

# **Department of Justice and Equality**

## **Customer Service Action Plan**



**2016 - 2018**

## Contents

Foreword by the Secretary General.....	3
1. Mission Statement.....	5
Our values are: .....	6
Our objectives are: .....	6
Our responsibilities are: .....	7
2. Development of the Customer Service Action Plan and Customer Charter.....	8
3. Customer Service Commitments.....	9
Commitment 1 – Quality Service Standards.....	9
Commitment 2 – Equality/Diversity .....	9
Commitment 3 – Physical Access .....	10
Commitment 4 – Information .....	11
Commitment 5 – Timeliness and Courtesy.....	12
Commitment 6 – Consultation and Evaluation.....	12
Commitment 7 – Better Coordination.....	13
Commitment 8 – Official Language Equality .....	14
Commitment 9 – Health and Safety .....	14
4. Our Customers.....	16
4.1 Our Customers’ Responsibilities .....	17
4.2 Internal Customers.....	17
5. Points of Contact .....	18
5.1 Written Communication.....	18
5.2 Telephone .....	18
5.3 Personal Callers and Meetings .....	19
5.4 Services through Irish.....	20
5.5 Disability Access Officer .....	20
6. Access to information .....	21
6.1 Freedom of Information Act 2014.....	21
6.2 Data Protection Acts 1988 & 2003.....	22
7. Feedback and Complaints.....	23
Appendix one: Department of Justice and Equality Contact details.....	25
Appendix two: Department Offices and Agencies details .....	26

# Foreword by the Secretary

## General



I am pleased to present the Customer Service Action Plan 2016-2018 and Charter. As a Department we have in our Culture and Values Charter committed to delivering public services to a high standard<sup>1</sup>. We have expressed our commitment to this by:

- placing the public interest at the centre of everything we do and are forthcoming in providing information to assist the public
- treating people with dignity and respect and recognising the different circumstances faced by many of them
- striving to provide an excellent service to the public and to support front-line staff to deliver high quality, responsive services, conscious of their impact on people's lives.

This Customer Service Action Plan is a further demonstration of our commitment to the values set out above and to a process of continuous improvement in relation to the delivery of services. As a Department we are committed to delivering high standards of public services, while providing excellent service to those whom we come into contact with.

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<sup>1</sup> Available from our dedicated [Reform page](http://www.justice.ie) on the Department's website, [www.justice.ie](http://www.justice.ie)

Our commitment to providing a quality customer service is further demonstrated in our Culture and Values Charter, which was developed in consultation with our stakeholders and staff<sup>2</sup>.

The Department is fully committed to delivering our own programme for change and the actions in the Civil Service Renewal Plan. We are constantly responding to new challenges, seizing ways to develop and improve the services we provide to the public.

This Customer Service Action Plan and Charter sets out how we will deliver on our customer service commitments while providing services to the highest standards of efficiency and accountability. Through these documents we will continue working with all our customers to constantly monitor and review our performance.

I would like to acknowledge the hard work and commitment of all staff throughout the Department in delivering public services to the highest possible standard and maintaining an ethos of integrity, courtesy and professionalism.

Thank you to everyone who contributed to the preparation of this Plan.

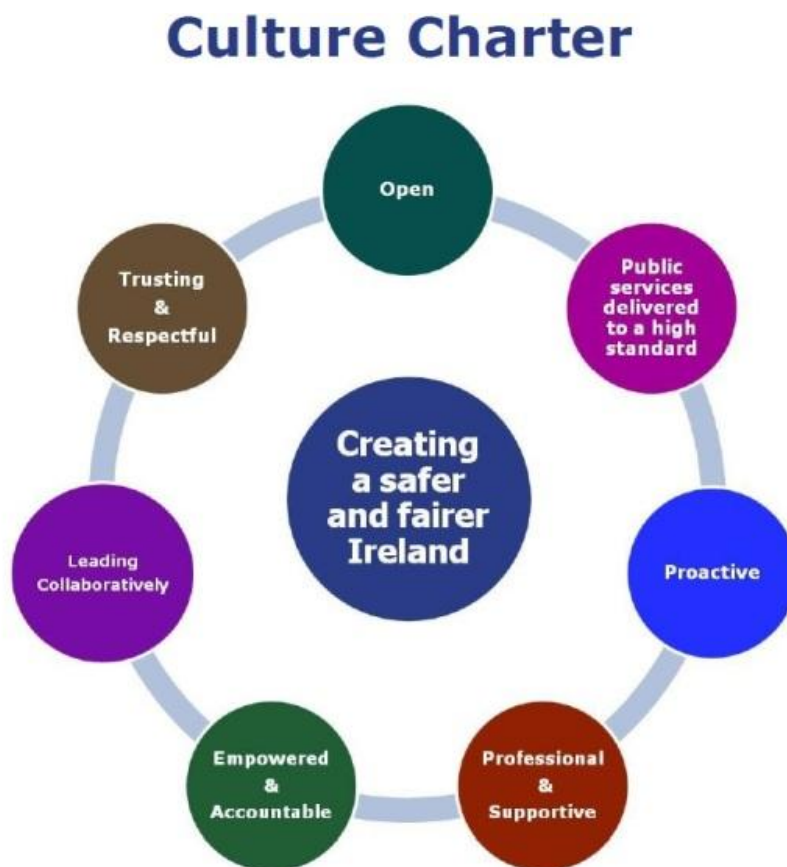
Noel Waters  
Secretary General (Acting)  
27 April 2016

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<sup>2</sup> Available from [our website](http://www.justice.ie) – [www.justice.ie](http://www.justice.ie)

# 1. Mission Statement

Our mission in the Department of Justice and Equality is to maintain community and national security, promote justice and equity, and safeguard human rights and fundamental freedoms consistent with the common good. Below is a diagram that sets out our new Culture Charter and Values.



**Figure 1: Our Culture and Values**

## Our values are:

- Open
- Public services delivered to a high standard
- Proactive
- Professional and Supportive
- Empowered and Accountable
- Leading Collaboratively
- Trusting and Respectful.

These values will foster and support the courage to make a difference in all that we do.

## Our objectives are:



**Figure 2: Objectives of the Department of Justice and Equality<sup>3</sup>**

<sup>3</sup> Our objectives are available from our [Strategy Statement 2015 - 2017](#) which is on our website [www.justice.ie](http://www.justice.ie)

## **Our responsibilities are:**

- Supporting An Garda Síochána and tackling crime
- Developing justice services
- Provision of Immigration and related services
- Promotion of a caring, integrated and equitable society
- Promotion of a secure and peaceful society
- Law reform
- Business delivery
- Fighting discrimination and promoting equal opportunities.

## 2. Development of the Customer Service Action Plan and Customer Charter

**The Department of Justice and Equality is committed to providing an efficient, professional and courteous service to all our customers.**

We have a large customer base and we are committed to meeting their needs. The development of this Customer Service Action Plan and Customer Charter took account of the best practice in the area and involved consultation with various stakeholders including staff and members of the public.

In preparing these documents we took account of:

- Individual employee feedback
- Feedback from members of the public
- The principles of Quality Customer Service
- The Departments Strategy Statement 2015-2017
- Our Culture and Values Charter
- Customer Charters and Customer Service Action Plans of other government departments

The Department's Customer Service Officer is Ms. Aisling Brennan, her email address is [customerservices@justice.ie](mailto:customerservices@justice.ie)



## 3. Customer Service Commitments

The Department of Justice and Equality is committed to serving the community and our customers to the highest standard through the commitments outlined below.

### Commitment 1 – Quality Service Standards

The Department is committed to providing a professional, efficient and courteous service to all our customers.

#### What we will do

- We will ensure that our Customer Service Action Plan is available on our website and is available in accessible formats.
- We will ensure that our Customer Service Charter is displayed prominently in our offices.
- We commit to ensuring that our staff will continue to provide quality customer service on a daily basis.

### Commitment 2 – Equality/Diversity

The Department is committed to the development of a caring and equitable society. The Department is an equal opportunities employer and is committed to initiatives that promote equality and

foster diversity.

### **What we will do**

- We are committed to ensuring that all customers are treated equally and in accordance with relevant legislation.
- We will ensure that all of the information on our website is accessible and provide information in alternate formats where feasible.
- We will provide sign language services and interpretive services where required.

## **Commitment 3 – Physical Access**

The Department will provide clean, accessible public offices that comply with occupational and safety standards. We will facilitate access for people with disabilities and others with specific needs. We would be grateful if customers could give us advance notice of their access requirements so we can make the necessary arrangements.

### **What we will do**

- We will ensure that that all of the facilities in our offices are suitable for all customers and staff including those with special needs.
- We will ensure all customer and staff are afforded privacy in their dealings with the Department.

## **Commitment 4 – Information**

The Department is committed to taking a proactive approach in providing information that is clear, timely and accurate with regard to the Department’s work and the services we provide. We use social media to promote the work of the Department such as Twitter<sup>4</sup> and Flickr<sup>5</sup>.

Access is available to Departmental publications and news through our website<sup>6</sup> and links to all agencies and offices associated with the Department.

### **What we will do**

- We are committed to having as much information as possible available on our website in accessible formats.
- We will provide information in a way that is clear and easy to understand.
- We will ensure that information is issued in a timely manner and is accurate.
- If you wish to access information through the Freedom of Information Act or the Data Protection Acts, go to Section Six in this document for details.

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<sup>4</sup> <https://twitter.com/DeptJusticeIRL>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.flickr.com/photos/departmentofjustice/>

<sup>6</sup> [www.justice.ie](http://www.justice.ie)

## **Commitment 5 – Timeliness and Courtesy**

The Department is committed to delivering quality customer service in a proper, fair and impartial manner. Customer satisfaction is very important to us.

### **What we will do**

- We will be courteous and sensitive in all dealings with our customers.
- When dealing with customers over the phone we will, where appropriate, identify ourselves and our area of work.
- We will acknowledge correspondence within five working days.
- We will give our name and contact information when responding to written and email communications where appropriate.
- Where delays arise in dealing with correspondence we will issue an interim reply to our customers.

## **Commitment 6 – Consultation and Evaluation**

We have used a consultation process in developing this Customer Service Action Plan. We have consulted with staff while the document was in draft format and this feedback was taken into consideration. We have also consulted with members of the public in regard to their customer service experience of the Department. We believe that by doing this we are utilising the valuable

contribution of our staff and customers in assisting us to provide the best possible customer service. The Department of Justice and Equality has engaged with its stakeholders on the culture of the organisation, specifically seeking feedback in relation to the values that could shape our future culture.

Our stakeholders, both internal and external, highlighted the delivery of services to a high standard as important and a value which should, amongst others, underpin a preferred culture. This Customer Service Action Plan is a positive action which supports a culture of high standards in the delivery of services to all of our clients.

### **What we will do**

- We will continue to seek feedback from our customers and staff through surveys and focus groups.
- We commit to following up and resolving any issue brought to our attention in regard to customer service in the Department.

## **Commitment 7 – Better Coordination**

The Department commits to continuing to promote a more integrated approach to the delivery of public services.

### **What we will do**

- We will work to have an integrated approach to work across the Justice Sector.

- We will continue to deliver a co-ordinated service to all our customers.

We will establish interdepartmental groups to ensure that we are working together to make progress in areas across the Department.

## **Commitment 8 – Official Language Equality**

Staff in the Department will continue to be encouraged to participate in Irish Language training programmes to provide them with the ability to facilitate customers to carry out business through the medium of Irish.

### **What we will do**

- We will ensure that we comply with our obligations under the Official Languages Act 2003 and the 20-year Strategy for the Irish Language 2010-2030<sup>7</sup>.
- We will ensure that all of our major publications are made available in English and Irish such as our Annual Report and Strategy Statements.
- We will ensure that all customers wishing to conduct business through Irish will be facilitated.

## **Commitment 9 – Health and Safety**

We will ensure that customers and staff are provided with a healthy and safe environment while on the premises.

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<sup>7</sup> [Our Irish language 2010-2030 Strategy](http://www.justice.ie) is available from our website – [www.justice.ie](http://www.justice.ie)

### **What we will do**

- We will ensure that all of our buildings and premises comply with Health and Safety legislation.
- We will ensure that various members of staff in each area are trained to carry out a variety of tasks and functions as set out in the Health and Safety legislation.

## 4. Our Customers

**We are committed to ensuring all of our business is conducted to the highest standards of ethical and professional behaviour. We will ensure that all customers are treated with respect and courtesy irrespective of their method of contact:**

- Telephone
- Written Correspondence
- Personal Callers

Customer Satisfaction is very important to us and we aim to achieve this by:

- Giving our customers the best possible service and appropriate advice.
- Treating all of our customers in a proper, fair and impartial manner while at all times remaining courteous and sensitive.
- Working to ensure that rights to equal treatment set out in equality legislation are upheld in the delivery of our services.
- Aiming where possible to meet any special needs our customers may have.



## 4.1 Our Customers' Responsibilities

- Have their reference number/correspondence reference number/accurate relevant details to hand when making enquiries in relation to ongoing dealings with the Department.
- Treat our staff with courtesy and respect and listen to the guidance they are giving as they endeavour to provide the most appropriate response to queries.
- Our staff have the right to make a decision to terminate a telephone call if the caller is considered aggressive, offensive, abusive or intimidatory. The staff member will advise the caller that their behaviour is unacceptable and advise that the call will be terminated should the behaviour continue.

## 4.2 Internal Customers

The Department recognises staff as internal customers. We are committed to ensuring that all of our staff are supported in their roles, providing leadership, inspiration and motivation to continuously improve the services we deliver.

## 5. Points of Contact

The contact information for all our offices is in Appendix 2.

### 5.1 Written Communication

- All correspondence will be acknowledged, the majority within five working days where it is feasible to do so
- Final replies will issue within 20 working-days and where this is not possible an interim reply will issue before the 20-day period is up
- All correspondence issued will contain a reference number (where applicable)
- Staff will furnish their name and contact details on all correspondence where appropriate
- Staff will try to ensure responses are in plain language
- Staff will respond to emails by email where possible
- Staff will use their out-of-office email message if they are going to be out for more than one day. They will include an alternative email address for the customer to contact.

### 5.2 Telephone

- Our aim is to answer all calls quickly
- We will identify ourselves and our area of work
- We will be polite and helpful, and do our best to provide our customers with clear and correct information

- If we are unable to answer your query, we will take your details and arrange for you to be called back by the relevant person
- Voicemails will be activated.

### 5.3 Personal Callers and Meetings

- We shall greet visitors politely, be fair and helpful and deal with their enquiries as quickly as possible.
- We will ensure, where practical, visitors are afforded privacy in their dealings with the Department.
- We will make sure that our offices are accessible for people with disabilities.
- Meetings hosted by the Department will be organised and conducted efficiently and effectively.
- People attending meetings can expect proper meeting facilities, timely notification and advance circulation of relevant documentation.

**It must be noted that where customers call to any of our offices without appointments, we may not be in a position to meet with them because of prior work commitments.**

## 5.4 Services through Irish

The Department will issue responses in Irish to all correspondence received in Irish. Every effort will be made to accommodate all telephone and personal callers who wish to conduct their business with the Department through Irish.

### **Seirbhis trí Ghaeilge**

Tabharfar freagra i nGaeilge ar chomhfhreagras a gheofar i nGaeilge. Deanfar gach irracht freastal ar fhiafraithe teileafon i nGaeilge agus freastal ar dhaoine a thagann i lathair ar mian leo a ngo a dheanamh.

## 5.5 Disability Access Officer

The Department's Access Officer is Ms. Aisling Brennan in accordance with Section 26(2) of the Disability Act.

The Access Officer is responsible for providing, arranging or coordinating assistance to persons with disabilities who wish to access the services provided by the Department of Justice and Equality. The Access Officer also acts as a point of contact for persons with disabilities who wish to access such services.

Email: [accessofficer@justice.ie](mailto:accessofficer@justice.ie)

## 6. Access to information

The Department of Justice and Equality is committed to providing information to their customers in a clear concise and timely manner. The Department's website [www.justice.ie](http://www.justice.ie) provides accurate and up-to-date information.

If you cannot find what you are seeking there, you can obtain information through the following channels:

### 6.1 Freedom of Information Act 2014

This Act allows an individual the right to request access to any information held by a Government Department or public body including personal information.

They can also request correction of personal information relating to them held by any Government Departments or certain public bodies where it is inaccurate, incomplete or misleading and also obtain reasons for a decision made by a Government Department or certain public bodies where the decision affects them.

If you would like to request information under the Freedom of Information Act please complete the form<sup>8</sup>:

You can email the form to [foi@justice.ie](mailto:foi@justice.ie)

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<sup>8</sup> [Available from our website www.justice.ie](http://www.justice.ie)

If you wish to post it:

Information Access Officer  
Department of Justice and Equality  
51 St. Stephens Green  
Dublin 2  
D02 HK52

## **6.2 Data Protection Acts 1988 & 2003**

These acts are designed to protect an individual's right to privacy and they give the right to request access to any personal information the Department may hold on them and the right to ask a Department if they have any records on them. They also have the right to request that any inaccurate information held on them is either amended or erased. Requests must be made in writing but do not need to refer to the Data Protection Acts.

The Information Access Officer is also responsible for processing Subject Access Requests under the Data Protection Acts.

## 7. Feedback and Complaints

The Customer Service Action Plan outlines the standard of service you can expect from staff of the Department. The Department aims to ensure consistency, fairness and transparency in its response to complaints.

An effective, solution focused, complaints procedure enhances service delivery and public confidence in the Department.

If you are not happy with the standard of service you receive, you should contact the staff member or division of the Department you were dealing with to have the issue resolved. If this does not resolve the issue you can contact our Customer Service Officer at [customerservices@justice.ie](mailto:customerservices@justice.ie).

If your complaint remains unresolved, you have the right of further appeal to the Office of the Ombudsman.

The Office of the Ombudsman,  
18 Lr Leeson Street,  
Dublin 2  
D02 HE97

**Phone:** 01-6395674

**Lo-call:** 1890 22 30 30

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

If you are not happy with the standard of service provided by the Irish Naturalisation and Immigration Service, you can contact them as follows:

**Email:** [INIScustomercomplaints@justice.ie](mailto:INIScustomercomplaints@justice.ie)

**Or in writing:**

Quality Customer Service Officer  
Irish Naturalisation and Immigration Service  
Department of Justice and Equality  
13/14 Burgh Quay  
Dublin 2  
D02 XK70

Please note complaints regarding the processing of an individual application or an application decision, such as in the immigration related areas, will not be dealt with through this complaints process and existing procedures will continue to apply.

**Note: While the offices of the Ombudsman and the Ombudsman for Children do not currently have the power to investigate the immigration and naturalisation process and related matters, the Irish Naturalisation and Immigration Service (INIS) do receive correspondence from those offices on such cases and where possible, responds to such correspondence giving the factual position on the matter raised.**



# Appendix one: Department of Justice and Equality Contact details

Department of Justice and Equality Contact details may change, always refer to [www.justice.ie](http://www.justice.ie) for the most up to date listing.

Area/Services	Address	Phone	Email or website
Department of Justice and Equality Head Office	51 St. Stephen's Green Dublin 2 D02 HK52	01-6028202 Lo-call 1890-221 227 (calls within Ireland)	<a href="http://www.justice.ie">www.justice.ie</a>
Financial Shared Services	Department of Justice and Equality Deerpark Road Killarney Co. Kerry V93 KH28	064 - 6670300 Fax: +353 64 6634433	<a href="http://www.justice.ie">www.justice.ie</a>
Irish Naturalisation and Immigration Service	Department of Justice and Equality 13/14 Burgh Quay Dublin 2 D02 XK70	01-6167700 Lo-call 1890 551 500 (calls within Ireland)	<a href="http://www.inis.gov.ie">www.inis.gov.ie</a>

## Appendix two: Department Offices and Agencies details

Area/Services	Address	Phone	Email or website
Office of the Commissioner of An Garda Síochána	Garda Headquarters Phoenix Park Dublin 8 D08 HN3X	01-6660000	<a href="http://www.garda.ie">www.garda.ie</a>
An Garda Síochána Inspectorate	87 St. Stephen's Green Dublin 2 D02 YF60	01-4086500	<a href="http://www.gsinsp.ie">www.gsinsp.ie</a>
Anti-Human Trafficking Unit	51 St. Stephen's Green Dublin 2 D02 HK52	01-6028878	<a href="http://www.blueblindfold.gov.ie">www.blueblindfold.gov.ie</a> <a href="mailto:ahtudivision@justice.ie">ahtudivision@justice.ie</a>
Central Authority for International Child Abduction	Bishops Square Redmonds Hill Dublin 2 D02 TD99	01-4790200	<a href="mailto:Internationalchildabduction@justice.ie">Internationalchildabduction@justice.ie</a>
Central Authority for Maintenance Recovery from Abroad	Bishops Square Redmonds Hill Dublin 2 D02 TD99	01-4790200	<a href="mailto:mainrecov@justice.ie">mainrecov@justice.ie</a>

Charities Regulatory Authority	St. Martins House Waterloo Road Dublin 4 D04 E5W7	01- 6331500	<a href="http://www.charitiesregulatoryauthority.ie">www.charitiesregulatoryauthority.ie</a>
Criminal Injuries Compensation Tribunal	Second Floor Montague Court 7-11 Montague St Dublin 2 D02 FT96	01- 4768670	<a href="mailto:criminalinjuries@justice.ie">criminalinjuries@justice.ie</a>
Community Programmes Unit Irish Youth Justice Service	4 <sup>th</sup> Floor 43-49 Mespil Road Dublin 4 D04 YP52	01- 6473000	<a href="http://www.iyjs.ie">www.iyjs.ie</a>
Courts Service	15-24 Phoenix St North Smithfield Dublin 7 D07 X028	01- 8886000	<a href="http://www.courts.ie">www.courts.ie</a>
Coroner Service	Athlumney House IDA Business Park Johnstown Navan Co. Meath C15 ND62	046- 9091323	<a href="http://www.coroners.ie">www.coroners.ie</a>
Cosc The National	2nd Floor Montague Court	01- 4768680	<a href="http://www.cosc.ie">www.cosc.ie</a>

Office for the Prevention of Domestic Sexual and Gender Based Violence	7-11 Montague Street Dublin 2 D02 FT96		
Forensic Science Laboratory	Garda HQ Phoenix Park Dublin 8 D08 HN3X	01- 6662910	<a href="http://www.forensicscience.ie">www.forensicscience.ie</a>
Garda Ombudsman Commission	150 Upper Abbey St. Dublin 1 D01 FT73	01- 8716727 Fax: 01- 8147023 Lo-call 1890 600 800 (calls within Ireland)	<a href="http://www.gardaombudsman.ie">www.gardaombudsman.ie</a>
Insolvency Service of Ireland	Block 2 Phoenix House Conyngham Road Dublin 8 D08 T3CK	01 - 0761064 200	<a href="http://www.isi.gov.ie">www.isi.gov.ie</a>
Irish Prison Service	IDA Business Park Ballinalee Road Longford Co. Longford N39 A308	043- 3335100	<a href="http://www.irishprisons.ie">www.irishprisons.ie</a>
Irish Film	Blackhall Walk	01-	<a href="http://www.ifco.ie">www.ifco.ie</a>

Classification Office (IFCO)	Smithfield Dublin 7 D07 NRR6	7996100	
Legal Aid Board	Quay St Cahirciveen Co. Kerry D07 PE0C	066- 9471000 Lo-call 1890 615 200 (calls within Ireland)	<a href="http://www.legalaidboard.ie">www.legalaidboard.ie</a>
Mental Health (Criminal Law) Review Board	Montague Court Montague St Dublin 2 D02 FT96	01- 6028221 Fax: 01- 6028216	<a href="http://www.mhclrb.ie">www.mhclrb.ie</a> <a href="mailto:mhclrbinbox@justice.ie">mhclrbinbox@justice.ie</a>
National Disability Authority	25 Clyde Road Dublin 2 D04 E409	01- 6080400	<a href="http://www.nda.ie">www.nda.ie</a>
Office of the Data Protection Commissioner	Canal House Station Road Portarlinton Co. Laois R32 AP23	057- 8684800 Lo-call 1890 252 231 (calls within Ireland)	<a href="http://www.dataprotection.ie">www.dataprotection.ie</a>
Office of the Refugee Applications Commissioner (ORAC)	79-83 Lr Mount St Dublin 2 D02 ND99	01- 6028000 Lo-call 1890 202 418 (calls within Ireland)	<a href="http://www.orac.ie">www.orac.ie</a>

Office of the Refugee Appeals Tribunal (ORAT)	6-7 Hanover St Dublin 2 D02 W320	01- 4748400 Lo-call 1890 210 458 (calls within Ireland)	<a href="http://www.refappeal.ie">www.refappeal.ie</a>
Office for Internet Safety	51 St. Stephen's Green Dublin 2 D02 HK52	01- 6028258	<a href="http://www.internetsafety.ie">www.internetsafety.ie</a>
Private Security Authority	Davis St. Tipperary Town Co. Tipperary E34 PY91	062- 31588/9	<a href="http://www.psa.gov.ie">www.psa.gov.ie</a>
Probation Service	Head Office Haymarket Smithfield Dublin 7 D07 WT27	01- 8173600	<a href="http://www.probation.ie">www.probation.ie</a>
Property Registration Authority	Chancery St. Dublin 7 DX – 228	01- 6707500 Lo-call 1890 333 002 (calls within Ireland)	<a href="http://www.prai.ie">www.prai.ie</a>
Property Services Regulatory Authority	Abbey Buildings Abbey Road Navan Co. Meath	046- 9033800	<a href="http://www.psr.ie">www.psr.ie</a>

	C15 K7PY		
Reception and Integration Agency	PO Box 11487 Dublin 2 D02 TD99	01-4183200	<a href="http://www.ria.ie">www.ria.ie</a>
Office of the State Pathologist	Fire Brigade Training Centre Malahide Road Marino Dublin 3 D03 NN83	01-8534871	<a href="http://www.justice.ie/en/JELR/Pages/office_of_the_state_pathologist">www.justice.ie/en/JELR/Pages/office_of_the_state_pathologist</a>
Victims of Crime Office	2nd Floor Montague Court Montague Street Dublin 2 D02 FT96	01-4768686	<a href="http://www.victimsofcrimeoffice.ie">www.victimsofcrimeoffice.ie</a>

**Department of Justice and Equality**

**51 St. Stephen's Green**

**Dublin 2**

**D02 HK52**

**Lo-Call: 1890 221 227**

**Web: [www.justice.ie](http://www.justice.ie)**

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