



**An Roinn Caiteachais
Phoiblí agus Athchóirithe**
Department of Public
Expenditure and Reform

Customer Action Plan 2019-2022



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Customer Action Plan 2019-2022



Foreword by the Secretary General

The provision of quality customer service is an essential element of the modern Public Service.

This Department is very conscious of the need to continue to provide the highest level of service to our customers. We are committed to ensuring that the principles of quality customer service are embedded in everything we do, in our policies and our strategies, and that this commitment extends to everyone in our organisation.

This new Customer Action Plan underlines our determination to ensure that the process of strengthening our service provision is built upon. It outlines how the commitments and standards set out in our new Customer Charter will be delivered and evaluated by us over the period 2018-2021.

We are determined to provide an excellent and continuously improving level of customer service. We will monitor closely the extent to which we reach the standards which we have set ourselves and will undertake regular consultation with our customers to ensure that we are meeting their needs.

Robert Watt
Secretary General

The Department and its Customers

The delivery of effective, quality customer service is a priority area for the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform and forms an integral part of our overall Strategy Statement and the strategies of individual Divisions within the Department.

The purpose of this Customer Action Plan, and the Customer Charter that accompanies it, is to set out in clear terms how we intend to ensure that we can continue to provide all our customers with the highest possible level of service over the period 2018 – 2021. It outlines our commitment to the provision and delivery of customer service and how our performance in this respect will be measured and evaluated. It ensures that the Department is effective in addressing its mission to serve the country, its people and the Government.

The Role of the Department

The mandate of the Department is to serve the country, its people and the Government by delivering well-managed and well-targeted public spending, delivered through modernised, effective and accountable public services. The Department provides ten main kinds of support to the Minister:

- **Expenditure Policy and Reporting Division (including Education and Justice Vote Groups)** is responsible for central public expenditure policy. This includes preparation of the Mid-Year Expenditure Report and the annual Estimates as well as the development of the Medium Term Expenditure Framework, Performance Budgeting and aggregate public service numbers policy. The Division is also responsible for the national framework for public capital investment, national policy for Public Private Partnerships and expenditure management for the Education and Justice Vote Groups. The Government Accounting Unit and Corporate Bodies Unit are located within the Central Expenditure Policy Division.
- **Labour Market and Enterprise Policy Division** is responsible for development of the Irish Government Economic and Evaluation Service (IGEES) and management of the DPER IGEES Unit; and manages the Prevention and Early Intervention Unit and various Votes (Agriculture, Food and the Marine; Children and Youth Affairs; Health; Business, Enterprise and Innovation; Employment Affairs and Social Protection; Transport, Tourism and Sport; Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht; Finance; Foreign Affairs and Trade, OPW; Public Expenditure and Reform; Rural and Community Development;

Taoiseach; State Property; Houses of the Oireachtas Commission; and the National Lottery Regulator).

- **Expenditure Management, EU Policy and Audit Division** manages the following Votes - Communications, Climate Action and Environment; Defence; Housing, Planning and Local Government - as well as the Climate Change Unit. It is also responsible for EU Structural and Investment Funds as well as Cohesion Policy including the development and implementation of the eCohesion Project. Departmental coordination of a range of issues relating to Brexit, the EU and North South cooperation is also conducted by the Division. In addition, this Division is responsible for the ERDF Audit Authority and the Internal Audit Unit¹.
- **Public Service Pay and Pensions Division** deals with public service pay and pension policy development and application, and industrial relations issues across all sectors of the Public Service (Civil Service, education, health, local authorities, defence, justice (Garda Síochána, Prisons), non-commercial State agencies), and related matters including the pay and pensions of Officeholders, and the operation of the Conciliation & Arbitration (C & A) Schemes and of Vote 12 Superannuation and Retired Allowances and the Pensions Insolvency Payments Scheme. In addition, the Division deals with pensions terms applying in commercial State bodies where significant matters of policy are involved; atypical pension terms (e.g. professional added years; cost neutral early retirement), employment conditions for EU officials; Board fees; Travel and Subsistence policy; engagement with, and supports for, the Public Service Pay Commission and dealing with certain financial supports for the Houses of the Oireachtas. The Division is also exploring the best implementation mechanisms for the Single Public Service Pension Scheme.
- **Reform Division** is responsible for developing, driving, co-ordinating, supporting and evaluating the Government's programme of Public Service Reform and Innovation and Civil Service Renewal. It is also responsible for legislative and other Government reform commitments assigned to the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform to promote and support open, accountable and transparent government and public administration and good governance in the Public Service. The development and implementation of a new public service reform and innovation plan for 2020: Our Public Service 2020 is a key priority, as is the establishment of a new Reform Evaluation Unit

¹ The Internal Audit Unit provides a shared internal audit service to the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform and the Department of Finance.

and the development of a culture of evaluation across the Public Service. An important part of the work of the division in driving reform is the implementation of the Civil Service Renewal Plan and supporting the Civil Service Management Board, which has collective responsibility for delivering the plan. It also has responsibility for managing the Civil Service Employee Engagement Surveys, the Civil Service Excellence and Innovation Awards and for a communications programme to engage with staff throughout the Civil Service. Finally, the Division has responsibility for a programme of Organisational Capability Reviews.

- **Civil Service Human Resources Division** is responsible for the development and implementation of HR policies in the Civil Service including strategic workforce planning encompassing the workforce planning framework and policies on recruitment; promotion; talent management, mobility; secondment and redeployment. The Division is also responsible for Civil Service performance management policies including probation; PMDS and underperformance and employment policies including discipline, grievance, and bullying and harassment; leave policy including the public service sick leave scheme. It also has a role in developing Civil Service equality and diversity policies and associated flexible working arrangements. It has responsibility for the new Civil Service Learning and Development Centre and for developing and implementing a new learning and development shared model for the Civil Service, as outlined under Action 9 of the Civil Service Renewal Plan. It supports the Senior Public Service and is responsible for the Civil Service Employee Assistance Service.
- **Office of the Government Chief Information Officer (OGCIO)** has a broad remit which includes leading the implementation of the Public Service ICT Strategy – delivering better outcomes and efficiency through innovation and excellence in ICT - encompassing five pillars namely Build to Share, Digital First, Data as an Enabler, Improve Governance and Increase Capability. In addition, OGCIO is responsible for the provision of ICT services to the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform and the Department of Finance; ICT infrastructure and support for the National Shared Service Office and the Office of Government Procurement; participating in a range of internal, national and EU working groups, steering and programme boards for strategic initiatives; and supporting digital service delivery and innovation across the Public Service including through the development and application of a range of ICT policies.

- **Office of Government Procurement (OGP)** leads on the reform of public procurement across the Public Service, and integrates national public procurement policy and operations. It provides a range of compliant value-for-money procurement solutions, including framework agreements and contracts, to support its public service clients in delivering services to the public. It works with partner sourcing organisations in Health, Education, Local Government and Defence to deliver on the objectives set by Government for procurement and to enable collaboration and coordination. Finally, it manages the national procurement platform, eTenders and a spend data repository, on behalf of Government.
- **Human Resources Strategy Unit** operates across three distinct areas, HR Operations, Organisational Development and HR Business Partnering. The Unit provides a range of services across the HR discipline including, Recruitment, Workforce Planning, Learning and Development, HR Consultancy, Performance Management, Employee/ Industrial Relations, Health and Well-being and Change Management.
- **Corporate Office** focuses on coordinating and continually enhancing the Department's governance framework, including business planning, risk management and compliance; providing a high quality of corporate support, including support for the Management Board and management of Parliamentary Questions, Freedom of Information Requests, etc.; and ensuring effective financial management.

In addition to the above Divisions, the Office of the **Chief Medical Officer** is also located in the Department

Customers of the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform

External Customers

The Department has a wide range of external customers and is committed to providing a quality service to meet their different needs.

- **General Public:** This includes members of the public who may or may not have previously contacted the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform

but are interested in knowing that if they ever need to they will be treated in a fair and equitable manner.

- Public representatives and members of the Oireachtas.
- Other Government Departments, public bodies and EU Institutions.
- A wide range of stakeholders from outside the public service including, for example, employers, trade unions and other representative bodies, community and voluntary groups, etc.

Internal Customers

The Department's Divisions and staff are customers of one other and it is important that the internal customer is acknowledged (See Principle 12 in the following section).

Quality Customer Service

The Department is wholly committed to providing the highest levels of service to all our customers in accordance with the 12 Principles of Quality Customer Service.

12 Principles of Quality Customer Service

1. **Quality Service Standards**

Publish a statement that outlines the nature and quality of service which the customer can expect, and display it prominently at the point of service delivery.

2. **Equality/Diversity**

Ensure the rights to equal treatment established by equality legislation, and accommodate diversity, so as to contribute to equality for the groups covered by the equality legislation (under the grounds of gender, marital status, family status, sexual orientation, religious belief, age, disability, race and membership of the Traveller Community).

Identify and work to eliminate barriers to access to services for people experiencing poverty and social exclusion, and for those facing geographic barriers to services.

3. **Physical Access**

Provide clean, accessible public offices that ensure privacy, comply with occupational and safety standards and, as part of this, facilitate access for people with disabilities and others with specific needs.

4. **Information**

Take a proactive approach in providing information that is clear, timely and accurate, is available at all points of contact, and meets the requirements of people with specific needs. Ensure that the potential offered by Information Technology is fully availed of and that the information available on public service websites follows the guidelines on web publication. Continue the drive for simplification of rules, regulations, forms, information leaflets and procedures.

5. **Timeliness and Courtesy**

Deliver quality services with courtesy, sensitivity and the minimum delay, fostering a climate of mutual respect between provider and customer.

Provide contact details in all communications to ensure ease of ongoing transactions.

6. Complaints

Maintain a well-publicised, accessible, transparent and simple-to-use system of dealing with complaints about the quality of service provided.

7. Appeals

Similarly, maintain a formalised, well-publicised, accessible, transparent and simple-to-use system of appeal/review for customers who are dissatisfied with decisions in relation to services.

8. Consultation and Evaluation

Provide a structured approach to meaningful consultation with, and participation by, the customer in relation to the development, delivery and review of services. Ensure meaningful evaluation of service delivery.

9. Choice

Provide choice, where feasible, in service delivery including payment methods, location of contact points, opening hours and delivery times. Use available and emerging technologies to ensure maximum access and choice, and quality of delivery.

10. Official Languages Equality

Provide quality services through Irish and/or bilingually and inform customers of their right to choose to be dealt with through one or other of the official languages.

11. Better Co-ordination

Foster a more co-ordinated and integrated approach to delivery of public services.

12. Internal Customer

Ensure staff are recognised as internal customers and that they are properly supported and consulted with regard to service delivery issues.

The way in which the Department will honour these principles is set out in our Customer Charter (Appendix A). To ensure that our Customer Charter commitments are met, the Department has developed a number of standards and performance indicators against which we will measure our performance. These are set out in the 'Measuring and Evaluating Performance' section below.

Measuring and Evaluating Performance

The Department will endeavour to meet the quality customer service targets set in our Customer Charter to ensure that we continue to deliver the highest levels of service to our customers.

In monitoring our performance, we will:

- Seek feedback and suggestions from our customers on ways in which we can enhance our service provision and delivery.
- Use internal management information systems to inform our customer service policies.
- Ensure full compliance with all applicable Health and Safety standards and regulations.

Service Standards and Performance Indicators

Our Customer Charter outlines in broad terms the level of service all customers of the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform are entitled to expect. To ensure that we can meet the commitments in our Charter, it is important that customers are made aware of the procedures and processes we use. These are defined as our Service Standards and are set out below. To further underpin our commitment to deliver the highest quality of service, the Department will use these Standards as Performance Indicators in measuring and evaluating our performance.

Quality Service

- Ensure that all customers are kept fully informed of the standards of service they can expect to receive from us, through the availability of our Customer Charter in all our offices.
- Ensure that copies of the Customer Charter and Customer Action Plan are made available to all customers who wish to have a copy.
- Ensure that a copy of the current Customer Charter and Action Plan are available on the Department's website.

Equality / Diversity

- Ensure that a focus on equality / diversity issues is maintained throughout the Department.
- Ensure that all customers are treated equally and in accordance with relevant legislation.
- Ensure that the needs of staff and visitors with disabilities are identified and fully catered for. For queries in relation to disability issues, customers can e-mail the Disabilityliaisonofficer@per.gov.ie in the Department, or Tel: (01) 076 100 7016.

Physical Access

- Ensure that full access to all areas of all our buildings is maintained for people with disabilities and any other customers with specific needs.
- Ensure that all areas of our buildings are clean, comfortable and comply with occupational and safety standards.
- To ensure that any issues or difficulties in relation to physical access can be addressed without delay, customers can telephone the Access Officer in the Department, Disabilityliaisonofficer@per.gov.ie at: (01) 076 100 7016.

Information

- Ensure that all information provided by the Department is clear, timely, accurate and fully accessible for any customers with specific needs.
- Ensure that material on Department's website follows all web publication guidelines in terms of accessibility and official languages equality.
- Ensure that our information distribution channels are kept as up-to-date as possible and that these channels maintain pace with the most recent technological developments and innovations in media and communications.
- Make every effort to ensure that information is made available in as many different formats as practicable.

Timeliness and Courtesy

- Ensure that all customers are treated with courtesy and that all enquiries are dealt with promptly and efficiently.

- Ensure that all staff provide their names and sections when answering telephone calls.
- Ensure that voicemail messages are updated regularly and that all voicemail messages are responded to within 1 working day of receipt.
- Ensure that full contact details are provided on all written or e-mail communication from the Department.

Complaints

- Ensure that all complaints are treated promptly, fairly, impartially and in confidence.
- Ensure that all complaints are acknowledged within 3 working days of receipt.
- Ensure that all complaints are investigated fully and that a reply to a complaint is issued within 15 working days. Where this is not possible, an interim reply will be given, explaining the reason for the delay and advising when a substantive response will issue.
- To ensure that the details of a complaint remain entirely private, the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform undertakes to keep records of complaints separate from other records.
- The Department of Public Expenditure and Reform website has full details of our Customer Complaints Procedure. All Quality Customer information is available under 'About' in the Corporate Information Menu on the Department's website. Details are also attached at Appendix B.

Appeals

- The Department of Public Expenditure and Reform maintains a formalised system of appeal for customers who are dissatisfied. Customers who are not satisfied with the outcome of the investigation by the Customer Service Officer have the option of appeal to a senior officer.
- If the matter is still not resolved, the customer has the right to appeal to the Office of the Ombudsman. Nothing in this appeals procedure affects statutory rights under Freedom of Information, Data Protection or any other relevant legislation.

Consultation

- The Department of Public Expenditure and Reform is committed to ensuring that the views of all of our customers are considered in framing Departmental policy initiatives. You can forward any comments or suggestions you may have by emailing CSU@per.gov.ie
- The Department is committed to working toward meaningful consultation with customer representative groups and other interested parties and reflecting their opinions regarding the development, provision and delivery of our services.

Choice

- Ensure the availability of multiple contact options for the Department, including a range of telephone numbers, e-mail, twitter and website.
- Ensure that the Department makes full use of new and emerging technologies to broaden the choice of channels available to customers.

Official Languages Equality

- Ensure that every effort is made to cater for callers who may wish to be dealt with through Irish and/or bilingually and inform customers of their right to choose to be dealt with through one or other of the official languages.
- Ensure that the Statement of Strategy and other information publications and key policy documents produced by or on behalf of the Department continue to be made available in both Irish and English
- Encourage a focus on Irish language training courses in staff development programmes.
- Ensure that customers who wish to deal with the Department by e-mail only through Irish are catered for at eolas@per.gov.ie

Better Co-ordination

- Work with other Departments and Government Agencies to improve co-ordination on service provision and delivery.

- Play a constructive role on those inter-departmental committees and groups on which the Department is represented and contribute to effective collaboration on policy issues.

Internal Customer

- Ensure that a module on internal customer service is included as a key part of all Customer Service training and induction courses.
- Ensure that the training and development needs of each staff member are provided for through the implementation of the Performance Management and Development System (PMDS).
- Ensure the development of more effective internal channels of communication to allow staff to gain a fuller understanding of all aspects of the role of the Department.

Training

We recognise that in order for staff to provide a quality service they must be familiar with the policies and practices outlined in the Customer Action Plan and with the commitments given in our Customer Charter. We are fully committed to investing in appropriate customer service training for all staff and to regular refresher training where necessary, particularly for those members of staff in regular contact with members of the general public.

Statutory Obligations

In addition to undertakings given in our Customer Action Plan and Customer Charter, we believe it is important that all Departmental staff are aware of their statutory obligations. The Department of Public Expenditure and Reform is fully committed to fulfilling all relevant statutory obligations in relation to Data Protection, Equality, Freedom of Information, Prompt Payment of Accounts and Safety, Health & Welfare at Work.

How to Contact Us

The business hours of the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform are Monday to Thursday 9:15am to 5:45pm and Friday 9:15am to 5:15pm.

Department Address	Department of Public Expenditure and Reform Government Buildings Upper Merrion Street Dublin 2 D02 R583
Telephone	(01)6767571 (Main Switchboard)
Department email address	CSU@per.gov.ie
Disability Liaison Officer	(01)7737016 disabilityliaisonofficer@per.gov.ie
Access Officer	(01)7737016 disabilityliaisonofficer@per.gov.ie
Quality Customer Service Officer, Ms. Helen Codd	(01)6045388 Helen.codd@per.gov.ie