



**An Roinn Cosanta**  
Department of Defence



**Óglaigh  
na hÉireann**  
DEFENCE FORCES IRELAND

**DEFENCE ORGANISATION  
CUSTOMER SERVICE  
ACTION PLAN  
2021 – 2023**

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# 1. Defence Organisation

The Defence Organisation, comprises of the Department of Defence and the Defence Forces and has responsibility for delivery of Defence outputs. The White Paper on Defence (2015) sets out the State's defence policy framework. The Defence Organisation's Strategy Statement outlines the key strategies and actions to be taken to ensure that all policy requirements are met.

The High Level Goal of the Defence Organisation is:

*“To provide for the military defence of the State, contribute to national and international peace and security and fulfil all other roles assigned by Government.”*

The Minister is the head of the Department and the primary role of the Department is to support the Minister, in particular by providing policy advice and support on Defence matters. The Secretary General is the Minister's principal policy adviser.

The military element of the Defence Organisation is headed by the Chief of Staff, who is the Minister's principal military adviser. Defence Forces Headquarters (DFHQ) is focused on all aspects of military planning and the development and management of the Defence Forces.

## Further information on the Defence Organisation:

Further information about the work of the Defence Organisation, including detailed information on Defence Forces operations, can be found in the Department of Defence and Defence Forces Annual Report, which is available on the Department of Defence website at [gov.ie](http://gov.ie).

To learn more about the various components of the Defence Forces see the Defence Forces website, [www.military.ie](http://www.military.ie).

In addition to the Defence Organisation, the Customer Charter and Customer Service Action Plan encompass the following bodies:

- The Army Pensions Board
- Defence Forces Canteen Board

Separately, the Office of the Ombudsman for the Defence Forces prepares and publishes its own Customer Charter and Customer Service Action Plan.

## 2. Customer Service in Defence

The Defence Organisation interacts with Government Departments, International Organisations, State Agencies, individual customers and a smaller pool of community customers in order to deliver services.

Given the nature of the activities in which the Defence Organisation is engaged, it does not provide services to external 'customers' in the classic sense. For example, there is no requirement for public offices, public counters, call-centres or services which the individual citizen needs to request on demand.

The Defence Organisation is committed to the provision of quality customer service to the highest standard and we continuously monitor our progress in this regard. This Customer Service Action plan sets out further details of how the commitments and standards outlined in our Customer Charter will be delivered by the Defence Organisation.

A review of internal communications within the Defence Forces resulted in the following improvements being implemented in 2019 and 2020:

- The establishment of an Internal Communications Cell.
- The monthly production of an Internal Communications Digest.
- The creation of a Members Area on [www.military.ie](http://www.military.ie) which gives access to information to non-desk based employees.
- Research into a mobile information app.

The Defence Forces reviewed its external online media platforms and followed through with recommendations for improvement:

- Upgrade of website [www.military.ie](http://www.military.ie).
- In addition to a considerable presence on Facebook and Twitter, the Defence Forces utilise Instagram to inform primarily their recruitment demographic. All of these mechanisms have been used to engage in a positive manner with the customers of the Defence Forces.

### **3. Quality Customer Service Actions and Performance**

The following section sets out the key actions we will undertake in order to enhance the quality of our customer service, and the indicators that we use to measure our performance.

#### **3.1 Setting Standards, Consultation and Monitoring**

The Defence Organisation is committed to the provision of quality customer service. The following actions set out how we will meet these requirements.

We will:

- Publish a new Customer Charter and Customer Service Action Plan at regular intervals in both Irish and English, which embrace the principles of quality customer service.
- Make the Customer Charter and Customer Action Plan available in the Customer Services area on our website.
- Monitor progress made in achieving the customer service standards outlined in our Customer Charter and Customer Service Action Plan.
- Monitor complaints received and use the feedback to improve service delivery.
- Continuously improve customer service awareness among organisational staff.

#### **3.2 Provision of Information, Timelines, Courtesy and Access**

The provision of clear, accurate and relevant information, which is accessible to all of our customers, is key to the delivery of quality customer service by our organisation. We are committed to ensuring that all of our offices and spaces are clean, safe and compliant with occupational health and safety standards. The following outlines our commitments regarding the above actions to achieving the Organisation's customer service goals successfully.

##### **Information**

We aim to:

- Ensure information on our websites is accurate, relevant and easily accessible to our customers.
- Use clear and simple language.
- Process all customer information in accordance with the Data Protection legislation.

## **Timelines and Courtesy**

We aim to:

- Be courteous in all our dealings.
- Deal with customer correspondence in a prompt manner.
- Acknowledge customer correspondence within 3 working days and provide a definitive reply within 3 working weeks.
- Where it is not possible to provide a definitive reply within this period an interim reply will be given explaining the position.
- Answer telephone calls promptly and politely.
- Provide the names of the staff member and business unit when answering telephone calls.
- Provide contact details on all written and email communications.

## **Access**

We aim to:

- Provide accommodation that is clean, safe and compliant with occupational health and safety standards.
- Ensure that there are suitable facilities in place for customers, including those with special needs, when dealing with staff of the Organisation.

## **3.3 Equality and Diversity**

The Defence Organisation is committed to according fair and equal treatment irrespective of race, gender, socio-economic status, language and other social attributes. We are committed to recognising staff as internal customers and the important role they have in contributing to the continuing success of our organisation.

We aim to:

- Comply with all equality legislation including the Employment Equality Act, 1998, the Equal Status Acts, 2000 - 2018 and the Equality Act 2004.
- Continue to promote equality and diversity awareness through a range of measures such as appropriate HR policies and specific training initiatives.
- Ensure that all customers are treated equally and in accordance with relevant legislation.
- Continue to fulfil the commitments outlined in our Schemes under the Official Languages Act 2003.
- Provide appropriate interpretation and translation services, including sign language, to meet customer needs, when required.

### **3.4 Customer Complaints**

The Organisation is committed to implementing the standards of best practice for public servants in dealing with complaints from customers. Complaints will be addressed in accordance with the procedures outlined in Appendix 2 of this Customer Service Action Plan.

We will:

- Treat complaints impartially, sensitively and in confidence.
- Log complaints and attempt to resolve matters at the first point of contact.
- Ensure complaints are dealt with promptly and provide a definitive reply within a reasonable timeframe, while ensuring regular contact with the customer throughout.
- Explain why we may be unable to provide what is required.
- We will apologise if we have made a mistake, explain what happened and we will attempt to rectify the situation.

### **3.5 Review**

This Customer Action Plan will be reviewed in line with the Customer Service Charter.

### **3.6 Data Protection**

The Organisation will treat personal data that you provide as confidential, in accordance with General Data Protection Regulations and Data Protection Legislation. Personal data may be exchanged between the Department of Defence and the Defence Forces or other Government Departments in accordance with law.

## Appendices

### Appendix 1: Defence Organisation Customer Service Charter

#### DEFENCE ORGANISATION CUSTOMER SERVICE CHARTER 2020 - 2022

##### OUR COMMITMENT TO YOU:

The Defence Organisation (Department of Defence and the Defence Forces) will deliver a quality service with respect, courtesy, sensitivity and the minimum delay.

##### BODIES ENCOMPASSED:

This Customer Service Charter also encompasses the following bodies under the aegis of the Department:

- The Army Pensions Board.
- Defence Forces Canteen Board.

##### SERVICES TO OUR CUSTOMERS:

The Defence Organisation is committed to the provision of the highest standard of service to all our customers. This charter sets out the standards of service we aim to provide in accordance with the principles of quality customer service, as approved by Government.

##### CORRESPONDENCE:

- We will acknowledge written customer correspondence (unless exceptional circumstances pertain) and electronic customer correspondence, within 3 working days of receipt, unless a definitive reply can be issued within 5 days.
- We will provide a definitive reply, where possible, to customer correspondence within 3 working weeks, otherwise an interim reply will issue.
- We will ensure that correspondence to customers carries a contact name and direct dial telephone number.

##### TELEPHONE SERVICES:

- We operate a telephone service during routine business hours.
- We will answer calls promptly and in a courteous and friendly manner, identify ourselves to callers when answering a telephone query and provide a contact name and telephone number.
- We will provide information as quickly as possible and ensure that if we are unable to deal with a query promptly, we will call back as soon as possible.

##### EQUALITY:

- We are committed to providing services to all our customers on an equal status basis.

##### VISITS TO OUR ORGANISATION:

- If you make an appointment to visit, you will be advised in advance of the security arrangements applicable and met by a member of staff on arrival.
- Services are provided mainly during routine business hours.
- Our main offices are accessible to people with disabilities. Should you have any concerns or special needs, please let us know how we may help.

##### INFORMATION:

- We will ensure that information is communicated in clear, easy to understand language.
- We will publish speeches and press releases on our websites within one working day.
- All key publications are available on our websites, including our Customer Charter and Customer Service Action Plan.



**SERVICES THROUGH IRISH:**

- Upon request, every effort will be made to deliver services through Irish in a seamless manner. Forms/leaflets for external customers will be available bilingually in accordance with the Official Languages Act 200.
- Key documents will be published simultaneously in Irish and English.
- Correspondence received in Irish will be answered in Irish.

**EVALUATION & REPORTING:**

- We will evaluate our performance against the commitments in this Charter.
- We will report on performance in our Annual Report.

**HELP US TO HELP YOU:**

- Please quote reference numbers when contacting us about an existing application or query.
- Please provide your contact details on all correspondence.
- Please treat our staff with courtesy and respect.
- If you have any specific needs, please let us know.

**COMMENTS, COMPLIMENTS & COMPLAINTS:**

- To give feedback you can submit a comment, compliment or complaint. To make a complaint, you may avail of our customer complaints procedure. This is in addition to your statutory right to make a complaint to the Ombudsman. We will co-operate with the Ombudsman or any other person/organisation that acts on your behalf.

**HOW TO SUBMIT A COMMENT, COMPLIMENT OR COMPLAINT:**

- You can email [customer@defence.ie](mailto:customer@defence.ie)
- You can call us on (045) 452114
- You can write to Customer Service, Department of Defence, Station Road, Newbridge, Co. Kildare W12 AD93

**WHERE TO FIND US:**

The Department of Defence and the Defence Forces Headquarters are located at Station Road, Newbridge, Co. Kildare, W12 AD93.

**OTHER DEPARTMENT OF DEFENCE OFFICES ARE LOCATED AT:**

- Department of Defence, Finance Branch, Áras an tSáile, Renmore, Galway, H91 AN2E.
- Civil Defence Branch, Benamore, Roscrea, Co. Tipperary, E53 CY80.
- Office of Emergency Planning, National Emergency Coordination Centre, Agriculture House, Kildare Street, Dublin 2, D02 WK12.

**CONTACT DETAILS:****TELEPHONE:**

Department of Defence & Defence Forces Headquarters, Newbridge: (045) 492000 or (045) 45 + extension

Defence Forces Headquarters, Duty Officer (24 hrs): (01) 8042721

Department of Defence, Finance Branch, Galway:  
(091) 743700 or (091) 74 + extension

Civil Defence Branch, Roscrea, Co. Tipperary:  
(0505) 25310

Office of Emergency Planning, Kildare Street, Dublin: (01) 2373800

**WEBSITES:**

[www.gov.ie](http://www.gov.ie)

[www.military.ie](http://www.military.ie)

[www.civildefence.ie](http://www.civildefence.ie)

[www.emergencyplanning.ie](http://www.emergencyplanning.ie)

[www.winterready.ie](http://www.winterready.ie)

**EMAIL:**

Department of Defence Staff:

[firstname.lastname@defence.ie](mailto:firstname.lastname@defence.ie)

**CUSTOMER SERVICE OFFICERS:**

Department of Defence, Station Road,

Newbridge, Co. Kildare, W12 AD93.

Tel: (045) 452114 Email: [customer@defence.ie](mailto:customer@defence.ie)

Defence Forces Customer Service Officer,

Station Road, Newbridge, Co. Kildare, W12 AD93.

Tel: (045) 445306 Fax: (045) 491169

Email: [info@military.ie](mailto:info@military.ie)

**OFFICE OF THE OMBUDSMAN:**

6 Earlsfort Terrace, Dublin 2, D02 W773

Telephone: (01) 6395600

LoCall: 1890 223030

Fax: (01) 6395674

Email: [ombudsman@ombudsman.gov.ie](mailto:ombudsman@ombudsman.gov.ie)

Web: [www.ombudsman.ie](http://www.ombudsman.ie)

## Appendix 2: Complaints Procedure

### Department of Defence and Defence Forces

We are always willing to address complaints from customers who are not fully satisfied with the level of customer service they receive. A complaint is defined as an expression of dissatisfaction with the quality of customer service, as outlined in the Customer Charter, provided by the organisation.

### How do I make a complaint?

- In the first instance, the matter should be brought to the attention of our staff in the Branch/Section concerned. The staff will try to resolve the matter without delay. The complaint can be made either orally or in writing.
- If staff in the Branch/Section concerned cannot resolve the matter or you are unhappy with the outcome, you can ask for the matter to be considered by a more senior officer within the relevant Branch.
- If, at this stage, you remain dissatisfied with the findings, your complaint should be directed as follows:
  - To the Department of Defence Customer Service Officer, Station Road, Newbridge, Co. Kildare, W12 AD93 by email: [customer@defence.ie](mailto:customer@defence.ie) or (045) 452114
  - To the Defence Forces Public Relations Branch, Defence Forces HQ, Station Road, Newbridge, Co. Kildare, W12 AD93 by email: [info@military.ie](mailto:info@military.ie) or (045) 445306

The handling of your complaint will be reviewed and you will be advised of the options available should you wish to bring the matter further. The review will ensure that the principles of the Customer Service Action Plan have been adhered to in the circumstances of the case.

- If you are not satisfied with the outcome of your complaint or the manner in which it was handled, you may wish to refer the matter to the Ombudsman.

Our customer complaints procedure is in addition to your statutory right to make a complaint to the Ombudsman who may be contacted at: Office of the Ombudsman, 6 Earlsfort Terrace, Dublin 2, D02 W773

- Tel: (01) 6395600 Fax: (01) 6395674 Web: [www.ombudsman.gov.ie](http://www.ombudsman.gov.ie)

We will cooperate with the Ombudsman or any other person/organisation acting on your behalf.

## Appendix 3: Customer Comment Card



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### CUSTOMER COMMENT CARD Department of Defence & Defence Forces

We welcome your comments. If you wish to provide a comment, please complete this form, and submit it to the Customer Service Officer, Customer Service, Department of Defence, or Defence Forces Customer Service Officer, Station Road, Newbridge, Co. Kildare, W12 AD93

#### Comments & Suggestions

Name:

Address:

Telephone:

Email:

The Defence Organisation will treat personal data that you provide as confidential, in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation and Data Protection Legislation. Personal data may also be exchanged with other Government Departments in accordance with law. Full details of the Department of Defence Data Protection Policy can be found on our website at [www.gov.ie](http://www.gov.ie); by email from [dataprotection@defence.ie](mailto:dataprotection@defence.ie) or in writing from Data Protection Office, Department of Defence, Station Road Newbridge, Co. Kildare, W12 AD93



Rialtas na hÉireann  
Government of Ireland

## Appendix 4: Useful Contact Details

### Defence Organisation Main Offices

Department of Defence and Defence Forces Headquarters, Station Road, Newbridge, Co. Kildare, W12 AD93	Tel: (045) 492000
Áras an tSáile, Renmore, Galway, H91 AN2E	Tel: (091) 743700
Benamore, Roscrea, Co. Tipperary, E53 CY80	Tel: (0505) 25310
National Emergency Coordination Centre, Agriculture House, Kildare Street, Dublin 2, D02 WH12	Tel: (01) 2373800

Direct Dial inwards: If you know the extension of the person you wish to contact, you may dial their extension directly by using the following prefixes:

Newbridge – 04545 + four digit extension    Renmore – 09174 + four digit extension

### Email Addresses

	Department of Defence	Defence Forces
<b>Customer Service</b>	<a href="mailto:customer@defence.ie">customer@defence.ie</a>	<a href="mailto:info@military.ie">info@military.ie</a>
<b>Information Office</b>	<a href="mailto:info@defence.ie">info@defence.ie</a> <a href="mailto:eolas@defence.ie">eolas@defence.ie</a>	<a href="mailto:info@military.ie">info@military.ie</a>
<b>Press Office</b>	<a href="mailto:pressoffice@defence.ie">pressoffice@defence.ie</a>	<a href="mailto:press@military.ie">press@military.ie</a>
<b>FOI Requests</b>	<a href="mailto:foi@defence.ie">foi@defence.ie</a>	<a href="mailto:foi@defenceforces.ie">foi@defenceforces.ie</a>

### Websites

Department of Defence	<a href="http://www.gov.ie">www.gov.ie</a>
Defence Forces	<a href="http://www.military.ie">www.military.ie</a>
Office of Emergency Planning	<a href="http://www.emergencyplanning.ie">www.emergencyplanning.ie</a>
Civil Defence	<a href="http://www.civildefence.ie">www.civildefence.ie</a>
Winter Ready	<a href="http://www.winterready.ie">www.winterready.ie</a>