to if you are not happy with the response at this stage.

### Formal procedure

DoF and its Directorates/Agency have the following 2-stage formal complaints process:

**Stage 1:** If you are not satisfied with the initial response, you should send a written complaint to the line manager of the person you have been dealing with. Please clearly state the reason for your complaint in the 'Subject' bar of your email, or at the top of your letter, and provide as much information as possible about your complaint along with contact details, such as your name, telephone number, email address and/or postal address. Our target for replying to formal complaints is 10 working days from the date of receipt. If a full reply cannot be issued within this time (e.g. 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. Contact details for the Director/Chief Executive will also be included in the substantive response.

**Stage 2:** If you are not satisfied with our response at Stage 1, you can write to the Director of the appropriate business area or the Chief Executive of the Agency. You will receive a full response within a further 15 working days.

### **Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman**

If you continue to be dissatisfied, you can bring your complaint to the Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman (NIPSO) within six months of the completion of DoF's internal complaints procedure. (The NIPSO, in certain circumstances, may investigate a complaint outside the time limit.)

Contact details for the NIPSO are provided at the end of this document.

# 2

## Standards (cont'd)

### 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 periodically and publishing the results; and
- Maintaining a Complaints Register for each Directorate/Agency.



# 3

## Contacting DoF

DoF has numerous offices throughout Northern Ireland and the main Directorates/Agency can be contacted as follows:

### **Central Procurement Directorate**

Level 2  
Clare House  
303 Airport Road West  
Belfast BT3 9ED  
Email: [procure.info@finance-ni.gov.uk](mailto:procure.info@finance-ni.gov.uk)

Tel: 028 9081 6200

### **Departmental Solicitor's Office**

Victoria Hall  
12 May Street  
Belfast BT1 4NL

Tel: 028 9025 1227  
Network Extension: 51227

### **Enterprise Shared Services**

Business Support Division  
Craigantlet Buildings  
Stoney Road  
Belfast BT4 3SX

Tel: 028 9016 3062  
Network Extension: 73062

### **Finance and Corporate Services Division**

4<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Goodwood House  
44-58 May Street  
Belfast BT1 4NN

Tel: 028 9025 4723  
Network Extension: 54723

### **Land & Property Services**

Corporate Correspondence  
and Complaints Unit  
Lanyon Plaza  
7 Lanyon Place  
Belfast BT1 3LP  
Email: [customerservices@lpsni.gov.uk](mailto:customerservices@lpsni.gov.uk)

Tel: 0300 200 7805

# 3

## Contacting DoF

### **NICS Human Resources (NICS HR)**

2-4 Bruce Street  
Belfast  
BT2 7JD

Email: [NICSHRSupport.SpecialistServices@finance-ni.gov.uk](mailto:NICSHRSupport.SpecialistServices@finance-ni.gov.uk)

### **Northern Ireland Statistics & Research Agency**

Colby House  
Stranmillis Court  
Stranmillis Road  
Belfast BT9 5RR

Email: [info@nisra.gov.uk](mailto:info@nisra.gov.uk)

Tel: 028 9038 8400

Network Extension: 82600

### **Public Spending Directorate**

Clare House  
303 Airport Road  
Belfast BT3 9ED

Tel: 028 9081 6813

Network Extension: 76813

### **Strategic Policy and Reform Directorate**

James House  
Gasworks Business Park  
2-4 Cromac Avenue  
Belfast BT7 2JB

Tel: 028 9081 9670

Network Extension: 37670

**You can also contact our switchboard (8.30am - 5.30pm) Monday to Friday on 028 91 858111 and they will direct you to the appropriate Directorate/Agency.**

# 4

## Contacting the NIPSO

### **Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman**

Progressive House  
33 Wellington Place  
Belfast BT1 6HN

*Opening Hours:* 9.00am - 5.00pm, Monday to Friday (excluding Public Holidays)

Telephone: 028 9023 3821  
Text Phone: 028 9089 7789  
Freephone: 0800 34 34 24  
Email: [nipso@nipso.org.uk](mailto:nipso@nipso.org.uk)  
Freepost: Freepost NIPSO  
Website: [www.nipso.org.uk/nipso/](http://www.nipso.org.uk/nipso/)